HOPE IN THE MIDST OF CRISIS: READING DANIEL 9 IN THE 21ST CENTURY ZIMBABWEAN CONTEXT

by

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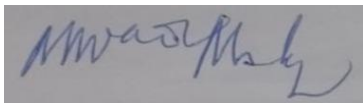
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ABSTRACT

Zimbabwe has witnessed a socio-economic and political crisis since the dawn of the 21st century.

The Zimbabwean nation that was for several decades under British colonial subordination is once again subjected to a native aristocracy. During the first decade of the 21st century, Zimbabwe was classified as a failed state. Western nations criticized the fast-tracked land reform initiative that evicted white commercial farmers. Additionally, they penalised political leaders, sending the nation into a deeper economic crisis that severely hurt the agricultural sector. Over three million people left the country to seek refuge and employment abroad. Citizens from mainstream opposition parties additionally experienced the crises of suffering, poverty, unemployment, victimisation, kidnapping, corruption and poor governance, among others. This study argues that apocalyptic literature, including the book of Daniel in the Old Testament, has the potential to inspire hope in the hearts of its readers and/or listeners to its interpretations. Hence the critical question asked in this thesis is, "Why would the findings of a historical critical reading of Daniel 9 be considered appropriate in bringing hope to a hopeless Zimbabwean 21st century context if read through a contextual lens?" Amidst the current Zimbabwean crisis, the researcher is of the view that a historical critical reading of Daniel 9 reveals that the text was written to people who were experiencing hopelessness. Therefore, the appropriation of the findings of a historical critical reading of Daniel 9 to the hopeless members of the opposition parties of the 21st century Zimbabwean context of crisis may be ideal for generating hope. Despite their differences on history, geography and background among others, this research was able to identify apparent common traits between the context of the production of the book of Daniel, that is, the Second Temple period and the 21st century Zimbabwean context.

KEY TERMS

Hope; Zimbabwean crisis; Daniel 9; African Biblical Hermeneutics; Apocalyptic literature; Second Temple Judaism; Context; Desolation, Historical Criticism; Hermeneutics of appropriation.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Dr Simukai Shamu and his family
for their unwavering support throughout the study

ABBREVIATIONS

AAT: The American Apocalyptic Tradition

ABH: African Biblical Hermeneutics

Acta theol: Acta Theologica

Afr Aff: African Affairs

Afr J Polit Sci: African Journal of Political Science

Afr J Sci Technol. Innov. Dev.: African Journal of Science, Technology, Innovation and Development

Afr Sec Rev: African Security Review

Afr Secur: *African Security Studies*

Afr Stud Q: African Studies Quarterly

Afr Today: Africa Today

Afri J Polit Sci: African Journal of Political Science

AHS: Advances in Historical Studies

AJCR: African Journal of Conflict Resolution

AJPSIR: African Journal of Political Science and International Relations

AJT: The Asian Journal of Theology

Ann Assoc Am Georgr: Annals of the Association of American Geographers

APJ: Africa Policy Journal

AQ: Australian Quarterly

ASC: UCLA James S. Coleman African Studies Centre

ASR: African Studies Review

AU: African Union

AUDJ: Acta Universitatis Danibius Juridica

AUSS: Andrews University Seminary Studies

BCE: Before Common Era

Bibl. Sacra: Bibliotheca Sacra

BJEFM: British Journal of Economic Finance and Management Sciences

BJPoIS: British Journal of Political Science

Black Theol: Black Theology

Br J Polit Sci: British Journal of Political Science

BSJ: Biblical Studies Journal

Bull Biblic Res: Bulletin for Biblical Research

Cato J: Cato Journal

CBQ: The Catholic Biblical Quarterly

CCC: Citizens Coalition for Change

CE: Common Era

CFR: Council on Foreign Relations

CID: Criminal Investigation Department

CIO: Central Intelligence Organisation

CIZ: Crisis in Zimbabwe

CODESRIA: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa

Cognit Ther Res: Cognitive Therapy and Research

CTJ: Calvin Theological Journal

Curr Hist: Current History

Dev Soc: Development and Society

DRC: Democratic Republic of Congo

ECAS4: 4th European Conference on Africa Studies

ESAP: Economic Structural Adjustment Program

Eur Sci J: European Scientific Journal

EVQU: Evangelical Quarterly

FFWA: The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs

Fieldwork Relig: Fieldwork in Religion

FTLRP: Fast Track Land Reform Program

Georget J Int Aff: George Town Journal of International Affairs

HHR: Health and Human Rights Journal

HIR: Harvard International Review

Hist. Workshop J.: History Workshop Journal

HRQ: Human Rights Quarterly

HTS: Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies

IJAR: International Journal of Advanced Research and Publications

IJHSS: International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences

IJOPAGG: International Journal of Politics and Good Governance

IJPSG: International Journal of Politics and Good Governance

IJST: International Journal of Systematic Theology

Int J Polit Cult Soc: International Journal of Politics, Culture, and society

Interpret – J: Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology

IOSR-JEF: IOSR Journal of Economics and Finance

ISSI: Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad

J Afr Cult: Journal of the African Cultural Studies

J Afr Law: Journal of African Law

J Agrar Chang: Journal of Agrarian Change

J Black Stud: Journal of Black Studies

J Contem Afr: Journal of Contemporary African Studies

J Democr: Journal of Democracy

J Dev Soc: Journal of Developing Societies

J East Afr Stud: Journal of Eastern African Studies

J Mod Afr: The Journal of Modern African Studies

J Soc DevAfr: Journal of Social Development in Africa

J Soc Sci: Journal of Social Sciences

J South Afr Stud: Journal of Southern African Studies

J Theol: A Journal of Theology

JAAS: Journal of Asia and African Studies

JAH: The Journal of African History

JAMS: Journal of African Media Studies

JASPS: Journal of Administrative Sciences and Policy Studies

JASPS: Journal of Administrative Studies and Policy Studies

JBL: Journal of Biblical Literature

JESOT: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament

JESOTS: Journal for the Evangelical Study of the Old Testament

JETS: Journal of the Evangelical Society

JLS: Journal of Literary Studies

JMAS: The Journal of Modern African Studies.

JOC: Joint Military Command

JPAS: The Journal of Pan African Studies

JSJ: Journal for the Study of Judaism

JSOT: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament

JSSR: Journal for the Study of Religion

JSSSR: Journal of the Studies in Social Sciences and Humanities

JTSA: Journal of Theology for Southern Africa

KOERS: Bulletin for Christian Scholarship

MDC-A: Movement for Democratic Change – Arthur Mutambara

MDC-T Movement for Democratic Change- Tsvangirai

Methodist Hist.: Methodist history

MJT: Midwestern Journal of Theology

NIV: New International Version

OM: Operation Murambatsvina (Operation restore order)

OTE: Old Testament Essays

Peasant Stud: Journal of Peasant Studies

Pharos J Theol: Pharos Journal of Theology

PRSt: Perspectives of Religious Studies

PT: Political Theology

Q J Austrian Econ.: Quarterly Journal of Austrian Economic

Restor Q: Restoration Quarterly

Rev Hum Aff: Review of Human Affairs

Rev Hum Factor Stud: Review of Human Factor Studies

ROAPE: Review of African Political Economy

SADC: Southern African Development Cooperation

SBL: Society of Biblical Literature

Scand J Old Testam: Scandinavian Journal of Old Testament

SHE: Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae

SRSA: Strategic Review for Southern Africa

Stud Tribes Tribals: Studies of Tribes and Tribals

Stud Christ Ethics: Studies in Christian Ethics

TJ: Theological Journal

TMSJ: The Master's Seminary Journal

Track Two: CACPC: Track Two: Constructive Approaches to Community and Political Conflict

Trans Inst Br Geogr: Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers

TrinJ: Trinity Journal

TRP: Town and Regional Planning

TWQ: Third World Quarterly

Wash Q: Washington Quarterly

West J Commun.: Western Journal of Communication

WJEH: World Journal of Education and Humanities

WTJ: The Westminster Theological Journal

ZANLA: Zimbabwe National Liberation Army

ZANU-PF: Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front)

ZAPU: Zimbabwe People's Union

ZATW/ZAW: Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

ZIPRA: Zimbabwe People's Liberation Army

ZWD: Zimbabwean Dollar

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1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The 21st century Zimbabwean context is characterised by crisis (Dzimiri 2017:51). The researcher is a citizen of Zimbabwe, who is greatly concerned about how the majority of Zimbabwean citizens experiencing hopelessness may remain hopeful in the face of a deep socio-economic and political crisis[1] (Mude & Chigora 2013:27; Fenga & Wepener 2018:1-8), which some scholars have named 'Zimbabwean Crisis'[2] (Chitando 2010; Maposa, Sibanda & Makahamadze 2011:250; Rugwiji 2017:16; 2020:6; Paradza 2019:1-8; Moro 2013:68). The crisis in Zimbabwe is blamed mainly on poor governance, political polarisation and corruption that have resulted in hyperinflation (Bratton & Masunungure 2008; Hanke 2008; Makochekanwa 2016:1250-1260; Maunganidze et al 2021:2), politically motivated violence as well as a general breakdown of law and order (Ndlela 2005:74). The Zimbabwean nation that was under British colonial subordination for several decades is once again subjected to the power of native aristocrats who, by holding the reins of power, have quenched their appetite for self-aggrandizement (Musendekwa 2018:6).

By 2002, Zimbabwe was left only with internal insurgence to account for a failed state (Rotberg 2002:93). Dube, Manatsa and Dziva (2013:6, 10) point out that Zimbabwe qualified to be ranked as a failed state due to an escalation of "intensive brutality and violence" during the first decade of the new millennium. Zimbabwe was ranked as the world's sixth failed state in 2011 by the United States.

Zimbabwe obtained independence from the British colonial settlers in 1980. Political independence came at a time when there were two major political parties operating on tribal grounds—the Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front) (ZANU-PF),

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[1] It is also regarded by CMI BRIEF (2010: 1-4) as a multi-layered crisis, as alternating between a socio-economic and a political crisis.
[2] The "Zimbabwean crisis" is also referred to as "Zimbabwe's crisis" (Dzimiri 2017:61-69).

representing the Shona people under the leadership of Robert Mugabe constituted the majority in the cabinet and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU). There is a myth that ZAPU represented the Ndebele but had a minority representation in the government (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012:543). Rivalry between the two political parties triggered ethnic violence against the Ndebele people, resulting in a civil war between the Zimbabwe National Liberation Army (ZANLA) and Zimbabwe People's Liberation Army (ZIPRA) between 1983 and 1987. During the war, approximately 20 000 people were massacred in Matabeleland and some parts of Midlands. The war was code-named Gukurahundi (CCJP & LRF 1997:61; Gavin 2007:6; Brett 2008:13; Ngwenya & Harris 2015:36). According to Ngwenya and Harris (2015:42), the trauma and anger was transmitted from one generation to another due to the "shared mental representation of traumatic past event".

Mugabe's misrule was severely felt and there was a prediction that the end of Mugabe's era could produce several scenarios, including the handpicking of a successor, his death, coup or chaos (Todd & Stewart 2006:22). Predictions of the future were blurred as hope and despair intermixed.

Mugabe's misrule led to an economic decline that was caused by an unplanned 1997 payment of the liberation war veterans. Zimbabwe was subsequently suspended from the Commonwealth (Kanyenze, Chitambara & Tyson 2017:3; Cox 2005:35-36). The Zimbabwean dollar crashed by losing 71,5% of its value against the United States dollar (Kanyenze, Chitambara & Tyson 2017:3). This situation prompted dissatisfaction within the civil society coalition. The crisis was exacerbated by Zimbabwe's participation in the war of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in August 1998, the war that aggravated an already declining economy (Kanyenze, Chitambara & Tyson 2017:3).

The 'fast track' land reform program that displaced white commercial farmers attracted condemnation by Western countries, which then imposed sanctions on the political leaders and plunged the country into economic depression that crippled the agricultural economy. The country that was once the breadbasket of the Southern African region has

been reduced to one of Africa's basket cases (Gunda 2018:13; Sachikonye 2002:14). As a result, Mugabe's rule was terminated in 2017, following mass protests and the intervention of the army. Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, who happened to be the leader of the faction that opposed Mugabe, then rose to power.

Unemployment, economic hardships and victimisation resulted in a mass exodus, with over three million professionals relocating to neighbouring countries and abroad as asylum seekers, some of whom were eventually employed. From 2000 to 2019, Zimbabwe has been ranked No. 10 out of 157 countries under the brain drain indices (Lamarche, Toysen & Wishart 2019:10).

The ZANU-PF government under Mnanganwa also failed to address the crisis engendered by economic and social hardships. As a result, the legitimacy of Munangagwa's leadership was severely disputed such that hopes for change were invested in the opposition party (Lamarche, Toysen & Wishart 2019:14).

Zimbabwe has been experiencing a crisis that is marked by suffering, poverty, unemployment, economic meltdown, violence, victimisation, abduction, corruption and bad governance, just to mention but a few. A country that obtained independence from Ian Douglas Smith when ZWD 0,47 was equivalent to US$1 drastically deteriorated to produce the worst economy in the world by October 2008 (Fenga & Wepener 2018:3). The government blamed the precipitous economic regression on external forces and drought whereas, in real terms, it was the outcome of misrule (Clemens & Todd 2005:1-4).

The current 21st century worldview promotes pluralistic interpretations of the biblical text since the context of Bible readers contributes to how they interpret any chosen biblical text. Whereas there is hopelessness among Zimbabweans that are not aligned to the ruling party (The Catholic Bishops Pastoral Letter 2019:1), the book of Daniel, that is characterised by "elements of apocalyptic worldview" (Murphy 2012:14), may have the potential to stimulate hope for a brighter future. I am thus of the view that the apocalypse

of Daniel (cf. Chapter 9 for the purpose of the present investigation), as literature of hope (Adler 1996:3; Schwab 2006:13; De Villiers 2016:240), may be used to address the Zimbabwean crisis. In particular, the prayer in Daniel 9 that seeks to fulfil the promises communicated in Jeremiah and the subsequent response to the prayer, triggered the researcher's interest to examine critically the potential of using Daniel 9 to generate the much-needed hope amidst Zimbabwe's socio-politico-economic crisis and in the context of the marginalised members of the opposition party - those communities which highly esteem the sacred texts of Christianity.[3]

The reason for choosing Daniel 9 from the whole apocalyptic section of the book is to make a case along the lines suggested by Boccaccini (2002) that Daniel 9 occupies a prominent place within this apocalyptic section. The position of Chapter 9 at the centre of Chapters 8 and 10-12 shows that it is significantly placed at the point where revelation shifted from dreams to literature. As such, it is critical for suffering communities to seek guidance from the literature.

The undertaking of the present research has been stimulated by my interest in offering hope to some Zimbabwean citizens who are in despair. Hence, the title of the present study is, "Hope Amidst Crisis: Reading Daniel 9 in the 21st Century Zimbabwean Context". The research question was thus formulated as follows: *"Why would the findings of a historical critical reading of Daniel 9 be considered appropriate for stimulating hope in a hopeless 21st century Zimbabwean context if read through a contextual lens?"*

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
The objectives of this study are to:

- Evaluate the extent of research on the 21st century Zimbabwean crisis and of hope in the context of the book of Daniel;
- Examine the context of crisis and hopelessness of some 21st century Zimbabweans;

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[3] International Religious Report (2022) estimates Zimbabwe's 2022 population to be 15 million. About 86% of the population are Christians.

- Explain the potential of the historical critical exegesis of Daniel 9 to empower some 21st Zimbabweans/ to instil hope in some Zimbabweans who are experiencing hopelessness today; and

- Explore how the outcomes of a historical criticism of Daniel 9 can be contextually appropriated with a view to generate hope in the 21st century Zimbabwe context of hopelessness.

1.3 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Daniel 9 was written to a people experiencing hopelessness. Thus, the appropriation of the findings of a historical critical reading of Daniel 9 to the seemingly hopeless situation of members of the opposition parties of the 21st century Zimbabwean context of crisis may be ideal for generating hope. Considering the relevance of the historical context of Daniel 9, a text that was written for a second century BCE audience to stimulate hope may also serve the same purpose in the Zimbabwean opposition politics especially among Christians who uphold the authority of Scripture.

1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Van der Merwe (2015:2), hermeneutical principles in the 21st century suggest a shift from Western to contextual approaches. I concur with Van der Merwe's view that contextual approaches allow the reader to deal with contemporary issues as intrinsically endowed in the text's meaning. The methodology deployed in this research is first and foremost a contextual approach which will benefit mainly from insights from African Biblical Hermeneutics (ABH) as well as historical critical exegesis. Adamo (2015:33) describes ABH also as "African cultural hermeneutics or African biblical transformational hermeneutics or African Biblical studies". Adamo thus suggests a composite methodological approach that makes Africa the subject of biblical interpretation. In this research, ABH would also recognise historical critical methodology as a methodology that has a role to play in Africa (Holter 2011:377-389). Rugwiji (2013:20) affirms the necessity of historical criticism in interpreting biblical texts as it considers the role of the biblical audience. One would thus argue that interpretation in a reader's context could not be done independently of the context in which the biblical text emerged.

1.4.1 African biblical hermeneutical approach

1.4.1.1 Defining African biblical hermeneutical approach

African Biblical Hermeneutics originated as an African alternative to Western methodologies of the 17th century such as the historical-critical method and the literary approaches of the 20th century. According to Ukpong (1999:313), during the mid-20th century, the Western methodologies gained popularity in biblical interpretation, corresponding with the period African countries began to gain independence and establish universities. The establishment of African universities brought with it the need for contextualisation (Onwu 1985:35). The earliest record of ABH can be traced to the 1930s (Ukpong 1999:313).

Adamo (2015:32) defines ABH as "the principle of interpretation of the Bible for transformation in Africa". A shift to ABH occurred in the 1960s when African biblical scholars developed interest in the enculturation or contextualisation of the biblical traditions to create dialogue among diverse African cultures (Ossom-Batsa 1996:92). The need for ABH as a transformative approach is stimulated by the paradigm shift from traditional methodologies which are informed by Euro-American worldviews. African Biblical Hermeneutics emphasize the African context as the subject of exegesis.

The methodology has been prompted by the need to make the biblical text (or the exegetical findings) relevant to the African context, which is characterised by crises such as poverty and exploitation. The liberation struggles witnessed during the 1960s and 1970s brought political independence but sub-Saharan Africa especially, continues to encounter socio-political-economic crises. It is in this context of suffering that biblical interpreters seek to generate hope (Ossom-Batsa 1996:93). According to Nyiawung (2013:5), the ABH approach provides opportunities to ask new questions in order to respond to the concerns raised therein. An African reader's movement between text and context is prompted by various issues unique to Africa including tribal biases, ideological and theological orientation, missionary heritage and ecclesiastical-theological heritage (Meanan 2014:260). Mosala (1989:67) suggests that ABH is prompted by blackness and

the struggle for liberation. Mofokeng (1988:34) says, "When the white man came to our country he had the Bible and we had the land. The white man said to us 'let us pray'. After opening our eyes, the white man had the land and we had the Bible". From this quotation, it is critical to note that the Bible was used by colonial governments as a tool to colonise Africa. The Bible has since been regarded as authoritative by Western theological traditions.

However, when Daniel 9 is interpreted in the Zimbabwean context of hopelessness, it may provide hope. The apocalyptic nature of the book of Daniel makes it a book that brings hope to its audience in times of crisis (Schwab 2006:13; De Villiers 2016:240; Adler 1996:3).

African biblical hermeneutics is viewed by Nyiawung (2013:1) as "an approach in biblical criticism, which takes the African worldview into consideration." Traditionally, emphasis is placed on the context of the text's production. However, there has been a paradigm shift from emphasising the context of the author to the context of the readers. Nyiamung (2013:1) argues that the African biblical hermeneutical approach aims to "blend between the historical data of the text, its sociological concerns and the contextual realities of the subject of exegesis". Ottuh and Idemudia (2001:3) concur that there is a need for blending, noting that African biblical scholars can mutually engage Western methodologies, for example, the findings of historical critical tools and their use. In this research, historical critical exegesis is employed to complement the existing findings.

According to Ossom-Batsa (1996:92), ABH is founded on "the framework of biblical hermeneutics, namely, the art of interpreting a biblical text in order to understand its original meaning and then delineate its significance for contemporary audience". Thus, the traditional approaches may lack contextual relevance in Africa. Dietrich and Luz (2002: ix) argue that traditional approaches are abstract, as they focus on reconstructing the past and their problems, rather than the contextual problems of ordinary people. However, historical critical exegesis cannot be ignored in the process of interpretation, as it is critical for creating dialogue. Snoek (2009:103) suggests that creating dialogue

would help the reader to scrutinise personal assumptions critically. Adamo (2005:1) argues that the goals of individual readers are influenced by their experience, culture and environment, thus, confirming the need for ABH as a methodology that is influenced by the African context.

According to Ukpong (2002:17), Western methodologies and African methodologies coexist and therefore have continuous interdependencies. This observation implies that ABH is not done in an exegetical vacuum. Though ABH may also involve the traditional historical critical method of analysing the text, African biblical scholars tend to identify with certain layers of the text that are relevant to contextual demands. African Biblical Hermeneutics does not presuppose exclusivity but, rather, engages in dialogue with traditional approaches. In the current research, the ABH echoes the biblical voices differently to produce unique meanings as informed by contextual influence. The context of readers makes them relate to textual layers that seem to be contextually relevant. Interpretation is informed by individual circumstances and experiences. In this way, the exegetical process produces new and unique insights that are contextually meaningful.

1.4.1.2 Proponents of African Biblical Hermeneutics
Some proponents of ABH are informed by the impact of the colonisation of Africa by the West and they take a very harsh stance against the hegemonic structures that perpetuated interpretive methodologies and that continue to oppress Africans even after their political independence.[4]

Masenya [ngwan'a Mphahlele] and Ngwa (2018:2-3) give examples of great contributors to ABH from the year 2000 to 2017. These include Justin Ukpong, Chris Manus, David Tuesday Adamo, Gerald West, Virginia Fabella, Mercy Oduyoye, Musimbi Kanyoro, Teresa Okure, Musa Dube, Madipoane Masenya [ngwan'a Mphahlele], Dora Mbuwayesango, Mapula Lefa, Andrew Mbuvi, Jeremy Punt, Aliou Niang, Robert Wafula, Jesse Mugambi and John Chijioke Madubuko. All these scholars approached

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[4] Oppressive systems put in place by former freedom fighters that later rose to political leadership continued to uphold many people's suffering covertly. Some innocent persons are being terrorised, assaulted and kidnapped simply for opposing the powerful.

biblical studies from a vast array of methodologies that are triggered by the context of the scholars and range from black conscious and gender conscious, to political conscious approaches, among others.

Adamo (2018:xi) acknowledges Ukpong, Dube and West as the founders of ABH based on their research presentations at the Society of Biblical Studies (SBL) since 1986, before gaining wider influence among African scholars. Adamo himself is also regarded as a proponent scholar of ABH (Oladotun 2020:33).

1.4.1.3 Task of African Biblical Hermeneutics
The task of ABH is firstly to identify African interests in the biblical text (Ottuh & Idemudia 2021:9). African Biblical Hermeneutics responds to the needs of the readers in context (Adamo 2015:2). The interest of ABH is linked to the interpretation of the biblical text in a way that addresses the readers' contexts (Ukpong 2002:7). In contrast with the traditional approaches, ABH is in touch with the African context, whilst the traditional interpretation is not attached to the readers and interpreters' worldviews. As Brown (2007:9) clearly states, Western methodologies are abstract and not true to any specific context, that is, they separate the context of the academic enquiries from the contexts of ordinary readers (West 2009:29). Brown suggests that African scholars do theology by engaging the general readers in congregations so that they apply meanings of biblical texts to their own contexts. The emphasis here is on the need for a contextualised hermeneutics that does not simply alter the existing hermeneutical methodologies (Knoetze 2001:2; Brunsdon & Knoetze 2014:277). According to Brunsdon and Knoetze (2014:277), in contextual hermeneutics, "one can begin to realize that a few alterations are not sufficient, but a completely new hermeneutical key is needed to be relevant to the (new) 'ancient future' worldview in the context of Africa". This statement suggests that Africa should develop methodologies that have contextual relevance.

Similarly, Musendekwa and Rutoro (2020:71-84) propose a curriculum of theology for institutions of higher learning that is heritage-based and which explores various avenues for contextualising interpretation. These include physical heritage, cultural heritage and

communitarianism. The curriculum would not completely discard traditional methodologies but would draw insights that respond to contextual demands from them.

Secondly, ABH critiques the perpetuation of colonialism after the independence struggle under the guise of neo-colonialism[5] (Idemudia 2016:188). Mutumbuka (1981:xiii) describes neo-colonialism as the transition from colonialism whereby colonialism takes a new guise in Third World countries, which often becomes worse off when corruption and self-enrichment undermine freedom and truth. Colonialism imbued the colonial spirit of self-aggrandisement that made African leaders adopt colonialism at its worst. The colonial baton has been handed to indigenous leaders, who now perpetuate the oppressive structures of domination (Musendekwa 2016:107).

Thus, ABH challenges the ideologies of colonialism. Liberation from colonial bondage calls for liberation hermeneutics aimed at addressing socio-economic and political challenges (Resane 2018:4). Adamo (2015:34) describes ABH as "liberational and transformational", arguing that colonialism goes beyond the partition of the African continent and European domination; it entails also the colonisation of the African mind-set that is attuned to perpetual domination of the other (Adamo 2015:34). West (1999:12) argues that, "At the heart of liberation hermeneutics lays the interface between socially engaged readers and the lives of ordinary readers". Hermeneutics therefore aims to propagate the much-desired freedom from colonial domination which is perpetuated by some African leaders. Ramantswana (2016:179) acknowledges that African leaders have reproduced and held onto oppressive colonial systems and domination. Musendekwa (2016:81-107) agrees that colonisation is an obstacle to civilisation. Many political leaders, who suffered the atrocities of colonial bondage, are even more atrocious and more oppressive than their oppressors.

African Biblical Hermeneutics responds to postcolonial governments when they become counter-oppressive by imposing policies that scared European settlers, resulting in the

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[5] Neo-colonialism is regarded as the imposition of new forms of colonialism by the former colonisers. In Zimbabwe, colonisation was perpetuated by the political leaders.

closure of industries and the collapse of the agricultural sector.[6] African Biblical Hermeneutics issues a wake-up call for African scholars to develop methodologies that deliver people from oppressive regimes.

Thirdly, the task of ABH is to reappraise biblical heritage and African tradition to correct the ideological conditioning of the Euro-American methodologies. Adamo (2015:35) considers the example of the association of Africans with the sin of Ham, through which Africans are viewed as slaves. Reclaiming the biblical heritage is an appeal to understand biblical texts in their historical contexts before applying them to the context of present day readers. This means that African readers may not depend on Western contexts that are not in touch with the African context.

Fourthly, ABH aims to promote African culture and African religious identity, without imposing Western cultural and religious traditions (cf. Sugirtharajah 1999:11). Reading the Bible is informed by the cultural and religious context of a reader. African Biblical Hermeneutic promotes African identity as well as belief systems and religious traditions of Africa which have often been castigated as syncretistic. However, I am of the view that reading from one's own contextual background can be beneficial.

1.4.1.4 Reading with Zimbabwean contextual lens

I therefore infer that ABH permits me to read the Bible with a Zimbabwean contextual lens (ZCL) that employs a variety of hermeneutical approaches that appropriate the biblical text to the contemporary Zimbabwean context. A Zimbabwean contextual lens in this thesis emphasises the relevance of the Zimbabwean context as the basis for understanding the biblical text which, in this case, is the text of Daniel 9. I have noted that Zimbabwe is experiencing a socio-economic and political crisis. Such a context of crisis and hopelessness calls for a message of hope. The book of Daniel is a book of hope (Birch et al 1999:44; Koester 2011:1; Satre 2011:87; Gray 2017:211). Reading Daniel 9 may bring the much-needed hope in the face of despair.

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[6] The socio-economic crisis in Zimbabwe seems to be more intense than that of any other African country.

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In my Master of Theology thesis, I noted that messianic expectations are prophetic responses to crises (Musendekwa 2011:1). That was followed by a publication which described the messianic characterisation of Mugabe as rhetorical propaganda that legitimised his authority in crises (Musendekwa 2018:1-17). Expectations regarding liberation are manipulated by controlling the narrative to legitimise those who liberated the country from colonial bondage. Vengeyi (2013:25) notes that liberation biblical hermeneutics is committed to addressing contemporary struggles and suggests that a Hermeneutics of Appropriation in religion and biblical interpretation can help to interpret socio-economic and political crisis. He notes that in the ongoing struggle for liberation, some church leaders are often silenced by the political elites who offer them money. They no longer stand for the truth.

According to Vengeyi (2013:42), Hermeneutics of Appropriation interrogate the historical, cultural and ideological perspectives of the readers of biblical texts who then appropriate them by identifying similarities and differences between their own historical contexts and those of biblical texts. Rugwiji (2020:1) views Hermeneutics of Appropriation as a methodology used to analyse the socio-economic and political situations in biblical texts and critically appropriate them to the contemporary situation, and in this case, the Zimbabwean context. It is, therefore, critical to engage in a historical reading of a chosen biblical text to find the appropriateness of the text to the present-day reader's context. Gunda (2010:56-57) avers that "hermeneutics help[s] one in the appropriation of the biblical injunctions for their own contexts".

Musendekwa and Rutoro (2020:76) legitimise a heritage-based theology curriculum which is aligned to contextual needs. A heritage-based theology curriculum constitutes methodologies that seek to limit the current colonial legacies. Colonial legacies continue to expose the now independent Zimbabwean state to perpetual colonial dominance by those who hold the reins of power (Musendekwa & Rutoro 2020:79). Thus, adopting a methodology that responds to the colonial legacies is imperative. Vengeyi therefore adopts an "*aluta continua* biblical hermeneutics for liberation" that begins with the experience of those who are oppressed and suffering (2013:19). Suffering is perpetuated

by the nationalist state which Moyo (1992:307) regards as neo-colonial by definition. Hope amidst crisis, in this case, is not an escapist way of side-lining crisis, but a method of coping with a situation that may not be approached violently, but passively as in the book of Daniel (Portier-Young 2011:210-215). The Zimbabwean lens should help the reader to find the place of God in crises (Musendekwa & Munamati 2021:226). In order to understand the book of Daniel, it is significant to use historical criticism also to probe the context in which the text was produced.

1.4.2 Historical criticism

The Enlightenment period, which is also known as the "Age of Reason", roughly stretches from 1680 to 1799. The Enlightenment period resulted in the emergence of historical criticism as a broad approach housing different historical methodologies that were birthed by historical thinking and also influenced by romanticism (Bartholomew 1998:22). According to Zinke (1981), the historical critical method has been undergoing development since the Enlightenment period. The historian unravels what happened in the past based on evidence that is external to the Bible. The process of historical criticism thus entails the interrogation and evaluation of the past which is accessible to the historian. Historical criticism was popularised by Ernest Troeltsch towards the end of the 19th century. He represented historicism mainly within liberal theology (Zinke 1981) but William Robertson Smith is credited with making the approach more familiar to the public through his articles in the Encyclopaedia Britannica. However, the ground-breaking work was done by other scholars long before the publication of his articles. He might not have introduced the term itself but he argued for an evolutionary view of the history of Israel in the sense that biblical writings are a product of "gradual development of religion of revelation" (Portier-Young 2011:179). By gradual development, he emphasises the notion that revelation is not instantaneous, but is developed over a space of time.

Historical criticism, according to Wright (1992:29), can be done based on three "defining elements": a) evaluation of contextual evidence that is exhibited by the text itself and not external or traditional sources, b) the researcher's willingness to "acknowledge the possibility that historical matters may be different from what is claimed by the text and

tradition surrounding it" and c) the open-endedness of the critical framework which calls for revision and review of conclusions.

Historical criticism is summarised by Hayes and Holladay (1982:41) as follows:

> The historical criticism of documents proceeds on the basis of two related assumptions or perspectives. These may be designated the internal historical and external aspects of a document. The internal historical aspects of a document are related to the historical cultural dimensions described or depicted in the texts. The external historical aspects of a document are related to the historical, cultural and geographical context in which the document was produced.

The above quotation shows the significance of the historical and literary worlds of the text in interpreting the text in the present context of the reader. In my view, historical criticism, therefore, would be critical for ABH. The reasons for this statement are stated in the following paragraphs.

1.4.2.1 Methodological significance of historical criticism

Historical criticism has gained prominence among biblical scholars but because it aims at reconstructing the historical setting from which the biblical texts originated, it undermines the traditions that have been shaped by the Christian faith. Levenson (1993:4) argues that "the price of recovering the historical context of the sacred books has been the erosion of the largest literary context that undergirds the traditions that claim to be based upon them". The Bible was intended originally to speak to people of different languages from ours but it continued to find expression through progressive revelation,[7] an aspect that cannot be validated by historical criticism. The Bible is only relevant to us when interpreted. Hence, the ethics of interpretation is of utmost importance. Since most Christian traditions regard the Bible as the revealed word of God to ancient Israel which was God's nation, each passage was intended for a particular historical context.

Historical criticism resulted from the 'historical awareness' in which the meaning and the truth of the text is assessed. Such a historical awareness became a significant methodology of biblical exegesis during the medieval period. The flourishing of human

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7 According to Payne (1980:18), progressive revelation is when "God graciously unfolded both his redemption and His revelation in ways corresponding to man's capacities to receive them"

science during the Renaissance resulted in "the rediscovery of the Greek and Roman classics" and the acceptance of the principle of going back to the sources and "the return to the Bible and sola scriptura", a methodology practised by the Reformers (Barton 1995:62). Barton (1995:62) states that, "This setting of Scripture over and against tradition and institution characteristic of the Reformers was a feature of Enlightenment[8] as well, but now historical reason was used as a tool of scepticism to undermine traditional faith".

The primary goal of historical criticism is to discover the literal meaning of the biblical text. Snyman (1998:343-362) however points out the problematic nature of literal meanings. Interpretation needs to engage in a careful investigation of the intended meaning of the sacred writing (Thiselton 1980:11). The concept of intended meaning is based on the earlier assumption of historical criticism that the text has a single meaning. Historical reason confirms the significance of interpreting biblical texts since what the text means depends on what the text meant. It is also significant in the sense that it confirms that biblical narratives are not mere fiction. The significance of historical criticism is theological since it raises awareness of the "culturally conditioned" nature of biblical texts and subsequent interpretations (Barton 1995:65-66).

Thus, historical criticism can be defined as the method of interrogating sources to produce objective interpretation. Primarily, it aims at discovering the literal sense of a biblical text which was at the same time the meaning which the author intended for his audience (Donahue 1991:20). However, there is a challenge in obtaining the objective literal sense of a story which includes not only external evidence, but also "internal feelings, impressions and value-judgements" of the storyteller (Davies 1993:13).

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[8] Brown (2007:91) notes that the term Enlightenment is characterised by "attitudes and opinions that can be traced to the sixteenth century". He also alludes that Enlightenment interpretation of the Bible was characterised by "the shift from treating the Bible as inspired word of God" to viewing it as "a collection of historical documents", which could be analysed just as secular literature. That period is also known as the 'age of reason' and associated with philosophers such as Descartes. According to Rogerson (2007:280), "Enlightenment is usually understood as a movement among intellectuals in Europe beginning in the 17th century". Whereas Enlightenment is rooted in the 16th century, it flourished in the 17th century.

The Old Testament is understood by some of the Jews independently of the New Testament. There has been, however, paradigm shifts in interpretation especially by various reading communities and at different times in history. The Church leaders used to be the custodians of the Bible who could read it in the original languages of Hebrew, Greek and later, Latin. The allegorical interpretation of the Bible was then the major hermeneutical method.

Burridge (2007:353) points out that the Reformers rejected any other mode of interpretation than the literal interpretation of Scripture. Indeed, they could not have been part of historical criticism but in engaging in grammatical historical readings, which recognised historical referents, their reading related to historical criticism. In the attempt to seek the meaning of the ancient text in its historical context, the historic-critical method was developed. Spohn (1995:6) claims that more emphasis was placed on exegesis. Determining the original meaning or the meaning intended by the author should be as a result of a critical investigation of the text.

The emergence of historical criticism was due to the crisis of the Reformation paradigm. In the 17th and 18th centuries and the early decades of the 19th century, the emphasis was on reason in order to establish the distinctive feature of truth. 'The historical component' was recognised towards the end of the 18th century, a period that was marked by a strong development of historical consciousness and in which scholars critically questioned on the one hand the notion of historiography and on the other hand, history. Exponents of the revolution in historiography were George William Fredrich Hegel, Barthold Georg Niebuhr, Leopold von Rank and Johann Gustav Droysen (Spangenberg 2002:24).

On the question of history, Spangenberg (2002:25) notes that most scholars believed that the chronology which was compiled using the Bible was historically true. However, it was realised later that this chronology was incompatible with new discoveries and new views. Regarding theology, Spangenberg (2002:29) points out that the Reformers' presupposition that "their theology corresponded with that of the writers of the Bible did

not have a strong footing". Scholars discovered rather that the writers did not live during the period referred to in the Bible. Furthermore, the theology of the Reformers is representative of a particular era. From this point of view, the original context conditioned the text in a manner that could be appreciated by the original audience, an issue that the present reader should seriously take into consideration.

Thiselton (1992:224) notes Schleiermacher's contribution of the idea of "grammatical interpretation", which seeks to situate the text in its historical and literal or cultural context and which presumes that the historical context depicts primarily the author's language and that of the recipients. The literal or cultural context states that, "every word in a given location must be determined according to it being together with those surrounding it". Having noted the insufficiency of grammatical interpretation, Schleiermacher (1977:169) decided to supplement grammatical interpretation with what he called psychological interpretation in describing "holistic interpretations that seek out the personality and style of the author". As such, Schleiermacher (1977:99) considers both methodologies primarily important, as the interpreter may move back and forth the grammatical and psychological sides to form what he called the "hermeneutical circle". Osborne (2011:8) explains that the goal of Schleiermacher's approach is to enter into the world of the author. Schleiermacher (1977:104) argues that historical interpretation is the only method that does justice to the rootedness of the author in time and place.

The world of the author, which is also regarded as the world behind the text, can be determined by studying the historical situation that influenced the writer. Thiselton (1995:10-36) argues that the text can be liberated from manipulation by those who use biblical material in support of their own desires. However, he also notes that scholars have called for a hermeneutical skill which seeks to identify linguistic patterns in the Bible and reconstruct the historical circumstances of a biblical discourse rather than depending on their own interpersonal perspectives. The goal is to free all historical inquiry from issues of theology and doctrine. This called for examination of the origins, date, authorship, purpose and textual history of each book. The focus shifted towards a pluralistic worldview whereby individual readers understand the text differently.

For Chilton (1995:37-60), traditio-historical interpretation, as a methodology, entails considering the texts as having been reserved, collected, annotated, translated, expounded and otherwise interpreted. Traditio-historical criticism aims at explaining the history that made up the text. Understanding the traditions helps one to understand the text. Chilton further explores various circles of tradition traceable in a biblical text to support his point. A wise reading of the biblical text calls for the application of historical skills and sensitivity towards the past. Reading with awareness of history is considered useful in determining the meaning of the text. Foucault's theory of "temporal history" suggests that historical awareness or consciousness is interrupted by the context in which history is viewed and interpreted. Moreover, facts in historical documents could be fictional and do not have constant meaning in time and space (Chen 2020:94).

Historical awareness is supported by the fact that the biblical historical documents have their own ways of interpreting the past. Historical awareness informs the need for historical criticism confirming that it is not merely realistic fiction but refers to the realities outside or behind the narrative. Historical criticism has theological importance as it makes the reader aware of the culturally conditioned nature of the text and its interpretation. It is therefore clear that historical criticism incorporates other disciplines from human sciences. The text is also regarded as not just historically conditioned but also socially and culturally conditioned. According to Schüssler Fiorenza (1984:15), the authors tainted the text with their preconceived ideas in such a way that the text became the interpretation of the authors. In this way, Schüssler Fiorenza affirms the notion that the text will never be free of prejudice, that is, in the sense that the author had certain biases, preconceived ideas. Similarly, the reader does not approach a text as *tabula rasa*. Readers import their generational or individual prejudices to the understanding of the text. Reading is an interactive interpretation in which the prejudice of one generation or individual is challenged by the prejudices of another, consecutively. Schüssler Fiorenza (1984:15) also argues that the biblical history is shaped by androcentric constructions and she acknowledges the need "to clarify the various positions of our time in order to be

relevant to our contemporaries" (2000:344). She suggests a dynamic interpretive worldview in which readers find the meaning of biblical texts.

Even if memory were *tabular rasa,* comprehension would vary from time to time and from one person to another based on their contextual influences. The combination of the cultural milieu of the author and that of the reader would bring about a huge gap between what the text said and what the text is saying. Historical criticism calls the interpreter to focus on cause and effect over time (diachronic), primarily aiming at what meaning is generated by social actors in relation to one another through a web of culturally determined social systems.

Barth (1956:157) places the doctrine of reconciliation in a historical setting in which atonement is regarded as history. He says atonement "is indeed truth, but truth actualized in history and revealed in this history as such – revealed, therefore as history". Barth's theology has been a subject of scholarly debates which see his theology as upholding historical criticism. Smith (1997:14) evaluates Karl Barth's position with regard to the significance of historical criticism in biblical interpretation. Smith sees historical criticism as "a vital building block in any interpretation". At the initial stage, the interpreter seeks to understand the text in its original historical setting. However, interpretation must go beyond discovering "the witness to revelation". Discovering the initial intention of the text is therefore the first move in discovering the initial intention of the author.

1.4.2.2 The context of historical criticism
The context of historical criticism involves the following:
- **The world of the text, story world or textual world**
The world of the text is the story world or historical world depicting the location where the story took place. It is limited by the boundaries of the text. One can compare it to a stage set with décor in order to create an illusion of a certain place, real or imaginary. Jarick (2013:214) uses the term "story world" to analyse the process of reading a text intratextually as against reading it intertextually. Intratextuality calls for reading a book independently of other biblical books. Williams (2013: vii) adapts the term "story world"

to explain that the text is a final product of an imaginative act. If a text is the product of an imaginative process, then, there is the problem of historicity. A true historical approach goes beyond the boundaries set by the text and invokes evidence from archaeology, cognate textual material and even sociology to 'construct' a plausible setting for the text.

The German existentialist philosopher, Heidegger (1962:341-345) has examined the problem of historicity, existentially and ontologically. Heidegger acknowledges the temporality of historicity. The problem of the historicity of biblical and ancient documents is that these texts originated as oral texts and, thus, potentially have anachronisms. According to Van der Toorn (2009:51-52), the Bible is a product of a scribal culture that incorporates views and insights from their contexts. The question of the historical setting of the author became an interesting phenomenon towards the end of the Middle Ages, but before then, the Bible was regarded simply as the word of God. The concern then was about, first and foremost the authority rather than the authenticity of the text. The notion of "authenticity" is thus a modern concern (Van der Toorn 2009:27).

There are at present various views about the historicity of the Bible. There are three major schools namely, the orthodox or conservatives who uphold the maximalist view that the Bible is historically accurate. The Old Testament is considered to originate supernaturally from God. These fundamentalists appeal to archaeological data and extra biblical records to confirm that the Old Testament is a truly historical record. The second school is the historical archaeological, which holds the centrist view that the Bible is generally historical. The third school is the historical reconstructionist, which upholds the minimalist view of Old Testament as history (Finkelstein & Mazor 2007; Hill & Walton 2009:68).

● **The world to which the text refers**
When the stage setting reflects a particular historical period which a historical reality referred to, it is regarded as the world to which the text refers. This world in relation to

the book of Daniel is the world of the Babylonian exile which situates the character of Daniel in the king's courts.

- **The world of the text's production**

The world of the text's production refers to the time and place of the author who wrote the specific text. It is neither the time when the story is thought to have taken place nor the stage on which it was produced. It is simply the world of the author of the script which was about to be written.

- **The world of the intended or real audience**

When the author composes a text, s/he writes to attract a vast array of readers. The text is written with an intended audience in mind. The word "audience" can be closely associated with the circle in which an author moves, making the readers part of his/her immediate environment.

1.4.2.3 Using historical criticism to handle the data

In the current research, I have already noted that I would use the Zimbabwean contextual lens to read Daniel 9. An appreciation of the historical context of Daniel would enable me to get a sense of the role of apocalyptic literature in the context of the production of the book of Daniel, the setting referred to in the book and the actual setting in which the book was written.

Traditionally, the book of Daniel is dated to the sixth century BCE. However, since the beginning of the 20th century, many more scholars have situated the book in the second century BCE. The fact that the book of Daniel is linked to this period in the history of the Jews made modern scholars aware of the social, political, economic and spiritual crises experienced by Second Temple Jews. Furthermore, the book of Daniel provides details about the second century BCE. Thus, it seems the allusions to "anointing the holy" and an "anointed one" (Dn 9:24-27) should be linked to events and persons from the second century BCE.

I will use the findings of historical critical research to comment on Daniel's context and reflect on how Daniel 9 may be used to stimulate hope amidst the crisis in Zimbabwe.

The rise of messianic expectations during the Maccabean era could serve as stimuli for creating and fostering hope. Daniel 9 may be seen as an example of how one can remain hopeful in difficult times.

In Daniel 9, the author let Daniel (the main character) read from Jeremiah and reinterpret the prophecy to fit the time in which the author himself lived. This prayer is then linked to the desecration of the Temple by Antiochus Epiphanes IV in 164 BCE. The prophecy of Jeremiah is thus reinterpreted in such a way that it relates to the period in which the author of the book of Daniel lived.

Porphyry, of whom we have no extant writings, seems to pre-empt modern research in assigning the book of Daniel to the second century BCE. It becomes possible to retell the stories of Daniel and apply them to a new situation. One may use these stories to encourage people in one's contemporary age not to lose hope, but to wait and trust that oppressors will not continue to rule. There is always light at the end of the tunnel.

I will try to understand the contents of Daniel 9 in its setting. Some of the findings have already been established and I will use those findings to appreciate the message of the book, specifically, Daniel 9 and relate them to my Zimbabwean context. Considering that the book of Daniel was written as a literature of hope, I would allow the setting of the text and that of my context to interact in the process of interpretation.

In this research, I use the Zimbabwean contextual lens to appropriate the historical critical exegesis of Daniel 9 to the 21st century Zimbabwean context. As already noted, a hermeneutic of appropriation is a methodology that is used critically to apply socio-economic and political problems in the biblical text to current realities. It is therefore crucial to conduct a historical critical study to determine if the text of Daniel 9 can be appropriated for the present-day reader's context. The context that created Daniel 9 and the Zimbabwean context may have something to share for the book to be relevant to the reader's context. The author and the reader will thus interact within thesocio-economic

and political contexts of present-day readers of Old Testament texts such as the text of Daniel 9.

1.5 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

1.5.1 Chapter One – introduction
The introductory chapter deals with methodological issues, initially provides the background to the problem, that is, the 21st century Zimbabwean context of hopelessness. In this chapter, I postulate that reading Daniel 9 with a Zimbabwean lens may generate hope. The Zimbabwean contextual lens is informed by the ABH which addresses African contextual issues, especially the responses of Zimbabwean scholars to the contemporary situation. A hermeneutic of appropriation, which draws from the historical-critical examination of Daniel 9 to the Zimbabwean context, will further shape the Zimbabwean lens.

1.5.2 Chapter Two – literature review
Chapter Two reflects the review of literature on hope in the 21st century Zimbabwean context of hopelessness. The literature review would identify potential knowledge gaps and methodological weaknesses of previous research and theories to justify the need for the current research. In this chapter, I engage in conversation with African scholars, particularly Zimbabwean scholars. I also examine the availability of literature that deals with hope from a biblical or theological perspective in order to address the Zimbabwean situation of hopelessness. Recent literature on the study of the book of Daniel will be reviewed. Since very little has been done by Zimbabwean scholars to address the contextual issue of hopelessness, I justify the need for reading Daniel 9 through a Zimbabwean lens to determine whether it has the capacity to generate hope for the 21st century Zimbabwe that is characterised by hopelessness.

1.5.3 Chapter Three – the Zimbabwean context of crisis
Chapter Three analyses the Zimbabwean context as the context of hopelessness, focusing on themes such as economic mismanagement, social depravity and political domination as main factors that contribute to the situation of hopelessness. I also unpack hopelessness as a key concept, while analysing the contribution of the government of

Zimbabwe in instituting policies that led to the social depravity, economic degradation and political domination. In this chapter, I also examine 21st century Zimbabwe from the Gukurahundi genocide of 1983–1987 in which about 20 000 people were massacred, leaving the consequences for later generations. Additionally, the economic decline that made Zimbabwe one of the worst economies in the whole world as well as the fast track land reform are evaluated in relation to the reduction of the former bread basket of Southern Africa to a basket case. The destruction of informal houses and industries in urban areas in order to disperse urban constituencies that were frequented by members of the opposition parties, are also analysed in this chapter.

1.5.4 Chapter Four –historical critical exegesis of Daniel 9

Chapter Four engages in a historical critical reading of Daniel 9 to identify the relevance of addressing crisis and hopeless situations of the 21st century Zimbabwe. Thus, how an existing historical critical analysis of the book of Daniel would inform, among others, the setting of the prayer of Daniel, the main character in the book, is carried out. Considering that the book of Daniel was written for the second century BCE Jews, it would thus have been intended to meet the needs of its intended readers during the time of domination and hegemony under the imperial power of the Greeks. The reliance on the past promises of restoration depicts a hopeful moment in which the seventy years of desolation would be fulfilled. The divine response and the postponement from 70 years to 490 years would resuscitate the once lost hope, making Daniel 9 a literature of hope.

1.5.5 Chapter Five – interpreting Daniel 9 in the Zimbabwean context

Chapter Five assesses the appropriation of the findings of the historical critical analysis of Daniel 9 in Chapter Four to the 21st century Zimbabwean context of hopelessness through a contextual lens. I have already postulated that reading the book of Daniel with a contextual lens may show that the book has something to offer. The long history of political oppression among the audience of Daniel 9 and the quest to end the desolation of Jerusalem can be appropriated in the Zimbabwean context of hopelessness with the with the possibility of instilling hope amidst the socio-economic and political crises. If apocalyptic literature generated hope, it could also have the capacity to give hope in present day contexts of hopelessness. The hopelessness of Daniel (the character) in

Daniel 9 relies on past promises to self-introspect where he and the nation went wrong. He confirmed from Scripture that the time for the end of the dissolution was over. Yahweh still had something planned for the future. Zimbabweans anticipated that independence would ensure the fulfilment of all the promises after the liberation struggle, only to find that things got worse. How can the book of Daniel still offer hope in the Zimbabwean crisis?

1.5.6 Chapter Six – recommendations and conclusions

Chapter Six is the final chapter which draws conclusions from the findings of this research. Possible recommendations for further studies are made. If at all, the book of Daniel can generate hope, then the Christian Scriptures find a significant place in generating hope in crisis situations in the 21st century.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Literature review evaluates the findings of related previous research in order to determine what is known and what is not yet known (Choga & Njaya 2004:36; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009:60; Magwa & Magwa 2015:36). As such, the researcher places himself/herself among other researchers (Ridley 2008:2). Based on the above description, literature review is an interactive scholarly study that seeks to establish any potential gap from existing scholarship in order to fill that gap with new knowledge. The focus of literature review in this chapter is to evaluate the extent of research on the 21st century Zimbabwean crisis and the concept of hope in the context of the book of Daniel.

Renowned academics on research, Magwa and Magwa (2015:37-38) offer reasons for literature review, which include, firstly, a conceptual appreciation as the basis of current research. The concepts to be used should be understood considering earlier research. The current literature review focuses on the study of apocalyptic literature and hopelessness in the Zimbabwean crisis as key concepts.

Secondly, literature review identifies knowledge gaps and weaknesses of previous research and theories in order to determine whether what has already been done can justify the possibility of further study and/or improvements. In this research, the literature review brings to light the methodologies that scholars have deployed in studying the book of Daniel. These include the doctrinal, historical critical and literary critical approaches. I am of the view that African biblical hermeneutical approaches can appropriate the book of Daniel to address Zimbabwean contextual issues. Earlier research would have been shaped by the social conditions of the time of research. Therefore, changing contexts would call for new solutions to existing challenges.

Thirdly, literature review enables one to determine the advantages and disadvantages of the research methodologies used by previous researchers to improve or discover the research strategy, technique and approach that are more appropriate for the investigation. This research focuses on current issues in Zimbabwe and calls for a methodology that enables the interpretation of Daniel 9 in the 21st century Zimbabwean context of hopelessness.

Fourthly, situating one's research in a context that has history would call for the study of the historical background of the research. In this research, the historical background of the book of Daniel informs the appropriation of Daniel 9 in a Zimbabwean context. When Daniel 9 is appropriated, it may generate hope, as it did in the world that produced the book.

Earlier research on the book of Daniel, particularly Daniel 9, has been done using Eurocentric methodologies such as historical criticism, textual criticism, literary criticism, etc. While these methodologies helped in textual analysis of crises, they do not directly respond to the crisis in Zimbabwe. The historical critical methodology, literary criticism and sociological-anthropological methodologies have contributed to the understanding of Daniel 9 in some situations of crisis. The current research aims to determine whether reading Daniel 9 through a critical-contextual lens can bring hope to the 21st century Zimbabwean context of hopelessness.

2.2 HOPELESSNESS IN ZIMBABWE

Hopelessness is one of the factors that cause depression. To distinguish it from other factors, it is called "hopelessness depression" and it affects individuals when what they highly desired to happen has failed (Abrahamson et al 1993:183). The individual is conditioned by helplessness to the extent that he/she is depressed. Hopelessness suggests that the hopeless individual or community does not have the potential to change the outcomes of "negative life events" (Gibb & Alloy 2006:264). Hopelessness is stimulated by the recurrence of unexpected outcomes of what was believed to be the solution to the

crisis (Abrahamson et al 1993:190). It is regarded as the major cause of depression (Abela et al 2009:364).

Hopelessness in Zimbabwe would be described as being conditioned by negative events that are dealt with in Chapter Three of this thesis. The nation is experiencing a socio-economic and political crisis that has led to hopelessness in the 21st century context. Such a crisis induces negativity in this life and exposes the nation to depression and despair. The condition of depression could be life threatening. Especially for those communities for whom the sacred texts of Christianity are highly esteemed, one is of the view that the text of Daniel 9 may still bring hope. Daniel understood that the perpetual exile was due to Israel's sin and only Yahweh could intervene and fulfil his promises.

2.3 HOPE AMIDST CRISIS

Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition (2003:3) held a Dialogue and Transition Conference with the hope that an inclusive national dialogue among political parties and civic society would lead to the reorganisation of the political framework. Dialogue, at that time, was a source of hope for a better Zimbabwe. Although it was observed that the ruling party was the main obstacle to meaningful dialogue (Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition 2003:24), Bishop Trevor E. C. Manhanga is said to decry the adoption of a common vision as source of hope for a better future (Coalition 2003:67). The fluidity of dialogue, like water, would nourish the stump of Zimbabwe's tree to produce some shoots (see Fig. 1 below). A Zimbabwean is likened to a stump to suggest the magnitude of the crisis which the dialogue did not quench. This is also a well-known biblical metaphor (Is 6:13; 11:1; 53:1-2; Job 14:8-9), which even occurs in one of the narratives in the book of Daniel (Dn 4:13-15, 26, 29-33). Although the nation is in a deplorable state, the study of Daniel 9 may generate hope.

The much-celebrated dialogue did not achieve the much-desired hope, but the front page to the report speaks volumes in its bid to communicate hope towards a better Zimbabwe.[9]

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[9] The bucket with water illustrates the dialogue that irrigates the stump – Zimbabwe, which is now regenerating into a tree again.
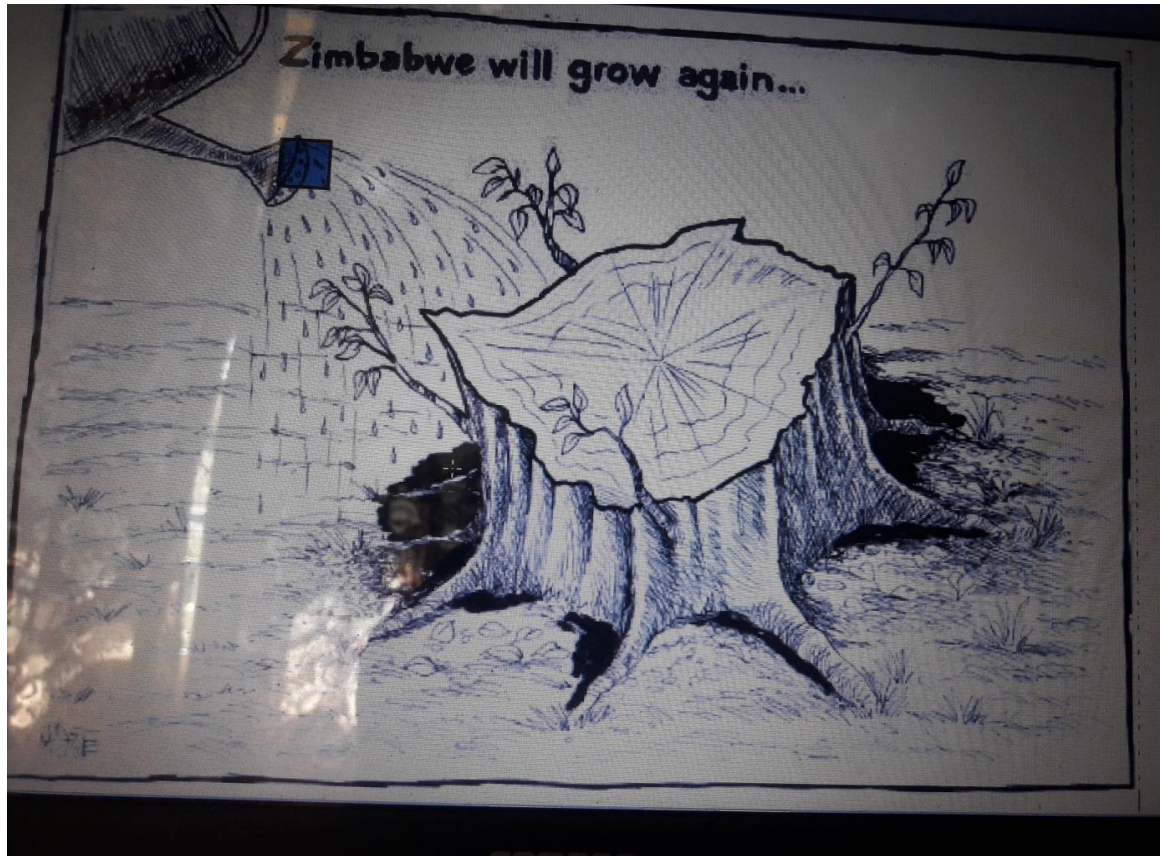
Fig. 2: 1 Source: Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition (2003, front page)

The Catholic Bishops Pastoral Letter (2019:1) lamented what it called "the dissipation of hope for a united nation and a promising future", as political actors failed to forge unity among Zimbabwean citizens across the political divide. It seems obvious that the nation was plunged into political despair during and after the military-assisted political change of November 2017. The preceding change ousted Robert Gabriel Mugabe and declared Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa as the President.

Earlier, it was mentioned that the messianic characterisation of Mugabe was a propaganda rhetoric intended to legitimise his authority in a situation of political and socio-economic crisis (Musendekwa 2018:1-17). Here, the messianic characterisation is a manipulation of the much-anticipated political figure that would influence the regime's change agenda. Similarly, the appropriation of African chieftainship ideals and spirituality to Mugabe paved way for self- legitimisation and deification (Mamvura 2021a:1863) and accorded Mugabe a perpetual leadership status. As such, Mugabe's

legitimisation thwarted any chances of change of government during his lifetime. Mugabe's tenure ended unexpectedly with the coming of a new dispensation under President Mnangagwa, thus, cultivating new hope amongst many Zimbaweans. In my view, the new dispensation did not seem to bring the much-anticipated hope but rather a complete change from the liberation government with the election of a completely new political player.

Bekhithemba Dube's article, "Postcolonial religious hope as stratagem to achieve political enslavement in Zimbabwe: A decolonial approach towards an uncaptured theology of hope", posits that a theology of hope in Zimbabwe has been captured and spearheaded by prophets such as Walter Magaya, Emmanuel Makandiwa and some leaders of African-initiated sects (also known as white garment or African indigenous churches). Under the pretext of giving people hope, they contribute to and sustain political oppression (2020b:1-7). Dube (2020b:2) asserts that in postcolonial Zimbabwe, the religious space is being used as a tool of oppression contrary to how it was used during the liberation struggle when indigenous religious leaders participated in the struggle to liberate the nation from oppression. Some missionaries inspired the indigenous people to fight for liberation, for example, Bishop Ralf Edward Dodge, who was seconded as a missionary of the American Methodist Church to Zimbabwe, inspired some of the indigenous religious leaders such as Sithole Ndabaningi, Muzorewa Abel and Banana Canaan (Maenzanise 2008:78).

Musendekwa and Dube concur that hope can be manipulated to condone oppression. Some of those who legitimised Mugabe as a messianic character also now affirm Mnangagwa. These include prominent church leaders such as Bishop Nehemia Mutendi of the Zion Christian Church, the founder of Family of God Church, Andrew Wutawunashe and the white garment churches or Mapostori.[10] This researcher finds some apparent resonance between the Zimbabwean situation and Daniel 9:2 where

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[10] Zvingowanise and Chirongoma (2023:54) blame Wutawunashe and Mutendi for endorsing "the present regime as one appointed by God and should be supported". Nyoni (2023: 186) also blames them for being "regime enablers".According to Dube (2023:12), "Mapostori have climbed on the bandwagon of ensuring that the interests of few are served and that ZANU-PF... should lead Zimbabwe..." Such perception by the church leaders has endangered followers by subjecting them to political manipulation.

Daniel lamented that the time prophesied by Jeremiah was already over. When Mugabe's tenure was about to end, it prompted the unprecedented circumstances that ushered in the new dispensation.

Nelson Mandela understood that in times of despair, hope is inspired by unity. Mandela declares that, "Together we will work to support courage where there is fear, foster agreement where there is despair" (The Elders 2007). Similarly, Yoweri Museveni argues that hope should be pinned on democracy rather than on international organisations (Onapide 1998:118). According to Lawman (2013:217), hope for a better Africa is undermined by corruption, bribery and inefficiency. I am of the view that the community in the book of Daniel comprised priestly officers who were involved in a power struggle, with some obtaining priestly offices through corrupt means. The latter could have been the reason for Daniel's lament over the prolonged oppression (Dn 9:3).

Two Zimbabweans sought to address hopelessness from the study of Jürgen Moltmann's theology of hope namely Tichaona Nigel Chikanya and Collium Banda. Chikanya (2012:49-57) considers the dialogue between Moltmann's theology of hope and the concept of hope in Zimbabwe. Moltmann's theology of hope is rooted in a context of suffering and the role of Christ as the source of hope for a purposeful life (Chikanya 2012:51). Thus, hope in the Zimbabwean context seems to be unattainable, as it is not rooted in Christ.

Collium Banda completed his PhD dissertation with Stellenbosch University in 2016 on the topic, *Empowering hope? Jürgen Moltmann's theological challenge to ecclesiological responses in the Zimbabwean context of poverty*. Banda (2016: ii) argues that Moltmann's concept of "church of hope for the poor" generates hope for the church that believes in the triune God of hope.

However, literature on hope in Zimbabwe is written primarily not from a scriptural point of view. For example, Meldrum's (2016) book titled, *Where we have hope: A memoir of Zimbabwe,* recounts his life experiences as a journalist in Zimbabwe from 2003 to 2013,

before he was deported. Meldrum is an American journalist who came to Zimbabwe shortly after independence, with the hope to cover the potential development of the newly independent state after the liberation struggle. He had hoped that the nation that obtained independence about twenty years later than other African states, would have much to learn from its counterparts. The high hopes that Zimbabwe could be an African model diminished. In three years, Meldrum angered Mugabe for reporting rape, torture and murder (Meldrum 2016:1). The members of the opposition party bravely struggled for the return of democracy. The argument here is that the extent to which the situation in Daniel was caused by forces from outside vis-a-vis the extent to which the situation in Zimbabwe caused by 'insiders' could generate a fruitful contrastive parallel.

2.4 DANIEL AS APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE

Apocalypse and apocalypticism are Greek terms derived from Greek ἀποκάλυψις, meaning revelation, manifestation and disclosure or unveiling. Nyahuma and Kügler (2021:2) note that the Greek origin of the apocalyptic terminologies is evidence that apocalyptic literature is rooted in Greek worldviews. Although Greek dominance may have stimulated such writings, they are generally viewed as reflecting a Persian worldview that the Jews had direct contact with, during the Second Temple Period.

Apocalypticism was provoked by Hellenistic imperialism and stimulated resistance to imperial domination. Apocalyptic literature emerged in the second century BCE context in which the Jews experienced hopelessness. The promise to restore the state after exile did not produce the anticipated outcomes. The pious Jews that resisted Hellenisation remained under the domination of the Greeks, even though they were already in their homeland. Consequently, some of them deployed apocalypticism as a literature of resistance against the empires.

Collins (1979:9) defines apocalypse as:

> A genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another supernatural world.

The key in the above definition is revelation, presented as narrative literature to provide transcendent reality as mediated by a heavenly being. There is a shift from historical realities to supernatural reality. The fact that apocalyptic literature prompts the desire for eschatological salvation proposes a context of crisis which would eventually pass, encompassing a world beyond the present. The research suggests that the moment of suffering in Zimbabwe depicts a situation in which salvation among the mainstream opposition members is always projected to a distant future.

2.4.1 Origins of apocalyptic literature

According to Rosen (2008: xxx), scholars widely agree on the motif that the apocalyptic genre originated from conditions associated with socio-political crisis. Rosen's position is that the writers could not have perceived a crisis unless it existed. He therefore agrees with the view that apocalyptic literature was created by a community that was experiencing crisis. At the helm is the meaningfulness of suffering as well as hope for the restoration of those traumatised or bewildered by the historical events. The religious incarnation of the apocalyptic genre is usually regarded as the literature of the profoundly discontented and alienated minority groups (Rosen 2008: vii). Apocalypticism is known, therefore, as the theology of the underprivileged who respond by using stories of injustice that invoke divine punishment on the perpetrators.

The condition under which the apocalyptic genre flourished is that of imperial domination. That means the Daniel setting could not have been the time of the Babylonian exile but, rather, it properly relates to the second century Judaism under foreign rule. The present research investigates the living conditions after independence, that is, from 1980, when Zimbabwe continued to deteriorate compared to life during the colonial era. Considering that apocalyptic literature became relevant in crisis, how much more would apocalyptic literature become relevant in a context where ordinary citizens do not attain what they had hoped for?

Apocalyptic imagination thrived during the intense suffering of the pious Jews under hegemonic powers and particularly under the so-called half-mad ruler, Antiochus

Epiphanes, who was committed to annihilating Judaism. Antiochus Epiphanes' profane practice of slaughtering pigs on the altar in the Temple and prohibiting the reading of the Law stood out. He also put to the sword mothers who brought their children for circumcision as well as the male infants who were brought to the Temple for circumcision. The officiating priest and his entire family were also killed (1 Macc 1:60-61). The crisis of the Second Temple Judaism in which the return to homeland was anticipated to bring about peace and prosperity seems to resemble the crisis of the postcolonial era in Zimbabwe. After the liberation struggle, the much-anticipated freedom from colonial powers and the introduction of the new Zimbabwe under the indigenous government were thwarted, as the new government inherited the legacies of the colonial masters that continued to burden the citizenry.

Portier-Young's (2013:145) comments on the emergence of apocalyptic literature during the Hellenistic period as follows:

> [I]t is not accidental that the first extant examples of the literary genre apocalypse emerge in the Hellenistic period, an era marked by a new internationalism as well as by continuous warfare, military occupation, and the reconquest of Judea and surrounding territories. Conquest created an empire; ongoing military activity, occupation, taxation, tribute, and colonial power maintained it.

Portier-Young argues that apocalyptic literature emerged when the Jews of the second century BCE, purposely used foreign myths and motifs to defend themselves against imperial domination. The Jews acted polemically against hegemonic powers and imperial subjugation, "corruption within the Temple cult, and other competing aetiologies that threatened to reform the political, religious and moral convictions of ancient Jews" (Portier-Young 2014:39). This research observes the apparent similarities between the conditions of the Jews of the second century BCE and the conditions of post-independence Zimbabweans. Most Zimbabweans have suffered under the rule of Mugabe and Munangagwa, thus rendering them without hope. It is critical to note also that corruption has worsened and crippled the already dwindling economy.[11]

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[11] According to Muzurura (2016:2), between 1998 and 2000 Zimbabwe witnessed a decrease in the Perception Index rating from 42% to 8%. He also noted that by 2020, Zimbabwe was listed at number 157

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2.4.2 Function of apocalypticism

The emergence of apocalypticism triggered opposition from the ruling Second Temple priesthood towards the end of the fourth century BCE (Boccaccini 2004:20). Apocalypticism continued in the second century, the period of Antiochus Epiphanes, in which apocalypticism sought to point towards a hopeful future. Apocalyptic traditions, therefore, are designed to give people hope and encouragement in times of despair (Villagomez 1998:204). Apocalypticism is a response to severe crisis. Crisis triggers either a sense of utter despair or the anticipation of deliverance (Villagomez 1998:203). The opposition was raging against the Jerusalem priesthood and foreign occupation (Boccaccini 2004:21). Thus, the Jerusalem priesthood that was instituted by Antiochus Epiphanes was totally different from the priestly ministry of the Persian period. The current research considers that the crisis of the Second Temple period in which the ruling priesthood became pro-Hellenistic appears to find counterpart in Zimbabwe. The independent state seemed to become worse than the colonial forerunner, as the opposition parties started to gain support in the new state.

Sanders, Hellholm and Vielhauer (1983:457) consider that apocalyptic literature was composed by the oppressed or those purported to be suffering in Israel. Cook (1995:3) assumes that the audience comprised priestly groups which were holding power. Reading from a historical-critical approach, earlier studies concurred that apocalypticism sprouted from prophetic traditions (Kvanvig 1988:3). According to Collins (1991:8), apocalyptic literature was a product of Mesopotamian influence, suggesting that it originated from the Mesopotamian period and got to its climax during the Second Temple period when it functioned as literature of hope. The preceding views seem to confirm that apocalypticism did not take place at the time of the pre-exilic prophets but of the Jews of the second century BCE. Despite differences in scholars' views regarding the origins of apocalyptic literature, it is clear that the genre found expression in times of crisis.

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out of 180 least corrupt countries, making it one of the top 20 corrupt countries in the world.

This research accepts the view that apocalyptic literature was intended to provide hope to the communities that suffered persecution. Apocalyptic hope emphasised "imminent divine intervention into human events so as to bring deliverance to the righteous and judgment to the wicked" (Taylor 2016:26). The end to suffering is the salvation of the righteous and divine judgement to the enemies of the people of Yahweh. In Zimbabwe, apocalyptic literature may comfort those suffering political persecution as they hope to be vindicated.

Taylor (2016:26) considers apocalypticism to be the presuppositions, attitudes, beliefs and expectations of religious or cultural movements that are similar to movements that produced apocalypses. Apocalypses presuppose a period of violence which required divine intervention to vindicate the righteous who suffered oppression in the hands of their contemporaries. In Zimbabwe, instead of speaking against the violence and vindicating the righteous, there is perpetual deification of political leaders. Though apocalypticism could have been shaped by the worldview that anticipated imminent divine intervention to redeem a community that sees itself as righteous (Bishau 2010:68), in my opinion, violence against those who oppose the state in Zimbabwe seems to produce apocalyptic expectations for the vindication of those violated and oppressed by the state.

Schwab (2006:13) also regards apocalyptic literature as a genre of the oppressed. Apocalyptic literature could have been designed to comfort and encourage the oppressed and powerless in times of distress. Based on this perspective, Daniel is regarded as a book of desperate sufferers searching for a solid theological foundation.[12] Similarly,

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[12] Cook (2014:30) has a completely different view of the origins of apocalypticism. He suggests that apocalypticism emerged among both the colonised and colonising powers and presupposes a situation in which both the colonised and the colonisers find apocalyptic literature appealing though probably from different angles. Cook could have been more convincing if his argument noted that the colonised could not have been literate enough to author apocalyptic literature. However, this research proposes that if apocalyptic literature originated during the Mesopotamian period and found full expression during the Second Temple period, then, it relates well with the stories about Daniel and his friends as learned men in the king's court.

modern readers depend on Daniel to generate hope and comfort when the world seems to crumble (Schwab 2006: xiii-xiv).

Schwab (2006:13) further states:

> Even the earlier grandfather of apocalyptic, Mesopotamian apocalyptic literature, was written by an oppressed class. This subjugation helps to explain the hideous images of tyrannical evil and the tortured cries for relief that characterise this material. Salvation is in the distant future. Apocalyptic is designed to comfort the oppressed, to encourage the faithful in distressful times. Apocalyptic is written for those who feel powerless or helpless, under pressure, marginalised...

Apocalyptic literature should therefore be regarded as literature for oppressed societies which hoped to acquire freedom from dominant powers who continue to torment them in the second century BCE. They sought a way to get relief from suffering because they did not have the power to free themselves. Apocalyptic literature therefore appears relevant in addressing the plight of Zimbabweans.

Apocalyptic literature stimulates hope by prompting the victims of torture and abuse to visualise the world to come (Schwab 2006:14). Research has already confirmed that an apocalypse is the literature of those suffering persecution and the disenfranchised, possibly responding to the disillusionment of the Second Temple period or crisis under the rule of Antiochus Epiphanes (Adler 1996:3; Aune 2005:238; Carter 2017:3; Meadowcroft 2017:221). Apocalyptic literature is, therefore, the literature of the socially disadvantaged, marginal and sectarian movements (De Villiers 2016:240). The crisis triggered a sense of utter despair but apocalyptic hope became the expression of anticipated deliverance (Villagomez 1998:203). Adler (1996:3) confirms that apocalyptic literature was the product of social and religious conditions that triggered apocalyptic hope in order to strengthen the religious communities under oppression.

From a sociological point of view, apocalyptic literature provided pious Jews with a platform for the reconciliation of their religious beliefs as well as their socio-cultural identities (Van der Borght 2018:160-175). The disenfranchised are encouraged to maintain their exclusive identity and remain faithful to their cultural heritage while anticipating divine intervention. Apocalyptic literature encouraged the devout Jews "to

persevere in expectant hope for a future restoration" (Slade 2015:7). In Zimbabwe, hope has often been manipulated to pacify those who are hopeful as well as to foil resistance.

Some conservative scholars claim that Daniel 9 alludes to the death of Jesus. The vision is assumed to have taken place in 538 BCE after Cyrus' decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem (Gurney 1981:31). Most conservative interpreters believe that the 69 weeks of years mentioned in Daniel 9:26 refer to the period of 476 years starting from Artaxerxes' second decree of 444 BCE to the year alleged to be the year of the death of Jesus (Poythress 1985:131). However, liberal scholars like Ekeke (2016:375) show that hope helped the pious Jewish community of the second century BCE to wait patiently; not simply imagination, but an act of living a righteous life towards God who would deliver them from their distress. This researcher is of the opinion that prospects of salvation in Zimbabwe are in the future. If the death of Jesus the Messiah culminated in the salvation of many, then, the place of the messianic characterisation of political figures in Zimbabwe diminishes.

Attempts to adhere to mathematical calculations in relation to apocalyptic literature may be problematic. However, the doctrinal devotees strictly adhere to literal figures to prove that the author of Daniel 9 predicted the death of Jesus Christ. Collins (1990:34) argues that prophetic oracles are mysteries and the reference to "seventy weeks of years" is not definitive. If real figures are not easy to interpret, then, any prospect for salvation cannot be determined by numbers. The end of the Zimbabwean crisis may not be determined by the duration but by anticipated events. The seemingly most anticipated future is the end of the present crisis through a change of leadership.

Adler (1996:3) confirms that apocalyptic literature is unanimously regarded as literature of hope, which primarily strengthens communities under imperial domination and hegemony. Apocalyptic literature alleviates anxiety by directing the persecuted community to an ethereal hope (Schwab 2006:14). In Zimbabwe, the state manipulated the colonial era prophecy of Mbuya Nehanda that her bones would rise. The state appropriated that prophecy to refer to those who fought for independence as the bones of

Mbuya Nehanda that had risen. By so doing, the liberation fighters claim to have assumed the messianic role of dying for the country. Instead of generating hope however, the messianic claims raised anxiety about the end of the existing crisis.

Apocalyptic literature stimulates hope by pointing the victims of torture and abuse "to an otherworldly hope – salvation not discovered in this place and this time" (Schwab 2006:14). Those who suffer persecution should never lose hope. The future is expected to bring everlasting salvation.

Carter (2017:3) avers that apocalyptic literature developed from a culture related to "religious desperation" in search of "assurance and comfort" by those who were experiencing doubts or persecution. Apocalyptic literature could have either been written or become meaningful during a period of suffering. One example is the period between 200 BCE and 100 CE, the period in which the pious Jews struggled for survival during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes and later under the Roman Empire. However, apocalyptic literature remains relevant to generations of readers that suffer in the hands of oppressive regimes.

According to Cook (2014:30), "Apocalypticism emerges in eras of calm and in eras of disruption, in stable societies and amid the encounters and clashes of cultures, in peripheral or colonised peoples and the dominating and colonising powers". Cook views the emergence of apocalyptic literature as not only limited to disruptive and oppressive structures, but also operative in calm and stable conditions. What perhaps is explicit enough is that the members of the opposition parties in Zimbabwe may not be responding to the crisis by generating new literature (in its broadest sense), but by seeking comfort from existing ancient literature that is revered as divinely inspired.

2.4.3 Apocalyptic literature as literature of resistance

Aune (1983:110-111) describes apocalyptic resistance as a common phenomenon among the oppressed whose hope for the existing order is dismissed. In the Hellenistic era, apocalypses were a form of anti-Hellenistic resistance literature. Apocalyptic literature

was therefore a response to oppressive social, political and religious structures of domination. Resistance can be either passive or violent and those who resist are regarded as marginalised groups. According to de Villiers (2016:240), apocalyptic literature is the literature of the socially disadvantaged, marginal and sectarian movements. Nevertheless, those in power could have ushered in the much-expected freedom.

Resistance is a theory that calls for hope in crisis. According to Dei (2006:11), resistance in general fights for survival in the now and beyond. The theory of resistance is related to resistance to past domination that seemed to steal the people's future by causing suffering. Even though the dominant may deny their existence, the stories continue to survive. Past stories of domination and resistance inform the response of later generations when encountering similar predicaments.

Portier-Young (2011:5) identifies various forms of resistance namely revolt, rebellion and revolution. Revolt is a form of organised protests which sometimes turn into violent rebellion and revolution. There are two extreme sides of revolt—an armed or a violent revolt and a silent foot-dragging revolt. The goals of resistance are to conquer or replace structures of domination. When a revolution takes place, it is not solely to transfer political and economic power. It also could create a new form of hegemony through experience and consciousness. The presence of imperial domination assures the presence of resistance. In its essence, therefore, resistance limits power. Based on Portier-Young's view, this author finds the place of violent and passive forms of resistance appropriate for the realisation of a better future in Zimbabwe.

Resistance literature gained attention due to the emergence of postcolonial criticism, which resonates with issues arising from World War II and which exposed the "experiences and cultural responses of indigenous peoples living under the western colonial rule" (Jones 2012:542). The perspective of postcolonial biblical critics brings to the fore the relationships between the Jews and imperial overlords in the book of Daniel. A reading of the book of Daniel reveals that the authors were Second Temple heroes who suffered persecution for their faith. Collins (1981:86-87) concedes that the Maccabean

reading of these stories can be understood as a vindication of the persecuted heroes at a time when God's dominion was invisible and only made visible in the second half of the book when the dominion of God could be asserted by visions. Collins (1981:88-89) concedes that the stories attested to more than one context since considerable continuity between the prophets and Daniel is notable.

Some scholars examine the place of prayer in Daniel 9 (Wilson 1990:91-99; Rosscup 1992:47-71; Poulsen 2021:95-110). Prayer and fasting in Daniel played a huge role in resisting oppression and feature in both the court narratives and the visions, serving as a literary bridge between the two major sections of the book, that is, the narratives (Dn 1-6) and the visions (Dn 7-12). When Daniel is confronted by Nebuchadnezzar's threat of execution, he summons his community to prayer. Nebuchadnezzar threatened to execute Daniel and the sages once they failed to tell and interpret his dream (Dn 2:17-18). Prayer was followed by a divine response through the interpretation of what was beyond human understanding. Divine intervention thereafter would generate endurance. I am of the view that prayer has frequently been mishandled by people in positions of political influence. Thus, the powerful directs and controls the religious space. In that way, the powerful is vindicated, displacing resistance. However, prayer seems to be the main vehicle for seeking divine intervention.

In Daniel 6, Daniel is presented as one of the three administrators appointed by Darius. They worked with the assistance of 120 satraps. The satraps and other administrators conspired against Daniel but could find no fault in him. They then compelled the king to decree that no one was to worship any other god except the king. Since the satraps knew that Daniel had no fault, they planned to trap him through his belief in Yahweh (Dn 6:1-7). King Belshazzar was compelled to make an edict against worshipping any other god (Dn 6:9). However, instead of praying behind closed windows, Daniel went upstairs and prayed with his windows open. According to Thomas (2005:295), Daniel's praying with his windows open was an act of resistance against the Empire. Daniel could also have boasted that his God, whom he trusted, was in control. The act of Daniel inspired readers of the book to uphold their faith in the face of oppression and torture.

Greidanus (2012:269) situates the prayer in the exilic era when Daniel consulted the book of Jeremiah and realised that the seventy years of desolation were almost up (Jr 29:10). Daniel did not require any further understanding of Jeremiah or try to search for the period left to the end of the desolation, but the end of exile. In Daniel 10, Daniel fasts for twenty-one days and receives another revelation. Prayer and fasting can therefore be regarded as "communal forms of non-violent 'spiritual warfare' that are available to oppressed communities when other forms of resistance are not viable…" (Jones 2012:546-547).

Part of the roles of wise teachers was to seek "a response of prayer and penitence". A study of the Scriptures prompted Daniel to pray (Dn 9:2). He committed to prayer, confessing and repenting of the sins of his people (Dn 9:2-3). In Daniel 10:12, the angel that was sent said it was "בִּדְבָרֶיךָ (because of your words)". This was a response to his petition in Chapter 9. Daniel humbled himself in prayer and fasting with ashes all over his body, seeking God's deliverance and mercy (Dn 9:4-19). For the second century audience of Daniel, prayer to God contradicted the claims of ultimacy by the Empire. God was the one to determine the true order according to the prophets and the Torah (9:10). In this way, Daniel was responding directly to the Empire (Portier-Young 2011: 235-246).

Jones (2012:550) avers that the book of Daniel is a composition of the "*maêkilim's* resistance", which he associates with wisdom literature. He claims that wisdom is central to resistance literature. Considering Daniel as wisdom literature would be supported by the Hebrew Bible's positioning of Daniel among the Writings.

According to Murmelstein (2015:451), Daniel's imagined audience shared the same texts for its emotions and practices. Therefore, the emotional character of the book of Daniel stimulates resistance against the Empire to realise the long-anticipated redemption.

In writing, one could employ a non-violent form of resistance. The burning of scrolls by soldiers during Antiochus' reign (1 Macc 1:56) confirms that there were writers continually reading and writing. Among these writers could have been the writers of Daniel, whose programme was to resist the Empire. The Torah and some of the prophets were reinterpreted to inspire readers to trust in and wait for God's salvation (Portier-Young 2011:266). Pseudonymity was a device that was used to give authority to the traditions rather than protecting the authors' identity (Jones 2012:549). The power of the text is embedded in an ancient and sometimes literary authority, whose message could hardly be ignored or denied.

This may recall the authority of the handwriting on the wall that led to the demise of Belshazzar (Daniel 5). Daniel did not pray or fast in order to solve difficult problems, but he simply came up and read the writing on the wall to the king. The message declared the end of the kingdom of Belshazzar. His abuse of the Temple treasury symbolised the end of the kingdom of Antiochus Epiphanes who took the Temple treasures for his gain. If the consequence for those who abuse power is the end of their kingdom, this research proposes that the end of corrupt leaders would be the realisation of the people's expectations.

Since Daniel, the central character in the book, was able to read and interpret, he could only do it with the help of God. Writing and reading were not common. Less than five percent of any group could read or write. At that time, reading and writing took place in scribal schools and that was where the prophets were. Polaski (2004:649) states that others who engaged in reading and writing could have been pious Jews in the imperial courts, who were there to serve the Empire. Harrington (2009:23) agrees that the episode of the writing on the wall concerned the Babylonian Empire in 533 BCE, but also aimed to speak to the post-exilic Jews during the second century BCE. However, the episode was making provision for the demise of the Empire and the establishment of Israel's God as the Sovereign, whose power was also communicated through writing. The author, according to Polaski (2004:650), could not have had a positive standing with the Empire, but probably wrote as a strategy for survival and in resistance of the Empire.

Not only the writing but also the reading is significant. Daniel, in Daniel 9, read from the book of Jeremiah and indicated that he was anticipating the fulfilment of the divine promise to restore Israel after seventy years. The composition of Daniel 9 could have been a response to the atrocities of Antiochus Epiphanes, which included the prohibition of the reading of the Torah and the burning of the scrolls.

However, the written material had the authority to determine the end of all things. The primary goal of apocalyptic literature is to "change the cognitive outlook or behaviour in their readers/hearers so that their spirit of despondency and despair be transformed into a spirit of courage and hopefulness" (Sangtinuk 2010:35). In the case of the audience of Daniel, they were encouraged to persevere to the end of the age.

Daniel is closely related to the period in which other apocalyptic literature originated. For example, Daniel is related to contemporary Hellenistic literature such as Animal Apocalypse with which it shares the same historical situation associated with persecution of the Jewish community by Antiochus Epiphanes and the subsequent Maccabean revolt (167-164 BCE). Ancient religion of the Hellenistic and Roman periods was characterised by various aspects such as mythology which feature in the apocalyptic literature of that time. During that period, mythology, as a worldview, was characterised by the "making sense of the personal, cultural, and political experience" (Murphy 2012: 67).

The book of Daniel was earlier regarded as a text of the exilic period. While it depicts Daniel and his friends in Babylonian exile, the real audience was the post-exilic community.

This section focuses on how the available literature on the book of Daniel as an example of resistance writing developed. Through resistance, but also through revolt, rebellion and silent feet dragging, the oppressed fight for survival. The main purpose of resistance is to replace structures of oppression and domination. The book of Daniel encourages its readers to continue holding on to their faith despite oppression and the torturous

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experiences they were going through. Violent resistance is noted in the book of Maccabees whereas in the book of Daniel, the oppressed used non-violent forms of resistance. Non-violent resistance was achieved through prayer, fasting, writing and reading. Such forms of resistance may also instil hope in the hearts of many a Zimbabwean.

2.4.4 Historical context of apocalypticism

It is important to provide a brief review of the context of the book of Daniel, particularly, of Daniel 9. Some scholars suppose that Daniel was authored during the Maccabean Empire period by an author or even authors who posed as a prophet or an author in the name of Daniel (Ferch 1983:129). Daniel, therefore, was written for people in a crisis situation. The purpose of the book was to generate or rekindle hope where hope was "precisely needed" in the midst of crisis (Casey 1976:18).

The Hellenistic imperial rule in Judea set the stage for apocalypticism. Judea, which was previously a territory of the Persian Empire, was conquered in 332 by Alexander the Great, who ruled by military conquest. A struggle for control ensued among the generals for about twenty years until they finally established themselves after the death of Alexander. Ptolemy declared himself king of Egypt. Seleucus claimed Babylon, Cassander took control of Macedon and Lysimachus controlled Thrace. The battle of Ipsus in 301 resulted in Ptolemy extending his kingdom by taking Palestine and Seleucus taking the remaining land from Syria and Babylon (Tanner 2017:2). The interest to control the world by the Greeks diminished the much expected liberty of the the Jews of the second century BCE.

The kingdom was split into two major kingdoms after Alexander's death in 323, one under the Seleucids and the other one under the Ptolemies. At that time, Judea was under the Ptolemies. Those days are regarded as the heydays of the Jews and the period in which the Old Testament was presumably translated into Greek (Ferguson 1987:381). The kingdom was not yet restored to the Jews but they remained hopeful.

Alexander's successors not only inherited his kingdom, but also Hellenism. This is evident in the establishment of boundaries by conquest. The book of Maccabees reveals that the Hellenistic kings were indeed violent (Portier-Young 2011:50). For example, Seleucus extended his empire by conquering Lysimuchus and annexing Asia Minor. His kingdom extended to the whole of Asia, from India to the Mediterranean frontiers. Seleucus' image was ornamented with horns, alluding to Appian's aetiological legend that Seleucus I held a bull by its horns and restrained it (Kosmin 2014:166). The authority among the pious Jews of the second century BCE however remained in the hands of the Greek Empire, eliminating any chances of restoring the Davidic kingdom.

The royal military ideology confirms the struggle for domination, as kings claimed control of conquered territories. Judah was caught up in the power struggle between Ptolemy I and Seleucus I and their successors. Battles for control of Syria were ceaseless during the period between 274 BCE and 178 BCE (Portier-Young 2011:54-55), which was noted by the transition from Ptolemy to Seleucids in 200 BCE in the Fifth Syrian War. According to Drane (1987:190), the war followed the cold war between the successors of Seleucus I and Ptolemy I, leading to several military encounters. The war ended in the conquest of Ptolemy V by Antiochus III in the battle of Paneon in 198 BCE. It is clear that the Jews of the second century BCE suffered due to the power struggle among the Greeks. Internal schism among the successors of Alexander (mainly the Ptolemies and Seleucids) ensued. The Hellenistic influence in Palestine continued for at least another 120 years after Epiphanes. Schisms among one's enemies project the end of the enemy's kingdom.

Antiochus III started by being more tolerant of and made alliances with the Judeans after receiving help to oust the Ptolemaic army. The Jews were granted freedom to offer Temple sacrifices and reconstruct the Temple, right to self-government, tax exemption to cult officials and the council of elders, three-year tax remission and the release of war captives (Bright 1980:416; Drane 1987:190; Portia-Young 2011:54-57). Instead of experiencing complete restoration, the Jews continued to be under the hegemonic control

of the Greeks who decided their fate. The liberation struggle in Zimbabwe did not culminate in the much-desired freedom either.

Foreigners were restricted from entering the Temple, carrying unclean meat and skins into the city was forbidden and the Jews had to guarantee that they would carry out sacrifices (Portier-Young 2011:57-58). These rules radicalised the restrictions on sacrifice that could have been easily compromised even by the Jews themselves. The conditions of the treaty seemed favourable to the Jewish faith, yet it appeared to have been used, largely, to attract more allegiance. It prompted Jewish hope for realising the much-anticipated freedom from foreign domination (Portier-Young 2011:58).

Antiochus III also wanted to expand his kingdom in the west and was defeated by Rome in the battle of Magnesia (Drane 1987:190). He entered a humiliating peace treaty of Apamea with Rome in which he lost the wealthy Asia Minor and he was forced into bankruptcy. According to Bright (1980:418), Antiochus III surrendered his navy and war elephants and he was forced to release refugees and surrender twenty hostages, including his son who later ruled as Antiochus IV. He was also required to pay enormous indemnity. A year later, he was killed while robbing the Temple at Elam to get money to pay for the tribute to the Romans (Dn 11:19).

After the death of Antiochus III, his son Seleucus became the ruler. He did not carry out any considerable change to his father's administration. Bright, for example, refers to the fact that Seleucus rather approved the privileges his father had granted (1980:418). However, II Maccabees 3:4-20, reveals that he connived with certain Jews to take Temple funds. To that end, the circumstances of the Jews could have moved from bad to worse while the worst was yet to come.

In the interim, there was a power struggle between the rival groups of the Tobiads, who represented the orthodoxy group and the Oniads, the pro-Hellenistic. The power struggle was at its peak when Antiochus IV Epiphanes held the reins of power after the death of Antiochus III (Drane 1987:192). Antiochus IV Epiphanes' appearance on the scene was initially to reclaim Palestine and Phoenicia but after the death of his father, Antiochus

introduced a policy that prompted Jewish rebellion. The pious Jewish population was under pressure from all sides. Moreover, Rome was increasingly becoming a threat, ready to intervene in any affair with an upper hand (Bright 1980:119).

The reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes was characterised by the banning of Judaism in a bid to impose a uniform religion. That did not sit well with the Hasidim, the Jewish orthodox group. It was at that point that the book of Daniel emerged. Daniel's allusion to the "abomination that desolates" (Dn 11:31; 12:11) is reference to the destruction of the Temple during the crisis that emanated between the Hellenists and the Jewish orthodox groups such as the Hasidim (Scheffler 2001:153).

Antiochus Epiphanes IV desperately intended to unify the kingdom but due to financial constraints, he targeted Temple treasures. Jerusalem was not to be spared. He granted various cities the status of polis, ensuring that all were Hellenised. Hellenisation included the introduction of Greek religion and the erection of Zeus' statue in the Temple, which invoked bitter opposition from the orthodox Jewish community (Bright 1980:119).

Honigman (2021:292) provides a more elaborate explanation of how Antiochus prioritised his personal desires over and against the Jewish religious practices. One example is Antiochus's disruption of the succession lineage of the high priests by appointing Joshua, for a bribe, to replace his brother, Onias as the high priest. Joshua assumed the name Jason, built the gymnasium and induced the Jews to shift attention from Temple sacrifices to participating in sports. Jason was eventually deposed when Menelaus was appointed and assumed a Greek name for a much bigger bribe. Menelaus looted the Temple to pay hefty tribute to Antiochus Epiphanes IV. These events terminated the old Zadokite priestly lineage.

The struggle for supremacy between the Oniads and Tobiads could have helped to propagate apocalyptic resistance among the conservative Jews. The idea is supported by Ferguson (1987:381), who contends that rivalry between the two leading families, the Oniads and Tobiads, facilitated Antiochus III's Hellenisation enterprise in Jerusalem. The

Oniads were from the house of Onias, who held the Zadokite priesthood and the Tobiads were responsible for collecting tax during the period of the Seleucids.

The prominence of the Zadokites in Jewish priesthood is recorded from the construction of the Second Jewish Temple to the Maccabean revolt. Josephus listed fourteen priests namely Joshua, Jehoiakim, Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, Jaddua, Onias I, Simon I, Eliazar, Manasseh, Onias II, Simon II, Onias III and Joshua I (also known as Jason). This confirms the Zadokite supremacy as recorded earlier in Ezekiel 40-48 (Boccaccini 2002:43-44). The combination of duties between kings and priesthood was then challenged by Ezekiel during the exilic period (Boccaccini 2002:45). By then, the priesthood had gained the upper hand, which continued into the postexilic era due to the absence of kingship. The preceding observation alone confirms that where there is a centre of administration, the majority would be found on the margins.

According to Ferguson (1987:381), Jason requested to change the city of Jerusalem from a Temple-state to a city-state and Jerusalem's name was changed to Antioch. The high priest was incorporated into the Seleucid office. A gymnasium was also built to allow Jewish participation in the Greek games. Tanner (2017:5) argues that Jason's reforms later created conflict between those who favoured Hellenistic influences and the conservative Jews. The establishment of the gymnasium was the embodiment of the spirit behind the Hellenisation that was imposed on the citizens. Nonetheless, the government made an alliance with the Eastern countries, seemingly exposing the nation to new forms of colonialism.

Jason welcomed the cultural legacies of the Greeks by adopting the Hellenistic education system, culture, politics and philosophy that were foreign to the Jewish ancestral belief system. For example, the gymnasium provided a context of nudity in which Jewish athletes had to expose their circumcision, which used to be a symbol of abiding by the covenant. Seeing that circumcision became a barrier to physical advancement, they made foreskins for themselves to hide their origin (Collins 2016:180). Concealment of their circumcision was a way of preventing possible embarrassment (Drane 1987:192).

According to Drane (1987:192), the gymnasium interrupted the priestly sacrifices as the priests hurried to find time to go for games.

Jason's earlier purchase of the high priesthood set the conditions that caused his downfall. He obtained the position of high priest by promising an increase in tribute to Seleucids. When in 172 BCE, Jason sent Menelaus to pay tribute to Antiochus, Menelaus outbid him by adding an additional 300 talents to obtain the position for himself. This was a gross violation of Jewish law. Since Menelaus did not descend from the priestly family line in the house of Joshua, his appointment ended the hereditary high priesthood in Judea (Portier-Young 2011:121).

Menelaus failed to pay tribute to Antiochus and then plundered the Temple to gather all the golden objects either to serve as bribery to the king's officials or to pay tribute. Menelaus' actions angered Onias. Onias then sought legal action against Menelaus who, in turn, orchestrated his assassination. Daniel 9:26 refers to this assassination as the shift in the history of Judea when there was a turn from rebuilding to destruction at the hands of Antiochus IV. Menelaus then appointed Lysimachus, his brother, to the post of deputy high priest. The two brothers robbed the Temple treasures, including the golden objects. The Jerusalemites were infuriated and subsequently engaged in an armed struggle (2 Macc 4:40-42). A religious violation by Judean officials stirred a revolution. When the insurrection stopped, the council of elders instituted charges against Menelaus before Antiochus. Nevertheless, Menelaus was acquitted and his accusers were executed (2 Macc 4:43-48). These events set the stage for civil resistance and war (Portier-Young 2011:126). This narrative reveals the circumstances of oppression that prompted the apocalyptic hope for the restoration of the kingdom of David through violence. That was the time when the priesthood gained the upper hand which continued into the second century BCE due to the absence of kingship. Thus, the situation could have stimulated apocalyptic zeal for the restoration of the Davidic king as a messiah who would restore the kingdom of Israel to its former glory (Boccaccini 2002:45).

Revolt broke out in 166 BCE when Mattathias refused the command to participate in the Hellenistic sacrifices and further killed a Jew who was partaking as an officer to the king. He was then joined by his five sons and supporters to fight for freedom. Antiochus's forces were defeated. Judas took over after the death of his father Mattathias. Judas re-dedicated the Temple. Jonathan, another son of Mattathias, took over after the fall of Judas when his adherers deserted him and fell into the hands of Dometirius I Soter. Jonathan continued the guerilla war before he was recognised by Alexander Balas who appointed him as high priest. He was loyal but was assassinated during the time of Tryphon. His brother Simon succeeded him as a high priest but managed to resist and ward off Tryphon and by so doing, he established the Hasmonean dynasty (Scheffler 2001:154).

Fitzmyer (2007:56-64) considers the role played by Daniel 9:25-26 in the emergence of messianism. He notes that the book of Daniel contains the historical circumstances of the Second Temple period, about 165 BCE, when the book could have reached its final form in the Septuagint. Fitzmyer (2007:57) argues that though many scholars deny that the book of Daniel ushers in the "eschatological realisation" of the ideal Davidic king, messianic beliefs of such magnitude take shape in the book of Daniel. Fitzmyer (2007:60) situates Daniel 9:25-26 within the historical circumstances surrounding Daniel, which were supported by the message of Jeremiah and claims that the restoration of the Davidic kingdom had to be realised at the end of seventy years as in Jeremiah 25:11-12. Fitzmyer (2007:61) regards the postponement from seventy years to 490 years as an estimated period that ranges from the edict of Cyrus to the persecution of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who is said to bring the abominations that make desolate. The cutting of the anointed one would refer, in this case, to Onias III, who was discharged from his priestly office while "the prince" would refer to Antiochus himself.

Pierce (1989:211) notes that scholars interpreted Daniel 9 as either pseudo epigraphic history of the second century BCE relating Antiochus Epiphanes's desecration of the Temple 167-164 BCE or the conservative view, which considers it as prophecy from the sixth century BCE, relating events about the life of Jesus Christ, which probably indicates

an "eschatological dimension". However, Pierce (1989:211) situates the text in the events related to the prophecy of the sixth century BC but "focussing on the postponement of the expected restoration caused by the poor spiritual condition of the remnant in the close of the exile". The postponement could have been from the intended seventy years to 490 years. Pierce (1989:211) equally supports a historical dimension which pushes the book of Daniel to the historical past.

According to Murphy (2012:71), Hellenisation provoked various reactions including the claim that some Jews could have pursued "profitable relations with the other Hellenised people" while some recognised it as "an attack on the very identity of one's people". Different attitudes arose from different social locations – geographic, intellectual and socio-economic. Literary work on apocalypse and military action were the Jewish responses to Hellenistic domination. Central to all the responses to Hellenisation is hope that all suffering would culminate in restoration. If the book of Daniel originated from the Second Temple period under the Greek Empire, it may suggest that the much-desired liberation had not yet arrived since the pious Jews were subjected to authorities that did not meet the needs of the masses. Real freedom could be grasped from a distant future, as the nation remains hopeful.

2.4.5 African biblical scholars engagement of ABH to address contemporary issues
There are various possible ways that ABH can make fruitful contributions to contemporary issues. First of all, it is critical to note that many African biblical scholars are heavily indebted to the contributions of Mbiti, who in his book, *African and Religious Philosophy,* highlights the African philosophy of time which the current researcher upholds. Mbiti (1985:15) argues that all activities should be understood from the viewpoint of a religious universe. Thus, he points out that experience among Africans is given a religious meaning. According to Mbiti (1985:15), "What has not taken place and what has no likelihood of an immediate occurrence falls in the category of no time". In Africa, events are determined by the "long past, a present and virtually no future". This view of time does not promote the Western view of linear time but rather cyclic time in which events that have taken place as determined by changes in days, months and

seasons are liable to repeat. This philosophy of time justifies why Africans accept the notion that history repeats itself. It would be more appropriate for African Christians to accept that they are subjected to the ongoing cycles of history and to find their place in biblical history.

Secondly, African culture is close to the Hebrew culture. This is clear based on the point that African biblical scholars either find the text to be addressing the African context or even find themselves in the biblical record (Adamo 1989:17-25; 2001:46-47; Dada 2010:161; Rugwiji 2013:17). In this regard, Adamo's book, *Africa and Africans in the Old Testament* notes that biblical stories are closer to the African worldview.

Lastly, it is critical to note that various scholars have carried out the study of the Old Testament books and contextualised them in Africa. The African Old Testament scholar, Farisani (2017) analyses current trends in biblical hermeneutics in Africa by engaging Masenya and Ramantswana who on the one hand express concern that South African biblical scholarship remains overwhelmed by Euro-centric hermeneutical methodologies without seeking meaningful dialogue between the ancient biblical texts and their own contexts (Masenya [ngwan'a Mphahlele] & Ramantswana 2012:598-637). On the other hand, they engage Gerry Snyman, a white South African biblical scholar whose hermeneutics of whiteness relates to his own context. In his article, Farisani (2017:2) demonstrates the interpretation of selected biblical texts in Africa as having "three poles namely the pole of the biblical text, the pole of the African context and the pole of appropriation. Biblical interpretation among Africans has focused more on addressing the contemporary context of the reader.

2.4.6 Daniel 9 in the Zimbabwean context

Although African biblical scholars and theologians have not adequately interrogated Daniel 9, Musendekwa (2011:89) carries out a close reading of Daniel 9:24-27 as a prophetic text that generates messianic hope. Messianic hope could have been stimulated by the circumstances of the audience of the book of Daniel. Daniel is regarded, therefore, as having predicted the time of Jesus' ministry and death as authenticated in verse 26,

which mentions "the slain Messiah". However, considering Daniel as prophecy limits its scope as apocalyptic literature. However, a study of the whole chapter could offer new insights in contemporary contexts.

An understanding of the text of Daniel 9 in African contexts should be based on a wider understanding of apocalyptic literature. In most African countries, interest in apocalyptic literature could be prompted by the betrayal of the masses as leaders adopt oppressive policies of the colonial governments (Gwindingwe & Osunkunle 2022:216). Gwindingwe and Osunkunle (2022:216) recognise the biblical apocalypse with reference to the promises for the future as in Revelations 21:1a and 8 as the basis for apocalyptic voices in Zimbabwe.

Nyahuma and Kügler (2021:4) consider apocalypticism in Africa and illustrate with the Shona people, which constitute the majority tribe of Zimbabwe:

> …the Shona have different elements of time, space and being. There is the land of the living, the land of the living dead waiting to join the ancestors. Being is also peculiar, and it is not obliterated in death. The dead are alive as the living and they must be restored to their family after a year through the *Kurova Guva* ceremony.

The example given above suggests that apocalypticism in African shares basic characteristics with ancient Judaism, but incorporates peculiar nuances. Nyahuma and Kügler (2021:5) further state that apocalyptic movements in Zimbabwe regard colonisation as a form of punishment for digressing from norms and values of the Shona culture. They give an example of Chaminuka, who prophesied the coming of the colonialists to Zimbabwe as a warning of the coming threat.

Having found that there is a gap in the direct application of Daniel 9 as literature of hope, this research aims to close that gap. Daniel 9 suggests a context of both crisis and hope. In the 21st century Zimbabwean context, the members of the opposition parties still need hope, despite the prevailing crisis. Daniel 9 would be an appropriate choice text for a nation with ongoing questions about when the crisis they face would end.

2.5 CONCLUSION

I firstly engaged the literature on "Hope amidst Crisis", paying particular attention to sources that were written with the Zimbabwean context in view. Scholars engaged Moltmann's theology of hope as the basis for instilling hope in the Zimbabwean 21st century context that is characterised by hopelessness. Secondly, I reviewed literature on the book of Daniel as an apocalypse and realised that apocalyptic literature stimulates hope in the context of hopelessness. I realised that the study of the book of Daniel was intended to address issues of hopelessness with its readers. The apocalypse of Daniel was aimed primarily at stimulating resistance against Hellenistic domination and hegemony. Daniel 9 entails anticipation of the end of the "abomination of desolation" of Jerusalem. Though much scholarly work has been done on this topic, such work, though helpful, remains in the past of the biblical text. Thirdly, I asserted that current research on Daniel 9 by Zimbabwean scholars is scarce. Zimbabwean scholars appreciate that the present context seems to give rise to apocalyptic ideas (as notes in music), being a context of resistance and hope. Thus, there is greater weight in reading Daniel 9 to address the context of hopelessness in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER THREE
THE ZIMBABWEAN CRISIS DURING THE 21ST CENTURY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The Zimbabwean crisis,[13] which began after independence in 1980 under the leadership of Robert Mugabe, has been examined in diverse ways. According to Nyambi (2013:183), there are "alternative representations" of the crisis in Zimbabwe during the post-2000 period, which means that there is no single view of the narratives. Any dissenting voice is marginalised and dissidents could even be victimed. The ZANU-PF claimed ownership of the narrative by blaming the former colonialists. Nyambi (2013:183) dismisses ZANU-PF's claim as invalid, as the government was not legitimately appointed. The legitimacy of ZANU-PF was questioned, following a series of contested elections. That brings us to the main objective of this chapter, which is to examine the context of crisis and hopelessness in which some 21st century Zimbabweans live.

In addition to the economic meltdown, Zimbabwe suffered a legitimacy crisis that emanated from the worsening standards of living during the Mugabe era (Dzimiri 2017:52) and heavily contested election results, especially in 2008 during the Mugabe era and in 2018 when Mnangagwa became president (Rwodzi 2019:196). The state induced a humanitarian crisis that was exacerbated by untimely interventions of the African Union (AU) and the Southern African Development Cooperation (SADC) (Dzimiri 2017:50).

It was mentioned earlier that the military-assisted takeover of power from President Robert Mugabe by President Mnangagwa in 2017 did not bring substantial change. Rather, there was an increase in social and economic hardships. Mnangagwa did not rule as a legitimately elected leader and his new government did not bring the much-hoped-for independence that was expected, but perpetuated the suffering that was carried over from the Mugabe era (Lamarche, Toysen & Wishart 2019:14).

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[13] This chapter uses the term crisis to refer to multiple or multidimensional crises. According to Gwande (2017:91), several scholars who have written about the Zimbabwean issue refer to either the Zimbabwean crises or "one overarching crisis".

The 21st century Zimbabwean context is characterised by crisis (Dzimiri 2017:51). Some scholars regard it as socio-economic and political crisis (Mude & Chigora 2013:27; Fenga & Wepener 2018:1-8). Other scholars refer to it as "Zimbabwean Crisis" (Chitando 2010:199; Maposa, Sibanda & Makahamadze 2011:250; Moyo 2013:68; Rugwiji 2017:16; 2020:6; Paradza 2019:1-8). International bodies such as the United Nations and the European Union blame the Zimbabwean government for the poor governance, political polarisation and corruption that led to hyperinflation (Bratton & Masunungure 2008; Hanke 2008; Makochekanwa 2016:1250-1260; Maunganidze et al 2021:2). Zimbabwe ranked the sixth failed state in 2011 and the ruling class has attributed this ranking to the sanctions from Western nations. This study emphasises that even after independence, Zimbabweans continue to experience socio-economic and political crisis that has left people in a state of despondence.

The current research acknowledges that the Zimbabwean crisis found its initial expression during the period of 1997-2008. Some regard this period as a time of crisis in Zimbabwe and as a time characterised by "hegemonic masculinities" (Mutambara 2018:88). Since the beginning of the 21st century, oppressive, repressive ideas about violence and women as inferior or even liberative ideas depending on historical or political contexts have been making the rounds in Zimbabwe (Mutambara 2018:88).

It is also worth noting that the ruling party is blamed for perpetuating politically motivated violence and for undermining democracy and the rule of law (Ndlela 2005:74). After several decades of British colonial rule, independence subjected the nation once again to native aristocrats (Musendekwa 2018:6). Independence, therefore, did not bring the freedom that was desired but it established a new form of dependence, which can be equated or even compared to colonialism.

Certainly, only a part of the population failed to realise the dreams of the whole nation. The context of these failures includes "poor governance, economic mismanagement, loss of support of the international community following repeated human rights violations and

manipulated electoral processes and failed elections, all compounded by periods of drought" (Besada & Moyo 2008:2). Mugabe's failures generated the crisis situation that subjected those who did not benefit from Mugabe's rule to put up resistance by placing their hopes in a future deliverer. Such resistance faces counter resistance through "patriotic rhetoric of sovereignty" and resuscitates the liberation spirit in which the 'patriots' are endorsed as the all-time liberators (Hammar, McGregor & Landau 2010:263).

The most controversial and widely condemned policy was the Fast Track Land Reform Program (FTLRP) that displaced white commercial farmers. As a result, Western countries and the United Nations (UN) imposed targeted sanctions on political leaders. The FTLRP had major negative effects on the country's agricultural sector (Gunda 2018:13; Sachikonye 2002:14). Although the program managed to access land, it undermined agricultural production by reducing the country that was once known as the breadbasket of Southern Africa to a basket case.

Consequently, economic hardship, politically motivated violence, victimisation and unemployment led to the mass exodus of Zimbabwean nationals to other countries. Over three million professionals left the country as asylum seekers or fled to seek employment opportunities in foreign countries. In terms of brain drain, Zimbabwe has thus been rated 10th out of 157 nations between 2000 and 2019 (Lamarche, Toysen, & Wishart 2019:10). This researcher therefore regards exile as one sign of the crisis in Zimbabwe. If one were to consider Daniel 9 as literature that desperately seeks restoration, then, exiled Zimbabweans invest their hope in foreign lands/ or a foreign land.

The magnitude of the crisis in Zimbabwe is best described by Caputo (2016:72) who says,

> It is impossible today to have hope in democracy, in the public institutions of democracy, when the democracy has been corrupted root and branch by money. It is impossible to trust politicians who belong, lock, stock, and barrel to the moneyed interests who fund their political careers. It is impossible to believe in the impartiality of the judicial system when judges are nominated on the basis of political ideology. It is impossible to have hope in democratic elections when political campaigns turn on duplicity, not on truth, on

wrecking the personal reputation of the opponents, when everything is done to prevent the least powerful people from voting, when voting districts are manipulated.

Caputo justifies the possibility of hopelessness in an undemocratic state. The political players use money to advance their individual agendas. They even appoint the judges based on their political ideologies, resulting in judiciary capture and the manipulation of the whole system that governs free and fair elections. In Zimbabwe, the state is blamed for manipulating all structures of justice for unjust causes. The less powerful would be frustrated and become hopeless. It is from this background that one would like to argue that reading Daniel 9 could be used to generate hope in such hopeless circumstances.

This chapter will focus on socio-economic and political crisis in the 21st century hopeless context of Zimbabwe, paying particular attention to the period of 2000-2022. For the purpose of this research, the socio-economic and political crisis in Zimbabwe can best be covered in two main sections: 1) Poor government policies that cover two critical areas of colonial heritage and land invasion; 2) State terror based on the pre- and post-election period of 2008 and Operation *Murambatsvina* (Operation Restore Order) (OM). The church efforts to bring hope will also be examined.

3.2 POOR GOVERNMENT POLICIES
3.2.1 Colonial heritage
Mugabe's conception of political independence was imperial. Being in political power entailed assuming the imperial domination of the colonial masters. The situation in Zimbabwe was exacerbated by the response to opposition politics that gathered traction towards the turn of the 21st century, leaving the country once again susceptible to hopelessness.

Furthermore, the Lancaster House constitution is blamed for safeguarding the interests of white farmers (Yeros 2012:5). White farmers extended colonial occupation by failing to return land to the indigenous people. The nationalist government since 1980 blamed the white farmers for obstructing development. According to Yeros (2012:5), the nationalist government comprised a petite bourgeoisie class that perpetuated imperialism, thereby,

betraying the masses. Thus, nationalism became an agent of neo-colonialism. Mulinge and Lesetedi (1998:17) argue that neo-colonialism maintains the legacies of the colonial era. Neo-colonialism is also often held responsible for structures and policies inherited from the colonial era (Mutumbuka 1981: xiii; Moyo 1992:307). This claim, as already highlighted, is not a stand-alone but is coupled with other factors noted in this chapter.

Racism in Zimbabwe, which led to Gukurahundi and the invasion of white owned farms, has remained one of the colonial legacies that continue to haunt the nation years after the liberation struggle. Mlambo (2013:56) asserts that the British monopolised the Rhodesian government and did not appoint ministers from other nationalities. Thus, British colonisation engendered racist policies. Mlambo (2013:57) remarks that one such racist policy was that of the colour bar that preserved some jobs for whites, barring blacks from participating in politics and "reducing them to second-class citizens".

In a letter by Joshua Nkomo to Mugabe in Nehanda Radio (Dec 2013 §80), he decried Mugabe's perpetuation of colonial laws. Some of the laws which were once used by the colonial government to oppress the indigenous people were applied by Mugabe to oppress his fellow citizens. Nkomo wrote:

> I now understand why you have maintained legislation such as the Law and Order Maintenance Act, the Unlawful Organisation Act and the Emergence Powers Act which was enacted by former regimes specifically for the suppression and oppression of the black population of Zimbabwe, and for use against their effort to struggle for independence, social justice, enjoyment of freedom and human rights you now seem to and justify the use of these notorious laws to deny your own people that which they fought and died for.

The new government of Zimbabwe under the leadership of Robert Mugabe maintained the imperial cocoon of the colonial era that was intended to perpetuate the oppressive structures of the colonial era. Musendekwa (2016:83) observes that the ongoing violence and cruelty against indigenous people constituted further deterioration of living conditions after the independence.

In Zimbabwe, the colonial legacies were maintained and possibly made worse by the indigenous government (Ranger 2007:162). Mugabe's government allegedly used colonial structures to deal with political opponents to protect the interests of the ruling elites. Mugabe, who suffered imprisonment during the liberation struggle, walked the path of his predecessors – the white colonial government. Mugabe's government comprised leaders who had been deplorably oppressed. By aligning with the colonial establishment, Mugabe, who had liberated the nation, turned into the oppressor (Mwananyanda, Amnesty International 6 Sept 2019). The masses of the independent state were subjected to oppression by leaders who seemingly wanted to compensate for the oppression they themselves had suffered.

Clark (2002) argues that when a revolution takes place, it does not solely transfer political and economic power but also, creates a new form of hegemony through experience and consciousness. Hegemony emanates through the introduction of policies that continue to infringe on the rights of the masses. One example in Zimbabwe is the Public Order and Safety Bill that bans any unauthorised gathering. The same bill prohibits any criticism against the president. Another example is the Access to Information Bill which contains provisions that limit the duties of journalists (Vao News, 27 Oct 2009). These laws have similar functions to those constituted by the colonial government.

Power struggle remained a critical issue after the departure of Mugabe. Two major splinter groups in ZANU-PF were created before Mugabe was ousted. One splinter group seemingly backed the idea that Mugabe should remain in power and the other suggested that he should appoint a successor.

Mhanda (2005:1) alludes to the developments that came with colonisation. The development of urbanisation, which saw the rise of the petite bourgeoisie class and peasant class, resulted in the liberation struggle for two main reasons. The petite bourgeoisie wanted to rise to the level of their white colonialists while the peasants resisted exploitation and dispossession.

3.2.2 Land invasion

The question of why Zimbabwe has been experiencing droughts and starvation since the land invasion in 2000 remains a mystery. However, that situation may be averted though prayer, petition and fasting (Dn 9:3). Since the colonisation of Zimbabwe, the colonial government had taken over most productive land, leaving the unproductive land to the indigenous people. The requirements of the Lancaster House retarded the land redistribution process. The declaration of war on colonial white farmers also eroded the nation's reputation on the international scene, thus, becoming one of the causes of the Zimbabwean crisis.

3.2.2.1 Background to the land invasion

Before the coming of European settlers, indigenous people were scattered all over the country living by hunting and subsistence crop production. The arrival of the white settlers resulted in the Land Apportionment Act of 1930. According to Moyo (1990:203), the white settlers gradually took over the land by pushing away the black peasants. Discrimination of the market against black peasants produced cheap labour in the farms and the mines.

The Berlin Conference of 1884 specified the limits of European control in Africa. The British established interest to control the land between Botswana and the Zambezi in 1888 (Oliver & Fage 1988:64). According to Douglas (1984:184), the land in Mashonaland and Matabeleland was then subjected to British control. As a result, the Ndebele king was coerced to sign the Rudd concession which gave the British mining rights in Mashonaland and by so doing, granted Cecil John Rhodes occupation.

When the British Pioneer Column occupied Zimbabwe in 1890, it dispossessed locals of their land. More land was dispossessed after quelling the Ndebele uprising (1893–1894) and the conquest of the Second Chimurenga (1896–1897). The Land Apportionment Act of 1930 designated 51%, which accounts for the best land, to about 50 000 whites and 29.8% to about 1 081 000 blacks (Muchemwa, Ngwerume & Hove 2011:218).

Restoration of the land to the indigenous people was one of the key reasons for the liberation struggle. The Land Tenure Act of 1969 was introduced to eliminate racial friction by dividing the country almost equally, with 250 000 Europeans being allocated 44 952 900 acres and 5 000 000 indigenous people being allocated 44 944 500 acres (Moyo 1987:33–49; Muchemwa, Ngwerume & Hove 2011:218).

The Lancaster House Constitution has been in use since independence. The constitution advocated for the principle of willing-seller, willing-buyer of land and had managed to resettle 70 000 families rather than the target of 162 000 families by 1990 (Onslow 2009:40). However, the process of land reform was too gradual, such that the Lancaster House Constitution expired with little success. The United Kingdom did not comply with the requirements of the Lancaster House Constitution to give the Zimbabwean government resources to effect land reform (Carver 2002:1). There is no doubt that the Lancaster House Constitution favoured the colonial policy of gradualism. However, it was apt for the state and particularly the ruling party to wait until the referendum. On realising that the new constitution had been rejected in 2000, the ruling party declared war against white farmers.

According to Moore (2001:255), the main reason the masses rejected the new constitution is that they were already fed up with promises of land that dated as far back as 1997. Mlambo (2010:40) argues that Mugabe and his government wanted to use the land issue for political mileage. The other view is that the majority of Zimbabweans were not interested in participating in land invasion. Those who participated in their campaign against white farmers[14] were ZANU-PF hooligans (Mlambo 2010:40).

3.2.2.2 Reasons for land invasion

There are two major views on what actually triggered land grabbing. Firstly, the rejections of the new constitution frustrated war veterans for they believed the land was part the outstanding issues from the liberation struggle. They then mobilised people who

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[14] Due to the State's stance on farm repossession, white farmers were frequently accused of funding the opposition to vote against the new constitution.

were desperately in need of land to invade farms owned by white settlers in what they dubbed the Third Chimurenga (Mude & Chigora 2013:28). Secondly, there was the view that Mugabe's government coerced the war veterans and ZANU-PF youths and it was supported by the army and the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) (Alexander & McGregor 2001:511).

The Third Chimurenga had two strands—the FTLRP and the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Policy (Ndlovu 2019:87). The indigenisation policy began in 2008 and required foreign businesses to cede 51% of their shares to the indigenous people. On the one hand, the FTLRP created a support base for ZANU-PF and, on the other hand, the Indigenous Economic Empowerment policy resulted in the closure of most of the industrial sector, which helped to demolish the opposition powerhouse. Clearly, the Third Chimurenga was rhetorically intended to promote the hegemonic and imperial interests of the state by attracting support and dealing with the opposition.

The MDC and civil society did not blame the crisis which had rocked the nation on land disparity, but on three major issues. Firstly, the ZANU-PF government wanted to address the land issue so that it could win elections. Secondly, the crisis was based on the earlier failure of the Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) which was introduced in 1990 and, thirdly, Robert Mugabe was manipulating the governing system by engaging the security service to silence any form of opposition (Carver 2002:1–2).

The ZANU-PF slogan of 2000, "The land is the economy and the economy is land" (Moore 2001:254) defeated the ends of justice. Court rulings on farm invasions were initially ignored until the government amended the law. For example, the intensity of conflicts over land heightened in 2000 as all court rulings were being ignored, until the Land Acquisition Amendment Act of 2002 gave orders to about 2900 commercial farmers to stop production in 45 days and to leave within another 45 days (Chavhunduka & Bromley 2010:2).

3.2.2.3 Outcomes of land invasion

The Land Reform Program that displaced white commercial farmers attracted condemnation from Western countries, that is, from the European Union (EU) in general and Britain in particular and from the United States of America. Zimbabwe was subjected to targeted economic sanctions imposed on the ruling elites (Magosvongwe 2019:34). Sanctions were issued to coerce the government to change policies that undermine the rule of law and human rights, which are the key pillars of democracy. Chingono (2010:193) shows that the sanctions did not produce the intended response. Rather, they resulted in much more undemocratic and humanitarian damage. It is important to note that the people who suffer more are the ordinary citizens.

Even though the state had all the resources to amend the constitution, it did not but declared the farm invasions to be a war. War with an unarmed farmer cannot be justifiable. The constitution was rejected not because it included issues of land, but because of articles related to presidential powers that cannot be fully dealt with in the present research.

The government responded to sanctions by formulating anti-democratic policies to consolidate its power at the expense of the common people. The outcome was hyperinflation, poverty, food shortage, brain drain, poor health delivery, diminishing investor confidence and the externalisation of finance (Chingono 2010:194). The government's response undermined democratic principles to a greater level than was ever before witnessed. The nation may be called under such circumstances to lament, like Daniel, "For your sake, O Lord. Look with favour on your desolate sanctuary". The expected answer to prayer would be, "...until the end that is decreed is poured out on him!" (the desolator) (Dn 9:27).

The FTLRP crippled the agricultural sector (Sachikonye 2002:14; Gunda 2018:13). Some commercial farms were reduced to subsistence crop production centres. Allocated settlers had no experience or even knowledge in farming, making the farms idle. Some farms were raided before harvest, resulting in great losses to the dispossessed colonial farmers.

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New farmers had no farming equipment or skill to operate sophisticated farming implements. The researcher is aware of the importance of land reforms. However, land invasion left the state accountable for the atrocities inflicted on legally settled white farmers.

From 1980 to 1997, 3.5 million hectares of land had been transferred to 70 000 families (Moyo 2000:5). The FTLRP appropriated over 10 million hectares to 168 671 families between 2000 and 2009 (Moyo 2011:496) doubling the amount of land that was supposed to be distributed. No doubt, land redistribution to indigenous people is a noble idea, but inherently the agricultural sector collapsed. It was unhelpful to allocate commercially productive land to ill-equipped, inexperienced farmers; that would significantly result in the de-commercialisation of the fertile farmland. I believe the ZANU-PF government forcefully amended the constitution after losing the referendum. When the new constitution was voted down, the state blamed white farmers for financing Morgan Tsvangirai to campaign against the constitution. Land redistribution was then used to restore support for the party as the land issue had remained outstanding since independence. Now the land is in the hands of many Zimbabwean citizens, but this has reduced commercial farms to subsistence farming, resulting in failure to meet the national needs and, at the same time, crippling the agricultural economy.

Many people lost their jobs. Farm equipment was vandalised and looted, running the whole system to the ground. Zimbabwe never got back on its feet since then. A country which used to have enough agricultural produce for its nation and for export began to depend on import. The state monopolised food handouts by barring non-governmental organisations from giving out food. When the state is the only entity that provides food that would increase loyalty from the poverty-stricken masses. In order to increase compliance and support, the ZANU-PF government became the only source of livelihood for the people, thereby minimising the chances of the opposition to gain support. Hope for the future would then be invested in the state as the sovereign authority.

Land invasion in Zimbabwe has often been regarded as a model for land reform but it emanated from hegemonic intentions. The challenges to fulfil the constitutional mandate undermined the legitimacy of the process. Daniel 9 and his reliance on authoritative documents, Prophet Jeremiah and the commandments, could justify the idea that authoritative literature may also be relevant in addressing the predicament of the world in which it is being appropriated.

3.3 STATE TERROR

This section focuses on the crisis associated with pre-election and post-election violence between 2000 and 2022. According to Johnson (2007:233), Mugabe had turned every election into a chance for unleashing state terror. The most striking violence was the deployment of the military to intensify electoral violence during the elections of 2002, 2005 and 2008 (Dzimiri 2017:52). The state security service arms, youth militia and war veterans were engaged by the state to clamp down opposition. Electoral violence was characterised by victimisation, torture, terror, abductions, detain-and-release tactics, killings, rape and sexual abuse.

3.3.1 State terror in Zimbabwe

Torture and violation of human rights escalated during the early years of independence. However, with the rise of the opposition party, abductions, torture and violence escalated. The use of torture could have been instigated by Mugabe's address at a rally on 29 March 2007 where he is quoted by Human Rights Watch (2007:1) as saying, "Of course he [opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai] was bashed. He deserved it ... I told the police to beat him a lot. He and his MDC must stop their terrorist activities. We are saying to him 'stop it now or you will regret it'".

Thus, Mugabe used the security services to terrorise members of the opposition parties simply because they opposed him. He treated the opposition parties as sell-outs and puppets of the West. In short, he regarded them as terrorists.

Multiple abduction and torture accounts have been recorded which show that the victims were the detractors of the ZANU-PF government. It is significant to note, for example,

the abduction and torture of Dr Peter Mugombeye, an outspoken leader of the Zimbabwe Doctors Association (ZHDA), who was abducted from his house in Budiriro Suburb by three unidentified men (Mavhinga, 2019). His abduction came after Mugombeyi arranged a series of demonstrations to demand salary increment for medical staff.

Additionally, the Zimbabwean political landscape has been characterised by genocide, targeting of the Ndebele, riots as a way of expressing grievances, abductions and terrorising of citizens by youth militia (Dodo 2018:125). Despite all the abductions and incarceration, those members of the opposition who defected to ZANU-PF were rewarded. For example, former MDC spokesperson Obert Gutu was sworn in by President Mnangagwa as a member of the National Peace Security and Reconciliation (NPRC) shortly after he joined ZANU-PF (New Zimbabwe 8 May 2021).

Authoritarianism is one major snare inherited from the colonial regime that is perpetuated in the postcolonial era. Masunungure (2011:49) observes that authoritarianism in the history of Zimbabwe originated from pre-colonial traditionalism, colonialism and the history of the liberation struggle. If Masunungure's observation is correct, then, authoritarianism has become the political culture of Zimbabwe and a snare that continues to haunt the nation.

To justify his observation, Masunungure (2011:50) has this to say:

> The structural pillars of white-settler colonialism were inherited intact by the incoming, victorious black nationalists who, after capturing the state, proceeded to systematically reinforce these authoritarian pillars. Hence the security sector (military, police and intelligence) and legal framework that undergirds colonialism were not reconstructed to be compatible with the new political order that the nationalists had fought so hard and long to establish. Dismantling colonial structures is no easy task, particularly given the extrinsic factors that aid the current government in its quest for regime prolongation.

Colonial structures continue to endure under the new government of liberation war heroes who fought and replaced the colonial government and, in turn, inherited the colonial structures. In 2000, the country descended into what Masunungure calls "a syndrome of crisis" as the fissures of economic degradation deepened.

According to Masunungure (2011:50-51),

> ...the public aversion to take risk was part of Zimbabwe's political culture that predated colonialism and was reinforced by settler-colonial repression, militaristic liberation-war ideology and post-liberation authoritarian politics. The result is that most Zimbabweans have come to view themselves as subjects, not as citizens, which has major implications for political behaviour. The Masses have grown fearful of confronting the state in the face of its massive display of repression, a tendency that only reinforces this subject orientation towards state authority.

The political landscape in Zimbabwe has invested much in the colonial heritage and the legacies of the liberation struggle that persistently haunt the nation. Being Zimbabwean reduces citizens to objects of repression. From the year 2000 onwards, there was wide-scale migration to other countries to escape suffering Mugabe's repression and syndrome of crisis that emanated from land acquisition. About a quarter of the population had migrated to other countries, with three million migrating to South Africa alone by 2002 (Masunungure 2011:51). A sample of 4, 654 (58%) migrated to avoid political torture, persecution and intimidation while 82% migrated for economic reasons and 31% due to unemployment (Makina 2007). All these reasons confirm the nature of the Zimbabwean crisis. Zimbabwe has been regarded as the "third most risky investment destination just ahead of Burma and Uzbekistan". The country has also been ranked second in terms of political risk, only better than Yemen. Zimbabwe was listed as number 56 out of 59 countries in the World Economic Forum of Competitive Report (Moore 2001:255). From the above analysis, the Zimbabwean situation had already reached a high level of crisis by the year 2000.

The ZANU-PF government under Mnangagwa failed to address the crisis that was prompted by economic and social hardships. As a result, Mnangagwa's position as the legitimately appointed leader was severely disputed, so much so that hopes for a new Zimbabwe were more and more inclined towards the opposition leadership (Lamarche, Toysen & Wishart 2019:14).

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In 1997, the government of Zimbabwe gave in to a series of protests by liberation war veterans, who pushed the government to pay their pensions and gratuities. Mugabe gave in and ordered the finance minister, then Herbet Murerwa, to pay ZW$3.5 billion to over fifty thousand war veterans; each taking home ZW$50 thousand. Mugabe ignored advice that such unbudgeted spending would impoverish the economy. In the same year, the government delisted 1 400 farms for compulsory acquisition (Coomer & Gstraunthaler 2011:319), for which the donor community and the IMF threatened to withdraw their support. News began to spread about the dwindling foreign reserves—that only one-month's worth of imports was left. On hearing such sad news, investors panicked and started stockpiling goods in United States dollars. The government made a desperate move and injected U$15 million to ease the situation, but to no avail. The Zimbabwean Dollar crashed by 75% against the United States dollar on Friday 14 November 1997, the day later known as "Black Friday" (Coomer & Gstraunthaler 2011:319). In an attempt to prevent further devaluation of the Zimbabwe dollar, the government ordered companies to close their foreign currency bank accounts, but this did not stop the downward spiral of the currency. The Zimbabwe dollar and the stock markets continued on a downward trend and this scared away investors.

3.3.2 Pre- and post-election state terror of 2005

According to Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru (2013:87), the first round of the presidential elections of 29 March 20008 had no clear winner. The MDC had won with 51% of the electorate in parliamentary elections, winning 110 seats out of the 210 seats. Correspondingly, Tsvangirai had 48% of the total votes against Mugabe's 43% (Fielding 2018:541). Therefore, the presidential results were withheld for more than a month. The ZANU-PF had never imagined or anticipated that the MDC could perform at that high level.

The MDC and the ZANU-PF braced for the second round of elections, which was to be held after three months, on June 29, 2008. Tsvangirai had declared interest to participate in the race. Consequently, there was an abrupt shift in the intensity of violence (Fielding 2018: 541). The post-election period after the first round of 29 March was characterised

by atrocities code-named "Operation Wavhotera Papi?" which is Shona for "Where did you cast your vote?" (Eppel 2009:968). During the operation, people who were believed to belong to the opposition were tortured and terrorised. Some were killed and others were abducted and vanished without any trace whatsoever. Even if they had been found, they would have been imprisoned, maimed or killed. The book of Daniel may be patently relevant in such circumstances of state persecution and the resulting hopelessness. Daniel could have asked the sovereign God, in prayer, beseeching Him as to why the desolation of Jerusalem continued beyond the stipulated time (Dn 9:2).

Several army officers were dispatched to all over Zimbabwe to establish training centres for party militia. These militias would unleash violence against the supporters of the MDC. The army officers were later rewarded after Mugabe's re-election into power (Fielding 2018:344). The army had continually been used by the state as an institution of terror, especially in dealing with any form of opposition against the ruling party. Considering that the book of Daniel originated during the atrocious period of the Seleucid Empire of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, Daniel 9 may speak to similar circumstances to generate hope for people in despair.

Mugabe had deliberately done injustice to Zimbabweans by appointing military figures to posts that relate to civilians. The militarisation of the state is a colonial heritage that involves the Joint Military Command (JOC)—the head of the police, army, air force, prisons and Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO). It was only later expanded to include representatives of the Zimbabwe National War Veterans Association and the Ministry of Defence (Ndawana 2020:243). Youth militias were also trained to reinforce the perpetrators of violence in established terror camps to stimulate voter fear and apathy among the opposition party members.

Subsequently, "reports of violence, intimidation, torture, murder, arbitrary detention, disappearances, and maiming" forced Tsvangirai to withdraw. Tsvangirai pulled out of the election race on 22 June 2008 to prevent further persecution of his supporters (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru 2013:87). For Tsvangirai, withdrawing could save the

situation. It would not have been proper for him to vie for power when his supporters were in grief and pain.

Some of those who were suspected of voting for any candidate other than Mugabe in the first round of elections were tortured, disfigured and their property impounded and ruined. Some were incarcerated or maimed. Apparently, there was a need for talks to necessitate national healing and reconciliation (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru 2013:87). Tsvangirai's withdrawal potentially eased the situation as Mugabe had to go into the ring alone.

Terror and torture were designed to demoralise the MDC supporters by disrupting their campaign rallies (Fielding 2018:541). Strategies of state terror had worked before. Few were publicly tortured to deter any future support for the MDC, if not to undermine any further support for any other opposition party. One may wonder at such atrocities, like Daniel who said, "Under the whole heaven nothing has ever been done like what has been done to Jerusalem" (Dn 9:12b). Daniel 9 may help in the interpretation of the context where Zimbabweans suffered for their freedom, yet in the hands of their liberators, continued to experience colonial bondage.

3.3.3 Operation Murambatsvina

In May 2005, the government embarked on an operation codenamed Operation Murambatsvina (OM). This operation appeared to be an act of revenge on the urban dwellers for voting for the opposition party in the parliamentary elections of 31 March 2005. At that time, a video clip of Morgan Tsvangirai was used heavily to undermine his credibility as a potential leader. Tsvangirai denounced the Zimbabwean government's relaxation of laws on formal accommodation saying, "*kungomera pose-pose sehowa*" meaning "germinating everywhere like mashroom" to refer to government's negligence that made room for the mushrooming of houses everywhere including in the reserved air spaces in residential townships. Mugabe also took that opportunity to punish urban dwellers for supporting the MDC. It is against this background that the Mugabe regime embarked on the OM.

3.3.3.1 Background of Operation Murambatsvina

Operation Murambatsvina, translated officially as "Operation Restore Order" and literally "Operation Remove Dirt" or "Clean the Filth Campaign", was a massive clean-up campaign officially intended to fulfil the requirements of the Regional, Town and Country Act. Ordinary people nicknamed it "Tsunami" to indicate the violent destruction that flattened places like the huge market space in Mbare (Bratton & Masunungure; 2007:22 Campbell 2007:29). Fontein (2009:373) aptly describes OM as a "massive spectacle of power that clearly displayed the capacity of the ruling elite to deploy state forces as it chose".

Operation Murambatsvina included the demolition of illegal business and residential structures (Bratton & Masunungure 2007:22; Vambe 2008:2). Homes of hundreds of thousands of people in high-density residential areas in Harare and Bulawayo were bulldozed (Youde 2007:10). According to Masunga (2015:108), OM was purported to arrest the proliferation of unplanned housing. As such, many urban dwellers were left homeless.

Operation Murambatsvina was sanitised as the act was seen as 'modernisation' which aimed "to rationalise coercion, serving economic and political ends of the elite, with devastating effects on marginalised segments of marginal society" (Spiegel 2014:544). The government continued to manipulate justice to meet ZANU-PF's political and economic interests and undermine the interests of the poor. Kamete (2013:72) alludes to modernist ideology through which the dominant authorities which are deployed in the subordinate society exclusively possessed power. This was contrary to the anticipated liberty from colonial domination. Once dominated, always a perpetrator. According to Sylvester (1986:229), the irony is that though ZANU-PF claims to be a Marxist party, "it uses inherited authoritarian state traditions to pursue a composite of repression and liberal nationalist policies".

The ESAP caused the proliferation of the informal sector, as many workers in formal industries were retrenched and industries closed. Some urban dwellers resorted to informal employment, informal accommodation and informal industry. As a result, prices of basic commodities skyrocketed. It was hoped that OM would be used to control the hiking prices of basic commodities (Hammer, McGregor & Landau 2010:270). Moreover, the government possibly feared that the angry urban citizens had already spoken through the ballot, that they were now supporting the opposition party. The government then used OM to disperse them into rural areas where they would only rely on government handouts for livelihood (Arbab 2006:173). Making the angry masses dependent on handouts would force them to either support the ZANU-PF or starve. The government also deployed the police into residential areas to destroy all the informal settlements and industries. Demolishing all the informal structures and shelter meant that the urban poor were reduced to destitution. The situation was aggravated by the perpetual economic crisis (Gumbo & Geyer 2011:55).

Before OM, the formal industry had downsized or completely shut down as the informal trade dominated the Zimbabwean economy. The Confederation of Industry reported that from 2002 to 2005, over 750 companies had shut down their businesses, subjecting the urban poor to economic misery (Musoni 2010:303).

The growing urban population resulted in the erection of more and more informal accommodation in open spaces, as many urban dwellers wanted to reduce the high cost of living by reducing rental costs. Operation Murambatsvina was introduced to demolish informal accommodation (Mlambo 2008:10). Resettlement structures in the outskirts of Harare at Churu farm[15] were demolished within 48 hours as the squatters were relocated to Pota Farm where they lived miserably (International Displacement Monitoring Centre 2007).

In May 2005, following gross economic mismanagement and the implementation of the chaotic land reform program, the government became bankrupt and desperate to find

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[15] Churu Farm is located in the west of Harare and it was owned by Ndabaningi Sithole.

foreign currency. The nation that was once an exporter of agricultural produce became an importer and receiver of food aid. The parliamentary elections of May 2005 demonstrated that the ZANU-PF had become unpopular in urban areas (Batton & Masunungure 2007:22). From 2000, the ZANU-PF encountered formidable resistance from the MDC. Morgan Tsvangirai was a trade unionist who became popular in urban areas especially among industrial workers.

There was truly a mushrooming of informal settlements and informal industry due to the harsh economic environment of the 1990s. The colonial laws on urban housing were deliberately relaxed. As a result, there was mushrooming of backyard shacks among urban property owners to create the much-needed accommodation. The rising unemployment levels also led to the establishment of informal markets and workshops in and around the city, town centres and residential areas. Nearly one-quarter of the population was forced into exile in neighbouring countries and abroad (Betts 2013:54).

Operation Murambatsvina was the largest clean-up campaign in Zimbabwean urban areas to get rid of filth (Kamete 2013:639). The Police Commissioner, Augustine Chihuri, is widely quoted as saying OM was intended to "clean the country of the crawling mass of maggots bent on destroying the economy" (Hills 2007:412; Fontein 2009:373; Simbao 2012:7). He properly intended to explain the "clumsy attempt to control the growth of the largely untaxed, which was undermining government receipts and an attempt to cripple the MDC urban support" (Onslow & Redding 2009:69).

These were official reasons for the destruction of informal houses and the displacement of many urban dwellers especially those who dwelt in those informal houses. They were bussed out of the cities to their rural homes. Those who did not have rural homes were ferried to Pota Farm close to Norton. In a way, Mugabe paralysed the opposition with long-term effects. The opposition party that was popular only in the urban areas began to gain traction in rural areas.

Thus, OM caused widespread urban displacement that resulted in a humanitarian crisis (Mathende & Nhapi 2017:145; Musanga 2017:781). The operation is one of the most ruthless ways a government can suppress its people. The people whose houses were destroyed were bundled and trucked to rural areas with the assumption that every citizen has a rural home or designated farm (Muzondidya 2007:334). Daniel laments the prolonged desolation of Jerusalem (Dn 9:2, 12). His goal perhaps was to seek the reasons for the prolonged suffering of the people of God.

3.3.3.2 Impact of Operation Murambatsvina
There was more brutal destruction and demonstration of state authority than clear efforts to implement policies. Moyo and Yeros (2007:115) describe OM as a military-style assault on irregular urban residential settlements and business structures. According to investigations by the United Nations Special Envoy, Anna Tibaijuka, OM served as "a smokescreen for motives that had little to do with addressing the problem of informal structures and restoring order within urban areas" (Tibaijuka 2005). Tibaijuka's report offended Mugabe's regime so much that the government rejected the United Nations U$30 million aid in September of the same year (Foushee 2006:6).

Operation Murambatsvina was carried out about a month and a half after the ZANU-PF won the general elections with more than two-thirds majority, as was required but he lost in urban areas. Wilkins (2013:888) affirms that OM was primarily planned to thin out the urban MDC-based population. In other words, the actual reason for establishing OM was to punish or intimidate the MDC supporters who made the MDC win most urban parliamentary seats (Welz & Junk 2009:186; Howard-Hassmann 2010:902; Reuter & Gandhi 2011:107; McGregor 2013:788). Although some of Mugabe's supporters were also affected, he reallocated to them industrial space and houses. By the end of 2005, the MDC had been weakened since ZANU-PF had won elections and got enough representation in parliament to amend the constitution (Gavin 2007:7). The government unleashed security forces on the poor people in high-density residential areas in pursuit of systematic violence (Saunders 2011:126). The police, the army and the youth militia were behind all the atrocities of that time (McGregor 2013:788). About 40 000 vendors and

informal traders were arrested and 90 000 houses demolished (Maltz 2006:215). The OM flattened homes of 700 000 people and forced them into rural areas (Morris 2006:28; Hammer, McGregor & Landau 2010:270; Howard-Hassmann 2010:902; Bratton 2011:359; Cuneo, Sollom & Beyrer 2017:253). The state used structures of justice to punish opponents.

The United Nations estimated that those who were affected directly or indirectly by the upheavals were 2.4 million people (Raftopoulos 2006:217; Naidu 2016:112, Ochele 2007:178). Their nutrition and health were affected (Howard-Hassmann 2010:902). More than 30 000 people were subjected to a 'detain-release' cycle of intimidation (Hills 2007:412). The number of people who were directly tortured may explain the magnitude of despair that was experienced by the nation.

Many African countries also understood OM as a campaign against MDC, as Foushee (2006:6) rightly elaborates:

> Many Africans, by contrast, characterised the campaign as an abominable political plot that aimed to attack Mugabe's urban opposition by focussing on neighbourhoods known to have voted against the President in recent elections. The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), which has provided the strongest opposition to the expansion of Mugabe's political power, has felt the brunt of the eviction campaign and accused the president of attempting to weaken its political structure by dispersing its core constituencies.

Despite the despicable destruction caused by OM, the informal economy was never destroyed. Rather, it took a new shape. According to Jones (2010:289), business continued from the rubble. Operation Murambatsvina provoked a bigger crisis in Zimbabwe than ever before, including trails of brokenness in the lives of the affected people. Victims of displacement were determined to "undermine the legitimacy of the state's authority" (Musoni 2010:303).

Fontein (2009:371) faults OM for defacing urban areas by demolishing some of the houses which were well built (though without proper documents) leaving rubble upon which the owners of the stands built temporary structures. Operation Murambatsvina was

Mugabe's operation which was meant to paralyse the growing opposition in urban areas. The operation may be like the biblical deportation of Judah to Babylon. For seventy years, Daniel could have felt contented. When the exilic conditions became prolonged, he lamented to Yahweh in prayer (Dn 9:4-19).

3.4 THE CHURCH'S POSITION DURING CRISIS

The church's participation in giving hope in the Zimbabwean crisis is polarised. Some church leaders supported the state while some criticised it. Consequently, leaders who supported the state were rewarded and those who criticised it were villified (Magezi & Tagwirei 2022:1). The church became divided while Robert Mugabe was still in political power. The church leaders who opposed Mugabe were often regarded as puppets, propelling the interests of the detractors. One such example is the Catholic Bishop, Pius Ncube, who was muzzled for standing up for the marginalised (Magezi & Tagwirei 2022:2). Magezi and Tagwirei (2022:1) rightly note that the church was "seized by retrogressive pauperisation of partisan gospel ministers and churches, worsened by state victimisation of those who stand against political ills".

Church leaders sometimes establish their personal interest by supporting the ruling party. Some were eventually rewarded for supporting the ruling party. However, church leaders should be called upon to desist from partisanship and preach the gospel of justice and peace.

Pro-state preachers sometimes preach hope as a way of encouraging people to accept the authoritarian rule (Dube 2020a:27). In that way, they fail to engage the state for the sake of justice for the victimised. The greatest challenge is when churches speak for justice, the state assume that they are taking the side of the opposition parties by giving false information. Bishop Mutendi of the Zion Christian Church is quoted in Dube (2020a:27) as saying:

> …We must survive the hardships we are experiencing. This is a passing phase. Wake up! This is your country. Do not give false information to the outside world but seek solutions from the Lord. We want to use the gift of God to enhance and firmly embrace

the President's Vision 2030 Empowerment Agenda. We applaud the work our President
is doing in uplifting our souls in prayer. We appreciate his work.

While Bishop Mutendi's message to the church has substantial significance because it embraced prayer, he did not openly beseech the state to exercise justice. Church leaders are often blamed for failing to safeguard the church's integrity, as they abuse their positions by manipulating the church to undermine democracy (Dube 2020a:28). When dissenting voices are suppressed, a deeper crisis ensues. People should be free to express different political opinions. Disagreement should not result in repression.

Dube (2020a:30) condemns theologies that give false hope thus:

> In times of Crisis, there is need for theologies that give people hope, but the hope must not be based on false assumption and exploitation of people. Religious leaders under normal circumstances are the locus and the keepers of hope.

Church leaders sometimes exploit their people by giving hope based on false assumptions. Hope should not sidestep those who are suffering. Leaders who falsify hope often do so for personal gain. Most popular of these leaders are Wutawunashe, Mutendi and many other self-styled prophets. The proliferation of such prophets led to the rise of some who are very much attached to the state and who sometimes exercise little or no wisdom in performing their tasks.

In times of crisis however, there is a need for theologies that give people hope, but the hope must not be based on false assumptions and exploitation. Religious leaders, under normal circumstances, are the locus and the keepers of hope.

3.5 CONCLUSION

From the discussion in the present chapter, it is evident that Zimbabwe has experienced socio-political and economic crisis that is rooted in poor governance and policies. The Zimbabwean government adopted the oppressive policies of the colonial government. When the state permitted land invasion, one could easily admire Zimbabweans for taking back their land without knowing that the state did not follow the constitutional mandate. The state terrorised its own people, particularly during the 2008 pre- and post-elections.

Operation Murambatsvina that demolished informal housing and industrial structures in 2005 was also introduced. Most Zimbabweans began to lose hope in the ZANU-PF government because it did not seem to have anything to offer. In such a context of a multifaceted crisis, the common people are left hopeless and in a state of despair. The situation indicates the need to generate hope in a hopeless context. The next chapter will focus on Daniel 9 to assess whether it provided hope to its earlier readers to analyse its relevance for today's 21st Zimbabwean context.

CHAPTER FOUR
HOPE IN DANIEL 9

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The present chapter argues that a historical critical exegesis of Daniel 9 has the potential to empower some 21st century Zimbabweans who are in a hopeless situation to become hopeful. The research considers the background of the composition of the book of Daniel. The book was not written in the sixth century exilic setting in Babylon but during the Second Temple period. The book of Daniel is considered apocalyptic literature by most scholars because it was written to give hope and stimulate passive resistance among the Jews under Greek domination. The book provides a better understanding of the social, political and economic conditions of the community to which it belonged. Daniel invites readers to understand that even in times of despair, there is a ray of hope. It is in this vein that the purpose and function of the book of Daniel are not determined by its author but, rather, the circumstances of crisis that befit apocalyptic literature, as has been noted in Chapter Two and from additional highlights in this chapter. The purpose of the book is to inspire others through the example of a man who stood before generations of Babylonian kings but remained resolute and faithful to his God as a lesson for people experiencing hopelessness. The focus of this chapter is to demonstrate that Daniel 9 may encourage the readers to remain hopeful and to believe in a better future.

Daniel constitutes late biblical traditions, also considered as apocalyptic literature, a genre that is developed around offering hope to its readers. As the book was written during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes IV, it denotes resistance against the Empire. This chapter considers that the prayer in Daniel 9, which is a prayer of penitence, in fact, reflects rather formulaic and thus old material that presents one of the longest prayers in the Old Testament (vv. 3–19). It also shows that Daniel 9 constitutes a reinterpretation of Jeremiah 25:11-12 and 29:10. The role of Angel Gabriel as the re-interpreter of existing prophetic traditions will be discussed. The use of the divine name Yahweh is discussed in relation to apocalyptic hope. The significance of the position of Dan 9 at the centre of

Dan 8 and 10-12 will be assessed. Moreover, the messianic expectation according to Daniel 9 and the concept of hope in apocalyptic literature will be considered.

4.2 DANIEL—A BRIEF HISTORICAL CRITICAL SURVEY

Chapter One of this study has highlighted the total context of historical criticism as dealing with four aspects—the world of the text, the story world or textual world, the world to which the text refers or the world of the text's production and the world of the intended or real audience. These four 'worlds' will be examined below.

4.2.1 World of the text

The author of Daniel, who was earlier believed to be a historical person with the name "Daniel" in the sixth century BCE, is viewed as describing events of the second century BCE. Collins (1984:2-11) considers the book of Daniel, in a broader sense, a myth, which when viewed closely, would provide historical and visionary perspectives. The two perspectives may have originally existed separately but became a literary unity that brought both perspectives together.

Daniel's reference to the wise in Chapters 11-12 prompts the assumption that the author preceded the Maccabean rebellion during the years of trouble. These editors added a series of visions to the existing group of exilic stories about a hero with the aim of "applying the ideology of the stories to the particular circumstance of their own time" (Davies 1993:121). Davies (1993:121) avers that many scholars identify the wise with the Hasdim.[16] Research on the book of Daniel suggests that it was written by a pseudonymous author and that it reached its final form during the second century to encourage faithful Jews who were in despair (Levine 2002: xiii).

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[16] Another term is Hasdeans or pious denoting the group that joined the Maccabees in the resistance against the Empire. Davies (1993:122-124) lists three classes of these Hasdim namely, 1) The law abiding mighty warriors who were involved in active resistance sighted in 1 Maccabees 2:42 and 7:12f. 2) Those "seeking righteousness and justice" who, when pursued by their enemies, kept hiding but were destroyed since they could not fight back for the sake of keeping the Sabbath (1Macc 2:29-38) and 3) The scribe of the apocryphal book of Jesus Ben Sirah who was a professional scribe at the beginning of the second century BCE.

Baldwin (1978:8-11) argues that there is no evidence of pseudonymity in the Old Testament. For the book of Daniel to be pseudonymous, a reader needs to be persuaded that pseudonymity is a literary convention that enhances its credibility and authority, as pseudonymity demonstrates that the author(s) was (were) avoiding victimisation. Portier-Young (2011: xxii) notes that "the pseudonymous writers of the apocalypse hid their identities to avoid retaliation for their radical critique, that they belonged to fringe sectarian groups with little connection to mainstream Judaism or centres of influence in Judean society". Earlier apocalypses could have belonged to the minority Judean elites. These elites are regarded as those who used pseudonyms to castigate their oppressors. De Villiers (2016:247) posits that:

> Apocalypses lack historical and social specificity because their authors deliberately wanted to conceal their own situation and create the impression that their books originated in a much earlier time. In order to authorise and legitimise their books, they wrote under a pseudonym in the name of an ancient, well-known figure or sage. They avoided any explicit references to their own situation.

De Villiers seems to misrepresent the significance of pseudonymity for through pseudonyms, the authors were resisting the Empire. Portier-Young (2011:35) regards apocalyptic pseudonymity as "a discursive strategy of resistance to empire in our texts". Portier-Young argues that authors of apocalyptic literature intended to counter hegemonic discourse with their own discourse. The role of pseudonymity was not to hide the author or community, but to confirm that these authors were countering the Empire.

There is a difference between apocalyptic pseudonymity and anonymity. In anonymity, open acts of resistance are prohibited, hence, the users are protected from harm as the subversive message is freely circulated (Portier-Young 2011:38-40). The purpose of anonymity is to shield one's identity while facilitating open attacks, threats and criticism. Some of the prominent techniques "include spirit possession, gossip, aggression through magic, rumour, anonymous threats and violence, the anonymous letter, and anonymous mass defiance" (Scott 2013:140).

While anonymity restrains and protects, it is different from pseudonymity in apocalyptic literature. Attributing authorship to a past revered figure in pseudepigrapha gives authority to literature. It also indicates participation in existing discourse (Portier-Young 2011:40-41). Pseudonymity is attributed to ancient popular figures. The author avoids being identified as an author because of the disguise offered by pseudonymity. Pseudonymity is notable among the ancient post-exilic communities who had long anticipated the restoration of the kingdom of David (De Villiers 2016:245).

Authority is located traditionally within a revelatory discourse to give testimony of an alternative source of power and reality (Portier-Young 2011:42). The readers of apocalyptic literature are imparted with traditional records that identify well with the readers and enable them to participate in the resistance of imperial domination. It, thus, makes sense that the pseudonymous nature of apocalyptic literature is a powerful tool of resistance.

Daniel used the first-person singular pronoun to indicate that he wrote this portion of the book. In other parts of the book, he is referred to in the third person "הו (he)". The name "דָּנִיֵּאל (Daniel)" means "God is my judge" but in the king's courts in Babylon, he was given a new name, Belteshazzar. His three friends from Judah also received new names. Hananiah was named Shadrack, Mishael was named Mesheck and Azariah was named Abednego (Dn 1:3-7). The new names gave them new identity as real soldiers. The meanings of the new names related to the pantheon of Babylonian deities. As for Daniel's three friends, once they were given foreign names, their old names were never referred to in the text again. Daniel's foreign name was used in Daniel 4:8. Nebuchadnezzar believed that Daniel had wisdom to interpret his dreams because he was called "בֵּלְטְשַׁאצַּר (Belteshazzar)" after the name of his god, meaning "Baal protect the king". For that reason, Daniel was endowed with the spirit of the holy gods. In verse 9, Nebuchadnezzar further referred to Daniel as "chief of the magicians". He believed that Daniel possessed extraordinary power like that of the gods.

Daniel did not openly resist the name. He was tactful because in the first-person texts of Daniel, he said "אֲנִי דָנִיֵּאל (I Daniel)". The emphasis is on the origin of resisting the imperial name. In Daniel 10:1, he is referred to as Daniel "who was also called Belteshazzar". We should recall that Yahweh changed Abram's name to Abraham and changed the name of Jacob to Israel. When God changed names, these names were used from the time of the change although the name Jacob was often used with reference to his household. The reason for Daniel's continued use of his native name could be interpreted to be that he had power to control his destiny. Daniel became an example of loyalty to Yahweh, though under foreign rule.

To sum up, the author/authors of the book of Daniel is/are not known. The author is pseudonymous, as the name "Daniel" has ancient origins. It depicts one who belonged to a community of the wise and who remained faithful despite his hopeless circumstance in the royal courts. The authors encourage(s) readers to remain loyal and faithful to Yahweh. In the next section, the context (world) of the production of the book of Daniel is examined.

4.2.2 Context (world) of the production of the book of Daniel
The purpose of the book of Daniel was instil and rekindle hope when hope was "precisely needed in the midst of crisis situations" (Casey 1976:18).The stories in the book of Daniel could have been formulated to meet the requirement of the world of the text's reception. Other groups of people did not participate in active resistance, but "preferred to wait until the time appointed by God and to accept what persecution came their way…" (Davies 1993:121).

The stories take a political stance of "loyalty and optimism". The book legitimises the gentile rule and exhorts Israel to remain loyal. Daniel even interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dreams which legitimised the gentile authority to the extent that kingship was exchanged from one nation to another, with Israel remaining loyal to all (Collins 1993:51).

In many respects, the visions are composed like tales of the postexilic world, depicting a world in which ancient Israel interacted with other nations. There is more emphasis on the role of other nations, a situation that brings Yahweh into the limelight as the sovereign God (Collins 1993:51-52).

4.2.3 World of the text's production

This research situates apocalyptic literature within the historical context which is intertwined with contexts of crises. Apocalyptic literature may provide hope in desperate situations. Traditionally, the book of Daniel is situated in the sixth century BCE, but since the beginning of the twentieth century, more and more scholars situated it in the second century BCE. The fact that the book is linked to the second century BCE made modern scholars aware of the social, political, economic and spiritual crises which the Jews experienced. Furthermore, the book of Daniel provides details concerning the second century BCE. Thus, it seems the allusions to 'anointing the holy' and an 'anointed one' (Dn 9:24-27) should be linked to events and persons of the second century BCE.

This research will employ the findings of the historical critical study of Daniel 9 to stimulate hope amidst the 21st century Zimbabwean context in Chapter Five. The rise of messianic expectations during the Maccabean era could serve as stimuli for creating and fostering hope. One is of the view that Daniel 9 serves as an example of how one can remain hopeful in difficult times.

In Chapter 9, the author of the book of Daniel lets Daniel (the main character) read from Jeremiah and reinterpret the prophecy to fit the time in which the author himself lived. The prayer of Daniel (Dn 9:4-19) is then linked to the desecration of the Temple by Antiochus IV Epiphanes in 164 BCE. The prophecy of Jeremiah is reinterpreted therefore in such a way that it relates to the period in which the author of the book of Daniel lived.

Since most critical scholars, following the third century philosopher Porphyry, concur with the view that the writing of the book of Daniel should be linked to the second century BCE, it becomes possible to retell the stories of Daniel and apply them to new

situations. We can use these stories to encourage people in our age not to lose hope but to wait and trust that oppressors will not always rule supreme, that is, that there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Dating the book of Daniel has always been a contention among scholars, with some arguing that it originated from as early as the sixth century BCE and others proposing that it obtained its final form during the first half of the second century BCE. In this regard, the stories in the book of Daniel are related to the incidents that are viewed in Daniel 11:45 where reference to the end of the king of the South presumably refers to Antiochus's death (Casey 1976:16). The evidences of incidents from 250 BCE are not prophetic references, but the reutilisation of older traditions to generate hope for the Second Temple community at a time of oppression (Ulrich 2014:1062).

Most 19th century scholars have reached consensus that the book of Daniel was composed during the Maccabean period despite the continuation of the opposition from fundamentalists. Moreover, the book of Daniel is a pseudonymous, literary feature common among Jewish writings under the Hellenistic influence. This view equally favours the Maccabean period (Collins 1984:26).

The author of the book of Daniel is "concealed by the device of pseudonimity", hence, Daniel is assigned to the exilic period. However, uncovering the actual world of the text's production could be related to the actual historical evidence in the book. It is more fitting to consider "apocalyptic genre" to be a product of the Hellenistic period (Collins 1984:19-20).

Daniel is regarded as a legendary figure by modern scholars and Chapters 1-6 were authored not before the Hellenistic period while Chapters 7-12 were written during the Maccabean period. Although the figures of Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus are historical, their use in the text does not portray a true historical record but a "historical account or edificatory legend, bona fide prediction or *vaticinium ex eventu*" (Collins 1984:28-29).

The world of the production of Daniel is closely related to the period in which other apocalyptic literature originated. For example, Daniel is related to contemporary Hellenistic literature such as Animal Apocalypse, both of which share the same historical situation of the persecution of the Jewish community by Antiochus Epiphanes and the Maccabean revolt (167-164BCE). The ancient religion of the Hellenistic and Roman periods was characterised by various elements which are observable in the apocalyptic literature of that time. One such element is mythology. In that period, mythology was a worldview which was characterised by "making sense of the personal, cultural, and political experience" (Murphy 2012:67).

4.2.4 World of the real audience

Any author writes a story to attract a vast array of readers. The text is not conceived in a vacuum, but always with someone in mind. In ancient texts, the real audience can be closely associated with the circle in which the author moved, making the members part of his immediate environment (Shen 2012:2668).

Daniel was earlier regarded as a book of the exilic period. While it depicts Daniel and his friends in the Babylonian exile, the real audience is the post-exilic community. Davies (1993:20-25) refers to the book as a narrative comprising the narratives of two exiles—the Babylonian exile and the exile in Palestine. The evidence of the two exiles is summed up in Daniel 9 where the seventy years prophesied by Jeremiah were reinterpreted as 490 years. Although Ezra-Nehemiah depicts the time of return as the time of Cyrus, the longer exile was in the homeland. It is, therefore, clear that the book of Daniel obtained its final form in the homeland. Davies (1993:25) alludes to the crisis of the postexilic era as "the intrusion of Hellenism into the system of government by which political and religious authority had been fused – The High Priesthood". The royalty was responsible for the priestly succession that eventually provoked resistance. Under the reign of Antiochus, resistance provoked the abolition of Jewish religious practices and replaced the latter with pagan worship.

Scholars have examined in detail the historical background of the book's original audience. Hence, this section will not dwell too much on that. However, very few scholars view the Daniel narratives as being placed in the postexilic community to generate hope during the trying times of the Hellenistic period. Rather, the more positive attitude towards foreign powers led many to date the narratives to the Persian period and to show that was used in the second century BCE as introductory material to the visions due to their popular nature. Daniel, thus, would have obtained its final form in response to the crisis of that time (Goldingay 1977:45).

The book of Daniel is regarded as a literary creation written in four stories set during the Babylonian (Dan 1-5), Mede (6:1), Persian (10:1) and Greek empire periods (10:20) (Moloney 2019:8). Chapters 1-6 were written to depict a situation of persecution of the Jews elsewhere in history. The Jews obtained their hope as the ancient stories allude to the ultimate victory of those who adhered to their national religious beliefs (Murphy 2012:72; Moloney 2019:9). However, Chapters 7-12 refer to the period under the rule of Antiochus IV until the Maccabean revolt.

The Jewish historian Josephus still placed the book squarely in the exilic period with Daniel as author, not thereafter. He even claimed that the book was shown to Alexander the Great! Alexander the Great's ambition to hellenise was informed by Aristotle and was to pursue the Greek civilisation of the world. He became mighty though he had just a small army. His successes were characterised by his establishment of a large Greek Empire before his death in 323 BCE, after ruling for just ten years (Scheffler 2001:148). After the death of Alexander the Great, the kingdom was divided between his generals. These were Ptolemy I Soter, who ruled Palestine from Egypt and Seleucus I Nicator, who ruled Mesopotamia and some parts of Asia Minor from Antioch. This was but just a continuation of Greek Hellenisation by establishing Greek religion and culture which dominated the ancient world for almost three centuries and was later replaced by the Roman Empire (Scheffler 2001:148). Such a period of contestation for control had a negative impact on Jewish social and religious identity.

The Ptolemies ruled Yehud as a province of Coelesyria as from 302 to 198 BCE. Seemingly, the Jewish religion and social practices were preserved, but the Jews were subjected to payment of tax. However, the Ptolemies managed to acculturate the Jews and introduced the Greek language (Koine Greek). It is there in Alexandria where it is believed that the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek occurred. Despite the preservation of Jewish religion and social life, there was a gradual split between conservative Jews who resisted Hellenisation and those who accepted it (Scheffler 2001:150-151). Hope for a restored state was thwarted as the Jews were divided over the issue of accepting or denying Hellenisation.

Tension among the Jews arose as a result of the Seleucids' victory over the Ptolemies. Despite the accumulation of Greek language and culture, the Ptolemies did not interfere with the religious practises of the Jews. According to Scheffler (2001:151), the Seleucids forced the Hellenisation of the Jews, causing conflict between orthodox and Hellenist Jews. The allusion of Daniel to the "abomination that desolates" (Dn 11:31; 12:11) is reference to the destruction of the Temple during the crisis that emanated between the Hellenisers and Jewish orthodox groups such as the Hasidim (Scheffler 2001:153).

The cause of the war was Seleucus IV ceasing to pay war indemnities to Rome. The debt was then inherited by Antiochus IV. When Antiochus paid up the debt, he drained the Seleucid empirical coffers. By the time Antiochus was preparing for war with the Ptolemies over the control of Phoenicia and Coele-Syria, Antiochus heavily depended on the "Phoenician naval technology" that included shipbuilding. Tyre was the centre of Phoenician shipbuilding. When Antiochus visited Tyre sometime between 173 and 172 BCE, during a qudrillinial game in honour of Heracles a Greek god, he made a public display of his Seleucid wealth and power, which boosted the morale of his troops (Portier-Young, 2011;119). The games engaged the "local habitants in the spirit of competition and spectacle", which was a central component of Hellenistic war ideology. Jason the High Priest, sent his envoys to convey a message to Antiochus about making sacrifices. It is shocking to note that Jason's loyalty to Antiochus involved participation in Greek religious practices (Portier-Young 2011:120).

In his search for an opportunity to implement his policy of Hellenisation in Jerusalem, Antiochus Epiphanes capitalised on the dispute between Jason and a close associate of the tribe of Banjamin, Menelaus. Menelaus was not from the priestly family; he captured the priesthood by promising to pay more tribute than Jason did (Pfeiffer 1973:562). Eventually, Jason's earlier purchase of the high priesthood set the conditions that caused his downfall. He obtained the position of high priest by promising an increase in tribute to the Seleucids. When in 172 BCE, Jason sent Menelaus to pay tribute to Antiochus, Menelaus outbid him by adding an additional 300 talents to obtain the position for him. This was a gross violation of Jewish law. Since Menelaus did not descend from the priestly family line of the house of Joshua, his appointment ended the hereditary high priesthood in Judea (Portier-Young 2011:121).

To ensure order and respect for the new high priest, a garrison was sent to Jerusalem and stationed at the citadel. The Hasidim (the most pious Jews) could have been scandalised when Jason seized the high priesthood from his brother Onias. Worse still, Menelaus was an out-and-out Hellenist (Pfeiffer 1973:563). The discontent between the conservative Jews and the Hellenistic Jews let the fissure between them grow. The presence of the Syrian garrison in Jerusalem also compromised, to a high degree, the religious-political situation of the conservatives, while pro-Hellenists found a firm grip on political power that was reinforced by the presence of the imperial forces.

It did not take long before Menelaus started to renege on his promises. It was hard for Menelaus to fail to pay tribute with a heavy military presence in Jerusalem. Their presence became a measure of control under the Hellenistic rule. However, the centre for governance was shifted from Jerusalem to Akra. This move gave a clear indication of the lesser value of Jerusalem for administration and religious worship. Heavy artillery was always a reminder that power was invested in Seleucid military presence. In fact, it appears peace in the city was only superficial. The social lives of the inhabitants were at risk since the occupation by soldiers violated the land ownership rights of the indigenous people. The agricultural land was under the control of the army. The citizens were

violated and raped. Patronage by foreign inhabitants is mentioned in Daniel 11:39. Akra linked the imperial power structures and citizens to facilitate the extraction of tribute from Manelaus, interweaving economic, political and religious domination in Judea (Portier-Young 2011:122-123).

4.2.4.1 Desecration

The presence of the army failed to generate the tribute that was required. There simply was no money since the province of Yehud was not rich. Menelaus was called to account by the king. He then plundered the temple to gather all the golden objects either to serve as bribery to the king's officials or to pay tribute. Maccabees 4:32-33 describes these objects as sacred. Menelaus' actions angered Onias. Onias then sought legal action against Menelaus who, in turn, orchestrated his assassination. Daniel 9:26 refers to this assassination as the shift in the history of Judea when there was a turn from rebuilding to destruction at the hands Antiochus IV. Menelaus then appointed Lysimachus, his brother, to the post of deputy high priest. The two brothers robbed the temple treasures, including the golden objects. The Jerusalemites were infuriated and subsequently engaged in an armed struggle (2 Macc 4:40-42). A religious violation by Judean officials stirred an armed resistance! When the insurrection stopped, the council of elders instituted charges against Menelaus before Antiochus. However, Menelaus was acquitted and his accusers were executed (2 Macc 4:43-48). These events set the stage for civil resistance and war (Portier-Young 2011:126).

When Antiochus Epiphanes was away on a campaign against the Ptolemies in Egypt, rumour circulated that he had died in war. Jason, who had previously fled, set out to regain his position as high priest from Menelaus. Jason raised an army in the Transjordan and marched against Jerusalem. Menelaus managed to repel him, but Antiochus became aware that there was still resistance against his Hellenising policies by some Jews (Pfeiffer 1973:563). Jason's rebellion was quelled by Antiochus, whom Jason did not know was still alive. Jason's assault of the temple guards and the soldiers at Akra also undermined the sovereignty of Antiochus (Portier-Young 2011:128-129). When Antiochus returned, Menelaus welcomed him and gave him the remaining Temple

treasures (Pfeiffer 1973:563). The Temple was completely ransacked to the disappointment of the conservative Jews.

Jason's resistance exposed Jerusalem to the tightened grip of Antiochus. This idea may correspond with the views of Pfeiffer (1973:564), who argues that with Antiochus' failure to annex Egypt, his only option was to maintain his grip on Palestine. He then sent his general, Apollonius, to occupy Jerusalem. Apollonius wanted to eradicate all rebellious elements that resisted Menelaus. Therefore, he destroyed the city walls and built a new fortress on the site of the citadel, the Akra.

Portier-Young (2011:138) claims that the revolt provided an opportunity for a re-conquest by Antiochus to facilitate the creation of an empire. Any kind of revolt called for the re-enactment of a conquest. The revolt of Jason, as already reported, was associated with the merciless killing of 40 000 Jews, while another 40 000 Jews were sold into slavery. Conquered territories survived at the mercy of their conquerors, which means that the Jerusalemites could only enjoy any freedom as granted by Antiochus. By initially taking freedom away and later restoring it, Antiochus shattered the people's sense of autonomy to ensure that all freedom would only be granted by his regime. Antiochus did not only rely on large-scale massacre and captivity, but also on repression and state terror.

4.2.4.2 Seleucid State Terror

Antiochus used various strategies of terror in Judea—from the revolt of Jason to the mission of Apollonius. Terror was employed as a control strategy. The main tenets of terror are summed up by Portier-Young (2011:140) as fear and anxiety, destruction, violence, abduction and depredation.

Apocalyptic literature was produced most likely at a time of anxiety, fear and terror, which emanated from perceived post-exilic threats. When the exact time of terror is unknown, it develops into anxiety. Terror can also be employed as a state mechanism for

social control. The target of state terror is the whole population (Portier-Young 2011:140-142).

One such instance occurred after Jason's revolt when Antiochus terrorised Jerusalem's inhabitants through abduction, massacre, home invasion and temple plunder. With the spectacular display of power, Antiochus shattered any will to resist by creating deep insecurity. By enslaving and massacring people at will, he also crushed all hopes for independence as survivors of horror were exposed to insecurity in the aftermath of the sufferings (Portier-Young 2011:143).

Murder in the home undermined psychological well-being, while religious security and social life were rendered meaningless. Slavery also played an economic role as slaves had economic significance in the Hellenistic Empire. The war captives could be sold at a price ranging from 100 to 300 drachmas each. Equally, Antiochus imposed his own social order as he negated the existing one (Portier-Young 2011:147-148).

The alienation from birthplaces constituted social death as cultural and religious values were violated. Co-values such as purity, holiness, honour and shame were violated. Slaves were highly dishonoured as Antiochus was honoured. Selling slaves to various places constituted part of the Seleucid hegemony as the empire confirmed sovereignty over human bodies. Abduction and terrorisation left trails of trauma as those who lost their beloved ones nursed hope and fear (Portier-Young 2011:149). The memories of past experiences also raised hope and resistance.

The defilement of the temple by Antiochus was in a manner reminiscent of Belteshazzar's, who defiled the temple treasures and became mad. Antiochus also repeatedly looted the temple treasures (Drane 1987:199).

The apocalyptic literature could have helped to interpret the political turmoil experienced in the post-exilic era. The Jews, based on their exilic experiences and their earlier

expectations, were trying to give meaning to their political and religious trauma (Drane 1987:201). Thus, Daniel's prayer gives honour to God and not to Antiochus.

After the temple plunder, Antiochus proceeded to appoint new officials to rule the region. Philip was stationed by Antiochus as a commander of a group of mercenaries that threatened the Judeans externally. The threats were compounded by the actions of Menelaus who betrayed his people. Antiochus also added oppressive structures by sending Apollonius with 22 000 mercenaries to occupy the city. Apollonius attacked the city on the Sabbath by transforming a military parade to a gruesome massacre of spectators before soldiers attacked the city (2 Macc 5:25-26; Portier-Young 2011:158-161). Apollonius also subjected Jerusalem to great misery, which brought shame to the orthodox Jews. The installation of the Seleucid garrison in Jerusalem was a symbol of foreign domination, turning the city into a Greek Polis. The renegade Jews, with the help of Menelaus, defied the worship of Yahweh in favour of that of Zeus.

Apocalyptic writers expose the spectacle by representing imperialism as a visible negation of life. The visible had no part to play in the eternal. Urban settlers fled into the wilderness, which was a signal of rejecting imperial rule (Portier-Young 2011:167-169). In contrast, the pro-Hellenistic group found honour from Greek identity as they participated in sport. Apocalyptic texts were composed in apocalyptic eschatology, a perspective for people in crisis. These texts are generated among marginal groups of people and written by a pseudonymous author to give the texts authority to their readers (Vorster 1986:172). The book of Daniel is one of such texts that suggest that the agonies of the present age are divinely predetermined to illuminate the triumph of his plan. Ezadegan (2023:188) notes that many scholars agree that God is immutable, that he has predetermined the future and that he possesses the foreknowledge of our agonies and the timing of human petitions. God is not surprised when people are subjected to insincere imperial rule, but rather, he knows when to bring restoration for his glory.

The memory of atrocities and trauma traps its victims in the state of terror that intrudes in the present. Traumatic memories are unspeakable and are encoded, therefore, in images

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and vivid sensations (Portier-Young 2011:174). The scholar agrees with Vorster (1986:178) that, "[t]he present and the past are narrated with a view of the future. And the events that take place on earth are linked to the supernatural space". In this regard, the memories of the victimised and the traumatic experiences produced apocalyptic literature.

The persecution of Antiochus IV Epiphanes led "the saints of the Most High, those holy ones of Israel" to place their hopes in the promises of Messiah, as noted in the book of Daniel (Moloney 2019:9). Therefore, Daniel 9 responds to the hopelessness of the second century BCE period. Setting the book of Daniel during the exilic period suggests a context in which the faithful Jews remained faithful. The book therefore would have been relevant literature to instil hope in the Jews who were in despair during the Second Temple period.

4.2.4.3 Edict of Antiochus
Israel's darkest moment was experienced when Antiochus attempted to Hellenise the Jews by force. To achieve this, he made an edict that ordered the fusion of all Seleucid territories into one people, who would worship Greek deities. To supervise the enactment of the order, a philosopher from Athens was sent to Jerusalem. When he identified the Jewish God with Zeus, he set up a pagan statue, probably in the likeness of Antiochus himself, upon the Temple altar (Pfeiffer 1973:564). That is what Daniel 9:27 probably refers to as "the Abomination that causes desolation".

According to Portier-Young (2011:176-178), the edict of Antiochus outlawed Jewish religious practices all over Judea. He persecuted, tortured and killed the conservative Jews and implemented new religious practices by force. He gained influence through the Jewish elite led by Menelaus the High Priest, who supported complete Hellenisation. Hellenist Jews were used to suppress and destroy Judaism. Jewish beliefs were abandoned at Seleucid's command but conservative Jews did not abandon their faith. Persecution, therefore, was used to project Antiochus' power in the world. It was his

mission of making and unmaking the world and identity to ensure that his empire was the only source of power.

The possession of the copies of the Torah deserved capital punishment (Weitzman 2004:219) and the Jews were forced to commit idolatry by making pig sacrifices (Levine 1988:182). Circumcision and the observance of the Sabbath and the festivals were banned and the people ate forbidden food and desecrated the Temple. New stories were told about how people remained committed to their culture and religion.

Finally, a revolt broke out in 166 BCE when Mattathias not only refused the command to partake in the Hellenistic sacrifices but also killed a Jew who was partaking in the sacrifices and an officer to the king. He was then joined by his five sons and supporters to fight for freedom. Antiochus' forces were defeated. Judas took over after the death of his father Mattathias and rededicated the Temple. Jonathan, another son of Mattathias, took over after the fall of Judas when his adherents deserted him and fell into the hands of Dometirius I Soter. Jonathan continued the guerilla war before he was recognised by Alexander Balas, who appointed him high priest. He became loyal but he was assassinated during the time of Tryphon. His brother, Simon, succeeded him as a high priest but managed to resist and ward off Tryphon and established the Hasmonean dynasty (Scheffler 2001:154).

4.2.5 Summary
The book of Daniel is regarded as pseudonymous, written to encourage a section of the second century BCE Jewish community in order to inspire hope. The wise associated with the exilic courts could have used the book to respond to the Hellenisation in general as well as the Seleucid imperial domination during the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Hellenistic ideologies and hegemonic strategies were compounded by violence, persecution, assassination, victimisation, traumatisation and the desecration of the temple. The book was written to instil hope in such hopeless circumstances.

4.3 PURPOSE OF THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Although the purpose of the book of Daniel was briefly cited, it is pertinent to examine it in light of its historical critical analysis. The purpose of the book of Daniel was to bring hope to the Jews under imperial domination. Collins (1993:51) states that the narratives are tales centred on diaspora lifestyle. The exiled Jews in Babylon were to seek the welfare of the cities that God had sent them so that they could also live in peace (Jr 29:7). The Jews in the Diaspora are exemplified by Daniel and his friends who lived in the king's courts and remained faithful to God.

Daniel, the man who committed himself to prayer in prohibitive circumstances and could interpret visions and dreams of foreign kings, received visions which required angelic interpreters and even to interpret the book of Jeremiah (Dn 9:2). Though he did not say any prayer to read and interpret the writing on the wall (Dn 5:26-27), he had to pray and fast to interpret the dreams and visions. It was during the time of king Darius. He devoted himself to Scripture and found that the prophet Jeremiah wrote about the end of the desolation of Jerusalem (Dn 9:2). Daniel wondered if the existing state accounted for the fulfilment or postponement. The Second Temple Judaism experienced domination and hegemony under the imperial power of the Greeks that prompted the reinterpretation of Jeremiah in times of terror and hopelessness. Hence, one could argue that a postcolonial context that is analogous to the Second Temple community may justify the need for reinterpretation.

In this research, the meaning of seventy years should be determined by progressive reinterpretation to address the circumstances in the community of Daniel. Moreover, the period of seventy years in the Babylonian exile is not historically reliable. Historically, they spent a period of about forty-nine years or close to seventy years, including the period of the rededication of the Temple of Jerusalem (Nel 2013:3). Reliance on the past promises of restoration depicts a hopeful moment in which the seventy years of desolation would be fulfilled. The divine response and the postponement from seventy years to four hundred and ninety years would resuscitate the once-lost hope, making Daniel 9, a literature of hope. Where prophetic hope ends, apocalyptic hope takes over.

For postcolonial Southern Africa, what was hoped for has not yet been realised. That can be better explained by the Zimbabwean context where the expected liberation is still a myth and national leaders and those people connected to them have become beneficiaries of the legacies of colonialism. The colonial elites have been replaced by the indigenous aristocracy.

Hope is cast into a distant future so that the readers would not despair. The following section connects the audience of the book to various themes of hope to clarify that it is literature of people experiencing crises.

4.4 THEMES OF HOPE IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL
The notion of "hope" in the book of Daniel can be understood from the study of various themes. This section defines hope and relates it to selected themes of the book.

4.4.1 Hope in the Old Testament
Thus far, the word hope has been used in this study quite freely and without any specific biblical content or context. In fact, the word itself does not appear in the book of Daniel at all, but the scholarly consensus is that the aim of apocalyptic literature is, among others, to provide 'hope'. Hope is complex or critical of both the present realities and future possibilities. Complex hope recognises the terror of the present realities and anticipates that the future would possibly be different (Ernst 2016:202). Hope is also a natural passion shared by both humans and non-humans in anticipation of a better future. It then gives human beings courage to strive towards it (Phillips 2018:20). Human existence, therefore, is determined by the future and not the present, in the quest for reality. The present is threatened by fear, but the future encourages with hope as humankind grapples for the yet-to-be future realities. The future is regarded as potentially more desirable than the present. Such theological assertion may justify that hope theology helps people to cope with the present realities. As literature of hope, Daniel may help in interpreting the possibilities of hope in Africa, particularly, in Southern Africa.

However, hope is not unrealistic optimism that obfuscates reality to generate a false sense of security. According to Hiebel (2019:7), hope makes meaning of life events and gives

meaning to traumatic situations in order to help sufferers cope. However, to a larger extent, hope must address all false senses of security. Since overcoming crisis is not entirely a human response, hope in its entirety may be regarded, according to Jones (2016:138), as two-pronged: 1) it might encourage passivity as one waits for salvation and 2) hope must guard against subjective projection, since it cannot fully claim control and precisely dictate the object for which we hope. Hope may not be an entire surrender to the sovereign authority but calls for individuals to be responsible for the realisation of what they hope for. When the postcolonial government failed to deliver what has been hoped for, people may resist either silently or violently, as mentioned in Chapter Two of this thesis.

Hope promises a future that has made a pre-appearance during the present age and illuminates the strength of future hope. According to Moltmann (1985:234), "Whoever lives in hope, lives by the proclaimed future, already anticipating it in spirit and lifestyle". In other words, that which is anticipated is not so strange, but has been pre-empted in the present. Daniel noted the perpetuation of suffering when he queried the perpetual desolation after seventy years had lapsed (Dn 9:2). Daniel wanted to know the reasons for the continuation of the desolation of Jerusalem. When the seventy years lapsed, Yahweh responded that it was just a single dispensation, a period in which Jeremiah's prophecy is proved true but also reinterpreted with time. The end of the first dispensation of seventy years is a promise that the other six sevens would diminish like counting. Counting is forward, past is confirmation of the fulfilled while forward is the not yet. The sovereignty of Yahweh is confirmation that he remains king.

The term hope has proved to be problematic. Its origin in the Hebrew Bible is probably linked to the legitimisation of the perpetual kingship of the house of David. Kingship was intended to realise peace and prosperity in Israel, bearing in mind Samuel's warning against the institution of kingship.

During the period referred to in Daniel 9, such prophetic promises had not been fulfilled, for example, Jeremiah's promise that after seventy years the children of God would

return from exile, did not happen. The failed promises ushered an apocalyptic age in which the political order was disappointing and frustrating because the returnees from the exile failed to realise the salvation they desired, as they experienced continued bondage back in Yehud. Subsequently, apocalyptic visions projected primordial events as future symbols of the defeat of chaos and imminent restoration of peace and justice (Hanson 1985:5).

The roots of hope in the Old Testament are in covenant life where God almost destroyed the whole earth. Hope was based on divine deliverance (Goldingay 2009:111; Gen 9:8-17). The hope of Israel was put to the test when the post-exilic era did not become as glorious as was assumed. This was the foundation of apocalyptic hope and eschatology, which refer to the final consummation that will put history, the world order and cosmos to an end. It is, however, significant to consider the wider definition of hope in the Old Testament. Eschatological hope would, therefore, focus beyond judgment to an era of peace, salvation and prosperity (Routledge 2008:266-275).

Hope in the Old Testament can be better explained by contrasting it with judgment (Brueggemann 2005:205; Routledge 2008:265). Judgement was based on the principle of retribution whereby the righteous are blessed and the unrighteous are condemned. Routledge (2008:265) confirms that the prophetic traditions reveal the prophetic oracles which promised the impending judgment through the exile of Israel and which in turn called for rebirth and renewal through the return and restoration. Daniel is assured that rebirth of Israel was to be realised through the return from exile, resettlement and the restoration of status as the nation of God.

According to Hubbard (1983:34), the whole of the Old Testament is a book of hope comprising of "a set of writings tipped toward the future". He notes that scholars like Van der Ploeg restricted eschatology "to the apocalyptic view of the end times". However, Hubbard prefers P R Davies' definition of eschatology as a "dimension of belief—that history moves in a direction, that this direction is set by God, and that God acts within history to ensure this direction". Once God is in control of history, hope becomes the

assurance that whatever originates from God's plan inspires hope and does not diminish it.

Hubbard (1983:34) further regards "prophetic hope and eschatology to mean about the same thing". The Old Testament emphasis on hope is based on "continuity and discontinuity with the past". He concludes by contending that all Old Testament hopes were fulfilled in Christ.

Hope can be summarised as the remedy for hopelessness and despair. Hope is stimulated by the present suffering and hope and despair are two sides of the same coin. Hope can help people to cope with traumatic conditions as it anticipates a future characterised by peace and prosperity.

4.4.2 Genre of apocalypse

The apocalyptic authors differed from the prophets since they had their own interpretive context. They marked the empires as their enemies and criticised the foreign rulers. Jewish apocalypticism was triggered by a reaction to political, economic, religious, social and cultural changes that took place because of the conquest of Antiochus Epiphanus. As a result, apocalypticism changed Israel's view of the world, its boundaries and history. Death was not the end of life but was followed by rewards or punishment. Collins (2014:11) affirms that apocalyptic hope transcends death.

Many scholars agree with Veilhauer that the social and religious origins of the apocalyptic literature are ascribed to a period of crisis and persecution (Adler 1983:3). Apocalypse trauma is regarded as not predicting the future, but rather reimagining a world that has been shattered by disillusionment and psychological trauma (Daschke 2014:458). Apocalypses were primarily for strengthening oppressed religious communities. Since Jewish apocalypse is associated with war, famine, increased tribulation and so forth, it gained acceptance in the early Christian thinking that transformed imminent hope to an eschatological future (Adler 1983:4-5).

In dealing with apocalyptic literature, we note that it is a theology against the empire, a theology of resistance and a theology of hope. This is a response to the crisis of not realising the most anticipated restoration as was prophesied. The domination of the ruling elite, which comprised the imperial powers, generated resistance and hope for the future since the present was full of suffering.

The author of Daniel had a variegated audience but essentially from the elite communities. The author could have been part of the elite (a descendant) that were transported into captivity. It seems that the character Daniel was quite close to power in the Persian period, but the book possibly obtained its final written form rather late and used the Persian period as a negative foil. Scribal activities (as earlier raised by Van der Toorn) could have been part of exerting power of some sort during the book's final composition in the postexilic era. Apocalyptic literature was produced perhaps as a response to their circumstances. This was a move against imperial domination and is based on the theologies of the margins, theologies of those in the boundaries or periphery—a theology of liberation, of those who were formerly oppressed by the dominant elite empires. Liberation theology later included the forms and nature of oppression experienced at various levels.

Birch (1991:311) highlights features of apocalyptic literature that differ from prophecy in several ways. Comparing Daniel 1-7 with 7-12, the following becomes clear: Apocalyptic literature is (1) full blown revelatory; (2) divinely mediated visions; (3) focusing on the cosmic transformation of the world; 4) in anticipation of the resurrection of the dead; (5) the termination of the authority of evil powers; and (6) with a richness in imagery associated with heroic figures.

Apocalyptic literature should be summarised as literature that emerged from imperial domination. It prompts heavenly mediated revelation that focuses on cosmic transformation and anticipates cosmic transformation and the termination of evil. Casting hope in a world beyond the existing world is a way of coping with that existing world. Hope shifts focus from the present world order to the future.

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4.4.3 Resurrection of the dead

In Daniel 12, there is hope of the resurrection of the dead. Murphy (2012:3) asserts that rewards and punishment would follow. Rewards and punishment were undergirded by "belief in the last judgment, cosmic dissolution, resurrection, heaven and hell and a restored Israel" (Murphy 2012:3). The faithful would be rewarded and the offenders would be punished. However, such a belief was not common in most of the Old Testament era. In Daniel, one finds the first and thus, chronologically very late, reference to a bodily resurrection.

Daniel 9 can be better understood in relation to its immediate context (Dn 8, 10-12). The contrast between the faithful and their oppressors is made clear for the first time in the Old Testament in the sense that there will be the resurrection of the dead (Dn 12:2). The faithful are assured everlasting life and their oppressors would rise for everlasting contempt. Gray (2017:211) argues that the imagery should only be read on the basis of hope and reassurance rather than a "literal prediction". This gives a clue that the author of Daniel did not intend to give details about "individual resurrection". The continuing suffering of the faithful results in hope of the end of suffering and the faithful would inherit the everlasting kingdom of God (Koester 2011:1).

Hope proceeds to the world beyond life and is one thing human beings live with. As Satre (2011:87) rightly says, "In the end, I doubt that we can live without hope in a future beyond this world…. when the questions about *then* arise, I place my bet on the side of hope". Hope goes beyond death and it is hope of resurrection which Moltmann (1985:234) refers to as the hope of coming back to life and being given the opportunity to finish what one had begun.

The ancient Near Eastern world regarded death as the god of the underworld who engulfed the dead. However, Daniel saw a vision in which Yahweh released the dead by destroying the pangs of death forever. Tears would be wiped away and the reproach of God's people would be taken away (Saylor 2014:384). The book of Daniel intends to

inspire hope in those outside the power structures and is "perhaps the first book in the Bible to anticipate the resurrection from the dead" (Redditt 2009:339).

The resurrection of the dead has always been an aspect of hope. It is based on the understanding that all will at one time die. Death, however, does not vanquish hope. Persecution from the imperial powers would never take away hope because hope proceeds to the world beyond death. Death itself may be the end of this life but it exposes one to the next life that will be realised after the resurrection of the dead. With hope of resurrection, one can remain courageous to meet any oppressive circumstances. Those who suffered violence for their unwavering faith are vindicated and healed. Daniel 12 provides courage and comfort to the victims and a warning to those who oppressed or worked hand in glove with the oppressors. Daniel's community is emboldened to participate actively in non-violent resistance against the imperial decrees as they continue teaching the Torah even unto the point of martyrdom (Saylor 2014:385). According to Frerichs (1984:14), the resurrection pictures the end of the present age and the establishment of the divine kingdom. Belief in the resurrection would ultimately produce trust in God's sovereignty so that even after death, the faithful would resurrect and be given time to continue confessing the dependability of God's power and grace that knows no human restrictions (Hanson 1985:6).

Being thrown into the fire and into the lion's den depicts circumstances of death and resurrection (Goswell 2013:140). Goswell notes that Daniel (7-12) features resurrection more clearly. In Daniel 11:33-35, some of the righteous were martyred. The assurance of resurrection makes those who die for their faith freely submit and hope that they will be rewarded with eternal life.

An apocalyptic response to the failing fulfilment of prophetic promises developed into apocalypticism. According to Murphy (2012:3), "there was common belief in the last judgment, cosmic dissolution, resurrection, heaven and hell and a restored Israel". This idea is supported by Collins (1993:70) who claims that there was a development within the historical apocalypse that is associated with the extensive expropriation of the ancient

traditions during the crisis of the Maccabean period. In this regard, the Mosaic covenant and prophetic traditions are woven together to bring hope of restoration from the Greek imperial rule.

The resurrection of the dead can be summarised as the anticipated victory that could not be prevented by imperial authorities. Death and dying would never separate the faithful from the divine plan and purpose. Rather, death would usher those who suffered for their faith into eternal destiny where there would be neither sorrow nor pain—this aspect is not clear from the text in Daniel 12 though.

4.4.4 Apocalyptic literature and the reinterpretation of prophetic traditions

According to Clements (1989:28), the emergence of apocalyptic literature was an extension and reinterpretation of earlier prophetic traditions during the Second Temple period. He further considers that the transition from prophecy to the apocalypse was not smooth. Apocalyptic literature probably developed from prophetic literature with the incorporation of certain features which are alien to prophecy. Apocalyptic literature, therefore, made substantial modifications to prophetic traditions. This literature is very conscious of "historical determinism which allowed that the outcome of history had been decreed in advance by divine ordinance" (Clements 1989:28).

Scholars have come to terms with the fact that apocalyptic literature emerged from a reworking which began in the book of Isaiah and Ezekiel. There is the inclusion of a substantial amount of apocalyptic type of eschatology in the Minor Prophets (Clements 1989:29). The scribes employed techniques of reapplying and re-using words and images, which were earlier used in prophetic traditions (1989:30). Daniel 9:27, for instance, may be regarded as a response to Daniel's prayer when he referred to Jeremiah's prophecy that restoration would occur after a period of seventy years (Dn 7:24; cf. Jr 25:11; 29:10). The angel of God reinterpreted historical events mainly associated with the desecration of the Temple by Antiochus Epiphanes.

In short, resurrection restores hope that would seemingly have gone into oblivion. The reinterpretation of the seventy years to seventy weeks of years restored confidence and determination to face the crisis with hope to face the future.

4.4.5 The four kingdoms

The book of Daniel refers to four kingdoms in the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream visions (Dn 2:1-47). Apocalyptic literature and prophetic literature have similar modes of revelation through visions and dreams. However, it is critical to note that visions in apocalyptic literature are surrealistic in nature. The description portrays a world "in which giant statues are demolished by mysterious stones and strange beasts arise to do battle with one another" (Ferguson 1994:745). The book of Daniel, therefore, offers the religious perspective which was compatible with the crisis of the Second Temple Judaism that stimulated hope for the end of the desolation of Jerusalem. Hence Birch et al (1999:445) argue:

> It is true that the prophets before the exile contemplate the world-power in its present form together with its final unfolding, and therefore they announced the Messianic time for the most part as near at hand, while on the contrary with Daniel, the one world-power is successively presented in four world monarchies...

The argument by Birch et al suggests that the prophets predicted the coming of the messianic kingdom. Daniel makes use of simple prophecy with more details such as significant numbers and specific periods to encourage readers to remain faithful despite their situation.

The book of Daniel refers to dreams related to world rulers such as Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel's dream in Daniel 7 only came in correspondence with Nebuchadnezzar's dream and emphasised the termination of human kingdoms with the establishment of the divine kingdom. Keil (1987:27) claims that revelation through dreams was mainly for pagan kings. Daniel was then engaged as the interpreter of those dreams even to the extent of reproducing the dream that was totally forgotten.

The existence of kingdoms which did not last forever is a sign of the end of the current suffering. The fact that no human kingdom survived forever demonstrates that humans have limited space in time. The one who anoints kings and ends their kingship demonstrates that he has greater power and authority over all. The God of history, who appoints kingdoms, will never allow a situation in which his own will be disappointed at the end of history. He will always reward according to one's doing. The one who enthrones is the one who ends. He is above all kings and powers. He has power to create and destroy. He is the one who finally establishes an everlasting kingdom. The human kingdoms are just but an expression of the preliminary divine plan that is limited to specific periods.

To sum up, the visions of the passing human kingdoms is a confirmation that human sovereignty is limited. The end of human kingdoms presupposes the termination of the suffering that accompanies them. The termination of human sovereignties would culminate in the establishment of the eternal divine kingdom that knows no pain and suffering, hence, the knowledge that the existing kingdoms were predetermined; there is always hope for a future characterised by peace and justice.

4.4.6 Loyalty to Yahweh

Nebuchadnezzar selected some young men from among the captives for royal service. Daniel, Azariah, Hananiah and Mishael were found to be without blemish, handsomely knowledgeable, and intelligent enough to qualify for the king's services (Dn 1:4). The king gave them new names to integrate them into his socio-cultural identity. They were granted royal favour to eat from the king's choicest food and drink wine from the palace. Thomas (2005:193) argues that hegemony was more than just coercion, but also persuasion through provision of incentives to the subjects.

The obedience of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to the royal courts should be understood in relation to their loyalty to Yahweh. The initiation of Daniel and his friends into the Babylonian courts could have been an inspiration for Palestinian Jews in the days of Antiochus IV Epiphanes when the Jews were compelled to eat non-kosher food

(Harrington 2009:18). Harrington notes that the Jewish laws were suppressed, but he goes too far in arguing, albeit implicitly, that a diet of only vegetables (which the four opted for) is prescribed. This is without any backing from the legal material. The compulsion to eat abominable food can be noted in the story of four Jewish young men who were enrolled as students in the Babylonian academy. Despite that they accepted to learn the wisdom of the Babylonians, they refused to defile themselves with the royal diet (Dn 1:8). The blessing of maintaining their identity in relation to food came out clearly, as they ate vegetables and drank water and their bodies became stronger than others who partook in the king's diet. Resisting the king's diet inspired hope in the Jews who remained loyal and faithful to Yahweh despite being under foreign domination.

Loyalty to Yahweh can be regarded as a means of resistance of the imperial rule. Such loyalty empowered the faithful even in the face of death. Unwavering faith could tolerate any form of suffering.

4.4.7 Clinging fervently to a hopeful future in hopeless conditions
The book of Daniel is a literature of crisis intended to give hope to its readers. Daniel 9, for example, aimed to convince readers that the end of the desolation was already decreed through the prophet Jeremiah and the time of restoration was overdue. Pusey (1978:184) regards Daniel's prayer as stimulated by the deterioration of the spiritual conditions. Though he held the conservative view that Daniel was written in the sixth century BCE, Daniel's own sins and the sins of Israel that he confessed must have caused the desolation of the sanctuary of Jerusalem. Allusion to the desolate state confirms that there was crisis. The theology of Daniel, therefore, should be stimulating hope for the end of the desolation.

Daniel is reminded through study that is informed by ancient Jewish tradition that Yahweh used exile as punishment for sin. Repentance would bring Yahweh's forgiveness and restoration. Yahweh not only fulfilled his promises by punishing Israel for their sin but also by ending the desolation after seventy years, as promised through Jeremiah.

Daniel realised from his reading of Jeremiah that seventy years had already lapsed. He then committed that situation to God in prayer (Dn 9:2).

Apocalyptic literature is the reinterpretation of ancient traditions. According to the character Daniel, the desolation should end once the sin was forgiven. However, it was not enough. Daniel used to interpret dreams and he even told Nebuchadnezzar the dream that he had forgotten before interpreting it. He also interpreted the writing on the wall (Dn 5:26-28). The interpretation was so clear even though Daniel did not spend any time fasting or praying. However, Daniel could not understand why the postexilic community remained under oppression. Though Daniel prayed, Yahweh made no radical response.

Times of crisis are often times of imagination, as Mortimer (2002:17) shows:

> Apocalyptic literature aided the original reader in apprehending meaning and hope in a seemingly impossible situation. Furthermore, meaning and hope are best apprehended by means of the imagination rather than by human reason (which is easily troubled by circumstances). Understanding the human imagination's unique ability to grasp meaning is the key to defining and appreciating the apocalyptic genre.

The above quotation shows that one of the roles of apocalyptic literature is to provide the reader with the lens to apprehend meaning and hope where it seems impossible to attain. Imagination therefore plays a central role in making sense of the apocalyptic genre. Mortimer (2002:17) opines that apocalyptic literature is the type of literature granted by God in times of severe catastrophe.

The author of Daniel could only find meaning for his present condition in the recognition that the exilic situation was the fulfilment of prophetic traditions. This point is supported by Daniel (2016:155) who says,

> An act is meaningful in the present only insofar as it is understood to be present: it is buoyed up by a meaningful past, a history that can be narrated coherently toward the present; and it will become a condition of the future insofar as it constrains actors toward significant possibilities that shape a destiny for narrated history.

Prophetic traditions proffered not only the promise of exile, but also the return from exile. What emerged in the past conditioned the future. However, the man Daniel possibly read Jeremiah when he was in Yehud. The challenge was that Judah remained under foreign domination. The end of the desolation of Jerusalem did not only constitute the restored kingdom but the forgiveness of sin.

Focusing on the culmination of the divine plan is meant to generate hope for those who desire to be on the right side of divine intention. Whereas imagination for the coming end brings a lasting solution to the hopeless circumstance, eschatology proposes the closure of everything ever experienced in this world and reveals the future judgement of the oppressors and the inheritance of the kingdom by the elect of God.

If the past determines the future, then, the future gives assurance that keeps one hopeful despite any upcoming challenge. One is motivated to be strong and endure any form of oppression by the rulers of this world. Hope for the coming kingdom gives strength and courage to withstand all forms of torture.

Israel under the oppressive powers of the imperial kingdoms could have remained hopeful that in the future, the domination would end as it was only for a prescribed time (Dn 9). At the end of all kingdoms, the Ancient of Days will be alone seated on the throne, judging everyone according to his or her own deeds. Those who endured unto death and have their names written in the book will be rewarded for their good deeds and those who sinned will be punished (Dn 12).

The suffering of the present age is for a short time, while the future joy of the faithful will be everlasting. This gives encouragement to those who suffer now to persevere in the midst of persecution or oppression. Focus on the end removes concentration on the present. History would always inform this ideology. The later generations have something to learn from the former. Such millennial hopes find expression in various forms. The main thing is that this age of suffering will not remain forever but will terminate in the establishment of the new kingdom.

4.4.8 Summary of section

Hope is a means of coping with the present context's traumatic situations. Apocalyptic literature anticipates a period in which suffering would end as a new order is established. When the previously determined time of the termination of suffering arrives, that time would still be reinterpreted and postponed to a distant future as a means of coping. Even death would never wipe out hope. Rather, in death, the faithful would be ushered into eternal life through the resurrection. The present world is regarded as temporary, while the world to come is regarded as eternal.

4.5 EXEGESIS OF DANIEL 9

Various themes of hope are identifiable in Daniel 9. The chapter begins with Daniel (the main character in the book) reading the prophecy of Jeremiah about the seventy years of Jerusalem's desolation. Daniel 9 is unique in the sense that revelation is through literature. It was while reading the letter or book of Jeremiah that Daniel noted that Jerusalem was to be restored after seventy years of desolation. The setting of the chapter is in Babylon in the first year of Darius' reign, yet it relates to the events of the Second Temple period. The reinterpretation of existing prophetic traditions by the angel Gabriel is critical to the determination of the end of the devastation of Jerusalem. Through prayer and fasting, Daniel fulfilled the Mosaic covenant promise that if the Jews confessed their sins, Yahweh would pardon them and restore them to their former glory. The use of the divine name in the book is critical for understanding Yahweh's sovereignty in late biblical literature. Most late biblical literature did not use the divine name. References to the anointed prince may help also in understanding messianic expectations and the end of the desolation of Jerusalem.

4.5.1 First year of Darius

The literary setting of Daniel is Babylon, but the book refers to the events of the second century BCE. The meaningfulness of the text is not related to the historical accuracy but to how a reader relates to it in context. Some scholars have wrestled with the historical accuracy of Darius. For example, Nel (2013:2) argues that Darius the Mede, son of Ahasuerus, was a non-historical figure. Rather, a Darius ruled in Persia from 522 to 486

BCE. His rule did not coincide with the period in which the book of Daniel was supposedly written.

The opening word of the first verse of Daniel 9 is בִּשְׁנַת, a prepositional clause that begins with the preposition "in (בְּ)". In the first year (בִּשְׁנַת אַחַת), brings attention to the beginning of something that would count down the limited period of his rule. Darius' father had died, but Yahweh would rule forever. That could have given Daniel assurance that Yahweh would fulfil his mission in Judah. It did not matter whether Darius existed or not. The text gives assurance that the beginning shows that there is an end.

The allusion to "בִּשְׁנַת אַחַת לְדָרְיָוֶשׁ (the first year of Darius)" (Dn 9:1) in the first part of the verse is repeated in the next verse as "בִּשְׁנַת אַחַת לְמָלְכוֹ (in the first year of his reign)" (Dn 9:2). Anderson (1973:104) argues that the repetition was stimulated by the heightening of hopes to return during the fall of Babylon. The repetition was to emphasise the statement, "כַּשְׂדִּים עַל מַלְכוּת הַמֶּלֶךְ (he was made ruler)". Darius did not try to become king. He was made king of the Chaldeans. Yahweh is the one who makes kings, as the Aramaic section points out: "מְהַעְדֵּה מַלְכִין וּמְהָקֵים (he makes pass away kings and install kings)" (Dn 2:21). The installation of kingship is juxtaposed with the removal or passing away of kings to indicate that once a king is removed, another one would be installed. Baldwin (1978:17) asserts that, "God is constantly overruling and judging in the affairs of men, putting down the mighty from their seats, overthrowing unjust regimes and effectively bringing in His kingdom which is to embrace all nations".

Yahweh is the ruler of all humankind and earthly kingdoms, that is, Yahweh is sovereign and in control. The basic assurance for Second Temple Judaism was that Yahweh would terminate all earthly kingdoms to establish his eternal one. Hope for Israel's restoration is bestowed only in Yahweh's power to control history.

Darius needs to be reinterpreted as representing a king of the Second Temple because Jerusalem was still in desolation after the rebuilding of the Temple. However, the setting of the chapter suggests that the man Daniel, in exile, was reflecting on the condition of

Jerusalem at the time when the book was written. The assumption is that Yahweh is in control. Like Daniel, all should appear before him with nothing to fear or to despair about, especially those who believe in him. Once one is aware of the sovereignty of God, one would never despair. Yahweh has demonstrated from the beginning of the text that he limits kingdoms and empires.

Darius was the king who assumed office after the death of his father. The repetition in verses 1 and 2 seems to emphasise that Yahweh is the one who installed him as king. Yahweh is the one who controls all earthly kingdoms. Since Yahweh predetermined the existence of human kingdoms, one after another, he would always fulfil his plans. The readers of Daniel should be assured that human kingdoms are temporary and the present suffering would end.

4.5.2 Gabriel as re-interpreter of existing prophetic traditions

Daniel is an eye opener to the fact that at the time the book of Daniel was written, the book of Jeremiah was already an authority and medium of revelation (Poulsen 2021:96). Antiochus Epiphanes prohibited the reading of the Torah and the prophets. The study of Jewish Scripture inspired the readers to resist the empires and remain hopeful for divine intervention in the future (Portier-Young 2011:266). The canon was possibly closed at a time earlier than Daniel's. That makes it clear that the book of Daniel is not prophecy. The reinterpretation of Jeremiah in Daniel shows that the book of Daniel was written for the community of the Second Temple period rather than of the sixth century BCE.

Collins (1984:89) regards Daniel 9:1-27 as a reinterpretation of the prophetic oracles of Jeremiah (Jr 25:11-12; 29:10). Jeremiah promised that the restoration of ancient Israel would be after seventy years. According to Anderson (1973:105), verse 2 suggests the developments that followed the fall of Babylon, which were also significant for the Second Temple Judaism. He rightly points out that the reference to "בַּסְּפָרִים (in the books)" suggests that before the book of Daniel was canonised, there were already authoritative books which were interpreted.

The seventy years of exile had lapsed, but the writer of Daniel realised that the promise was not fulfilled and therefore inquired from God when the exile would end. The research reveals that the return from exile and the rebuilding of the Temple of Jerusalem did not culminate in the realisation of the much-desired end of Jerusalem's desolation. Rebuilding the Temple was simply secondary as long as the Davidic kingdom remained under foreign control. Daniel's prayer was triggered by the prolonged foreign domination. Prophetic hope was put to question. Apocalyptic hope came as a compensatory move against apathy by shifting hope to a place beyond the current world of suffering, a new world that knows neither fear nor death (Dn 12).

Failure to experience the deliverance that was longed for and failure to realise the prophecies that were handed down by Jeremiah, exiles are pictured in Daniel as recasting hope into apocalyptic literature. Porteous (1974:134) suggests that Jeremiah's prophecy was not intended to predict a distant future. Jeremiah prophesied the manifestation of God's transcendent power and the scriptural revelation pointed to the crisis during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes. The end of exile after seventy years in Jeremiah should culminate in the restoration of the kingdom of Israel to its former glory. Gaebelein (1985:122) considers that Daniel knew that Babylon had fallen and that Cyrus would command that Jerusalem be rebuilt, as is written in Isaiah 46:28. Nevertheless, the return from exile was not the confirmation of a restored state; even the kingdom of David was not restored. Rather, the Second Temple community experienced a kind of continuation of the exile experience—but in their homeland. The Second Temple community depended on exilic narratives to generate hope for restoration. The author of Daniel found space through prayers for the confession of the sin of the nation of Judah, for divine intervention through the forgiveness of sin.

Seeing visions and receiving angelic interpretation is typical of apocalyptic literature. The prophetic tradition could no longer be considered literarily. According to Jones (2012:546), "The reinterpretation of Jeremiah's seventy-year prophecy in Daniel 9 characterizes the persecutions of Antiochus IV Epiphanes as an extreme example of imperial domination" but remained consistent with the experiences that commenced with

the Babylonian conquest and proceeded under Persian and Hellenistic rule (Jones 2012:546).

According to Jones (2012:546), a prolonged "history of foreign domination requires that an oppressed population develop positive, proactive practices of identity formation, boundary maintenance, and political resistance to survive the threat of cultural assimilation".

The purpose of the vision of the seventy weeks was "הַפֶּשַׁע לְכַלֵּא (to complete transgression)"; "חַטָּאות וּלְחָתֵם (and to end sin)", "וּלְכַפֵּר עָוֹן (and to atone the guilt)", "עֹלָמִים וּלְהָבִיא צֶדֶק (and to bring eternal righteousness)", "וְלַחְתֹּם חָזוֹן וְנָבִיא (and to seal up vision and prophecy)" "וְלִמְשֹׁחַ קֹדֶשׁ קָדָשִׁים (and to anoint the Most Holy)" (Dn 9:24). The conjunction waw "וְ (and)" is used to determine consecutive events that would take place before the end (Hess 2011:316). The words "transgression", "sins" and "atoning for guilt" are in line with the priestly traditions that justice and righteousness evoke a vision of a new age in relationship to covenantal promises. Portier-Young (2011:255-256) asserts that the wise teachers participate in the fulfilment of prophecy by effecting atonement and "leading many to righteousness even at the cost of death".

According to Smith (2013), Jesus' reference to the desolations as interpreted by Gabriel in Daniel (Matt 24:15) is an indicator that this reference is essential for understanding Jesus' teachings. The seventy weeks' chronology is considered essential for understanding historical events associated with Jesus' second coming. The desolations feature prior to the messianic age in which the Messiah would end the suffering of this age and the Messiah coming at an age which cannot be clearly perceived, yet always in the distant future, to keep hope alive for those who faithfully wait for that age. Smith has a more conservative view that considers Daniel more of a prophecy than apocalyptic literature. Periodisation, however, is a critical component of apocalyptic literature (Collins 1984:11). The passing phases in history encourage the readers of the book of Daniel to remain hopeful since it provides evidence of drawing closer to the end of oppression (Redditt 2000:237). According to Ekeke (2016:375), hope is not simply

imagination but an act of living a righteous life towards God who would deliver the audience from their present distress.

The intervention of the angel would guide us in interpreting Daniel 9 in which Daniel sought the fulfilment of prophecies of earlier prophetic traditions through the intervention of the angelic figure. That has always been the case in the second half of Daniel (7-12) when Daniel saw visions. The failure to interpret implies personal failure, whereas it seems Daniel was overwhelmed and incapacitated by the vision itself. Furthermore, an angelic interpretation gives the vision greater authority. Mortimer (2002:17) refers to angelic help as rather symbolic. In the first half, Daniel interpreted the visions of the emperors, but now he was unable to interpret the visions that he personally received. He required the intervention of an angelic figure to fill the gap and help to interpret his visions. Daniel was not left stranded and desperate; rather, the intervention of Gabriel makes divine intervention more apparent, giving no room for hopelessness.

This section has shown that the revelation paradigm remains open to reinterpretations that make the Scriptures indispensable. Hope was stimulated through the reinterpretation of ancient texts. The promises that were made earlier on cannot be thwarted, as they can bring new revelations.

4.5.3 End of the desolation of Jerusalem

According to Murphy (2012:71), Hellenisation provoked various reactions. For example, some Jews could have pursued "profitable relations with the other Hellenized people", with the Greeks, and others would recognise it as "an attack on the very identity of one's people". Different attitudes arise from different social locations—"geographic, intellectual and socioeconomic". The literary work of the apocalypse and the military action were Jewish responses to Hellenistic domination. Central to all the responses to Hellenisation was the hope that all suffering would culminate in restoration.

Daniel is also regarded as a product of the scribal school (Davies 2001:247-265) which is significant "in all seasons" (Grabbe 2001:229-246). The significance for the postexilic

Jews was to give them hope that all suffering, in the end, would result in judgement for the perpetrators of injustice and reward for the faithful Jews. The figure of Daniel and his friends give testimony that the God of Israel is the ultimate ruler whom all the nations, including the imperial powers, would worship. Central to these narratives is the belief that all human authorities obtain their authority from God who stands with his own.

The book of Daniel can be read intertextually with the book of Jeremiah. In Daniel 9:2 (see also Jr 25:11; 29:10), Jeremiah promised the end of the desolation after seventy years. The exile could be understood in relation to restoration to the former glory. Jeremiah's promises can be understood from the traditional expectations of ancient Israel.

It is convincingly clear that Daniel's prayer was based on self-introspection as he lamented that exile was the outcome of Israel's sins, that it is "בַּחֲטָאֵינוּ (because of our sins)" (Dn 9:16). Daniel acknowledged that he was confessing his sins and the sins of the whole nation of Israel—"חַטָּאתִי וְחַטַּאת עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל) (my sins and the sins of my people Israel)" (Dn 9:20). Daniel's confession sought to restore relationship with Yahweh. He was aware that his sins and the sins of Israel separated them from Yahweh. He and the entire nation had sinned—"חָטָאנוּ (we have sinned)" (Dn 9:5, 11, 15). Daniel confessed all the sins of Israel. He confessed the sins not only of Judah, but of the whole of Israel. Hope for the restored nation was not individualistic. Rather, it was collective. Amicable solutions often require collective identity, regardless of one's social status.

Equally important to note is that Yahweh did not confirm that the reason for the continuation of exile was sin. Yahweh had previously revealed to Daniel Nebuchadnezzar's dreamt and the meaning thereof. The visions of the four kingdoms and the great image of four metals depicted the passing kingdoms (Dn 4, 7; Lambert 1977:7). The fall of all the kingdoms and the establishment of Yahweh's kingdom would lead to the finalisation of Yahweh's plan with Israel and the entire human race.

Restoration would not only mean return, but also freedom from foreign domination. Perpetual domination prompted Daniel to pray for full restoration. Since Judah had

returned after fifty years, the author of the book Daniel was probably already in the motherland. Being at home was insignificant without the much-anticipated freedom from foreign bondage.

The man Daniel prayed to Yahweh for the termination of foreign bondage, but it could have been the perpetual bondage during the days of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. The historically non-existent character of Darius the Mede[17] (Dn 9:1) may offer evidence that Judah was still under the perpetual domination of a foreign king. Much more emphasis is given by referring to Darius as the king of the Chaldeans (Dn 9:2). Jeremiah's message is centred on the anticipation and hope for the end of the desolation of Jerusalem and Daniel's allusion to written documents confirms that the background of these stories was the king's court since writing belonged to the elite.

The desolation of Jerusalem can be summed up as the prolonged suffering beyond the predetermined period. Daniel could not remain silent but sought divine intervention through prayer and fasting. The next section therefore focuses on Daniel's prayer and fasting.

4.5.4 Daniel's prayer and fasting

The purpose of the long prayer section was "לְבַקֵּשׁ תְּפִלָּה וְתַחֲנוּנִים בְּצוֹם וְשַׂק וָאֵפֶר (to seek by prayer and supplication, with fasting, and sackcloth and dust)". Baldwin (1978:165) contends that, "Divine decree or no, the Scriptures never support the idea that God's purpose will be accomplished irrespective of the prayers of His people". Scripture demonstrates that Yahweh has instituted prayer as a means by which he fulfils his plan and purpose. The prayer of confession of guilt glorifies God's mercies (Bultema 1988:264). As for Daniel, the will of God was for him to show his loving kindness.

Daniel's prayer is a response to the reading "בַּסְּפָרִים (from the books)". Daniel 9:1-27 constitutes one of the longest prayers in ancient Israel. I agree with Werline (2013:15) that Daniel's prayer was a response to the oppressive imperial domination of the Jews by

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[17] Nel claims that Darius was actually not the Mede but a famous Persian ruler who ruled Persia from 522 to 486 BCE (2013:2). Darius the Mede was also alluded to in Daniel.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Earlier in Chapter Two, the literature review shows that prayer was a form of resistance of the Empire as in the example of Daniel who committed to prayer and confession of sins to Yahweh. However, a truly historical understanding of Daniel 9 will relate to similar texts from the Second Temple period such as Nehemiah 1:4-11. In the latter text, the presence of imperialism may not be immediately clear though the context is very similar to Daniel 9. The text of Nehemiah 1 is completely silent on prohibition of prayer. The idea of prayer as resistance is clearer in Daniel 3 or Daniel 6. Therefore, using prayer in the same spirit of adhering to Yahweh's covenant stipulations was definitely against the imperialist spirit. By praying, the faithful Jews defied the imperial orders. However, it also implied that the sins of Judah had not yet been forgiven, that is, seeing that Daniel continued to confess his nation's sins, seeking forgiveness (Dn 9:3-19). The confession of Daniel is evidence of the acknowledgement of guilt as a way to attain the much-anticipated restoration.

Daniel realised that the promise of restoration after seventy years would not be fulfilled if Judah would not confess her sins. Bultema (1988:266) notes that by confessing Israel's sin, Daniel was submerged in the sin of his people as he made confession for Israel. In verse 5, Daniel used the pronominal suffix "נוּ (we)" as in "וְהִרְשַׁעְנוּ חָטָאנוּ וְעָוִינוּ" (we have sinned, and we did iniquity, and we have done evil)". For Baldwin (1978:165), Daniel acted like a king representing Israel before God, which confirms that in prayer, one person can represent the sins of many before God.

Fasting is different from simply praying. One may pray daily, but it would be difficult to fast daily. Originally, fasting was an act of humility before God (Bultema 1988:265). However, the meaning changed to express sorrow. Fasting is an extra and more radical commitment to prayer by refraining from food and drink. It may be partial when one takes water or light foods, but the aim is to evoke divine intervention. Yahweh did not disappoint Daniel; the answer was sent the day Daniel started praying.

Clearly, fasting is popular in the book of Daniel and is mostly associated with prayer. Daniel prayed and fasted to get Nebuchadnezzar's lost dream. Daniel also fasted for

twenty-one days (Dn 10:2-3), as he abstained from delicacies, meat and wine. He also did not anoint himself with oil and put on sackcloth and ashes (Dn 9:3). Sackcloth and ashes symbolised grief in ancient Israel.

Thus, prayer was used as a form of non-violent resistance to the oppressive structures of imperialism. For example, Antiochus Epiphanes prohibited the reading of Scriptures, sacrifices, prayer and fasting. Daniel's prayer and fasting, in this instance, could inspire readers to resist the Empire. Prayer also demonstrates loyalty to Yahweh as the Sovereign One who is above all human sovereignties.

4.5.5 Mosaic covenant promises

Prayer, informed by Yahweh's fidelity to the covenant, is a major component of the book of Daniel. The disillusion and anger that were experienced when Yahweh subjected the Jews to the Babylonian exile were over. Yahweh and the heavenly hosts had never been defeated, as he remained faithful to his word that through the Babylonians, the Jews would be punished. When the time was over, they had to commit their fate to Yahweh and the book of Daniel recounts that Yahweh also was committed to his covenant (Block 2005:39). Belief in Yahweh's commitment evokes hope that his promises would be fulfilled.

Memories of the Mosaic Law prompted the author of Daniel to reflect on the potential retributive justice for the sins of the Hebrews as they strove to uphold the covenant stipulations (Dn 9:4-14). The promise of restoration after a specified period of seventy years was on condition that the exiles repent and obtain forgiveness as was promised by the prophet (Jr 25:11-12; 29:10). This prompted an eschatological nature of hope for restoration, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

The anticipation of the fulfilment of the seventy weeks of years did not culminate in anything worth hoping for, except to extend it to the final fruition of the divine plan with his creation and his predetermined expectations with the universe. The period of seventy weeks of years would culminate in the resurrection of those who committed themselves

to Yahweh. The wise who remained faithful to Yahweh expected him to usher in his own kingdom as the persecution intensified during the time of Antiochus IV and foreign domination. The wise anticipated the fall of all foreign domination (Reddit 1998:474).

The failure of the Jews to uphold the Covenant Law was the reason for exile. The prolonged exile persuaded Daniel to appeal to Yahweh through the prayer of confession of the sins of Israel which seemed to be the obstacle to the termination of the desolation of Jerusalem. Prayer and fasting were some of the rituals which were prohibited by the empires. Praying was also a means of resistance, marked with the hope of divine intervention.

4.5.6 Use of the divine name "Yahweh" in Daniel 9

The divine name in Hebrew (Tetragrammaton) is transliterated as Yahweh since the name was considered too holy to be pronounced. Later on, when the vowels were developed, the vowels from the name "אֲדֹנָי (my Lord)" were applied to the four original consonants to pronounce the name as 'Jehovah' (Wood 1989:233). The name Yahweh is mentioned seven times in the book of Daniel and all the references are in Daniel 9 (vv. 2, 4, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 20). However, it was problematic to refer to the Tetragrammaton in late biblical Hebrew, as it may be noted that the name is not used in the books of Canticles, Ecclesiastes and Esther when the Jews could have been in exile. According to Davies (1993:82), Daniel used both names "Adonai" and Yahweh as was applicable during the Second Temple period—that creates a very big challenge for situating Daniel 9 in the same timeframe with other late biblical literature.

Yahweh is mentioned in relation to Moses, the one who received the name. Yahweh revealed the divine name firstly to Moses at his request (Ex 3:14). However, Yahweh had previously revealed himself to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Ex 6:2). Divine revelation was, therefore, associated with the redemptive history of the self-revealing God. Daniel then pleaded for divine justice, for Yahweh to fulfil his promises as he has a history of fulfilling his promises, beginning with his covenant with Abraham and ratified in Moses. The return from exile was promised earlier in Exodus—that Yahweh would restore the

former Israel from the Egyptian bondage to the Promised Land. It was in a similar predicament that Daniel then referred to Yahweh (Ex 3:14; Dn 9:2, 4, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 20).

The mention of Yahweh may call for further scrutiny. The name Yahweh is mentioned six times in Daniel 9 that is, verse 2, "דְּבַר־יְהֹוָה (the word of Yahweh)" in construct relationship with a *maqqef*, to imply one speech unit and to imply the word "of" God that he spoke to Jeremiah the prophet. The prophets received their oracles from Yahweh. The name Yahweh is also used in verse 4 with reference "לַיהוָה אֱלֹהַי (to Yahweh my God)". The reference to Yahweh in this verse may also be understood in relation to verse 8 that refers "לַאדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ (to Adonai our God)". Both are possessive cases; while in the first case, it is first person common singular pronoun, in the second case, it is first person common plural. Additionally, in the second case, the name Adonai is rendered[18] in verse 8 as "יְהֹוָה (Yahweh)"; in verse 10, it occurs in "בְּקוֹל יְהוָה (in the voice of Yahweh)" and in verses 13, 14 and 15 in "יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ (Yahweh our God)". In verse 20, it is "יְהוָה אֱלֹהַי (Yahweh my God)", with first person pronominal suffix, "my", to indicate possession.

The name Yahweh has appeared together with the name Moses, the covenant and the Torah. Van Deventer (2017:237) argues that the mention of the name Moses raises some challenges in interpreting late biblical literature and that the book of Daniel is the last to be included in the Hebrew Bible. The book is like the literature of the period close to the end of the first half of the second century BCE, bringing into focus the period after seventy years of exile, as mentioned by Jeremiah (25:11-12; 29:10). Despite all the challenges, it is critical to understand that Moses is mentioned in the same context as the name Yahweh. The name Moses is mentioned twice in Daniel 9. Daniel 9:11 refers to "בְּתוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה עֶבֶד־הָאֱלֹהִים (in the Law of Moses servant of God)". Moses is the one who possesses the law, as the phrase "the Law of Moses" shows. The Law has always been attributed to Moses as the servant of Yahweh, implying that Moses was the custodian and teacher of the Law.

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[18] The word YHWH is also used interchangeably with Adonai as in verse 8 where the word Adonai is used in the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, while some other versions retain YHWH.

Daniel 9:13 refers to "בְּתוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה (in the Law of Moses)". In both instances, the name Moses is in construct relationship with the Law, to demonstrate a sense of ownership. Hebrew constructs form single speech units. Attributing the Law to Moses presupposes the law giving in Exodus 19 and 20. The book of Daniel, therefore, should be read intertextually with other biblical literature that refers to the Law of Moses. Thus, Scripture has been redeployed in prayer as reinterpretation in new contexts. Harkins (2017:81) proposes an entirely different view of interpreting Second Temple prayers. He regards the Second Temple prayers as prayers of grief over the people's failures to uphold Yahweh's obligations. The prepositional clause, "בְּתוֹרַת (in the Law)" appears twice in Daniel 9, that is, in verses 4 and 27. The word is also mentioned five times in Daniel 11 and 12 (Dn 11:22, 28, 30 [twice] and 30). In Daniel 9:4, the author refers to Yahweh as "שֹׁמֵר הַבְּרִית וְהַחֶסֶד (keeping the covenant and grace)". The covenant referred to is the covenant made with Abraham by Yahweh, who in his gracious will, elected him and his posterity (Gn 15). The covenant name Yahweh was then revealed to Moses. Yahweh is obliged to keep his covenant "לְאֹהֲבָיו וּלְשֹׁמְרֵי מִצְוֹתָיו (to those who love him and those who keep his commandments)". Thus, the conditions of the covenant were given but could have been realised at the time of the composition of Daniel 9. Yahweh kept his promises provided Israel responded to Yahweh's covenant and lovingkindness. Israel's response was to love Yahweh and keep his commandments. The conditions of the covenant entailed receiving divine promises. The covenant is written in juxtaposition with verbs that describe the breaking of the covenant. The prerequisite for Yahweh to uphold his covenant is keeping the commandments that were given to Moses (Ex 20).

The community of the covenant are encouraged to adhere to divine obligations (Dn 9:5). The author lists consecutive actions that his audience had committed as follows: " חָטָאנוּ וְעָוִינוּ וְהִרְשַׁעְנוּ וּמָרָדְנוּ וְסוֹר מִמִּצְוֹתֶךָ וּמִמִּשְׁפָּטֶיךָ: [19] (We have sinned, and we have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, and turned from your commandments, and from

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[19] See Dn 9:5 in *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia,* SESB Version, electronic ed. Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 2003.

your judgements)". Wood (1998:237) avers that the four parallel verbs above were mainly to describe the intensity of sinfulness. Both the author and the audience acknowledge their shortcomings as what triggered divine justice. Prayer would be the only way to appeal for divine mercy. Only through Yahweh's "הַחֶסֶד (mercy)" and will would their iniquities be pardoned. Prayer confirms loyalty to Yahweh and constitutes the declaration of his sovereignty, thus stimulating hope for Yahweh to fulfil his plan and purpose.

Yahweh's self-disclosure in which he introduced his name to Moses was related to the redemptive history of ancient Israel. Yahweh's self-revelation was coupled with the natural phenomenon that demonstrated his gracious love for Israel. He revealed himself as the consuming fire, yet revealed himself to Moses as the fire that did not consume the bush. The introduction of the divine name is related to the hope for future deliverance. Daniel's prayer acknowledges that sin had separated Judah from their God. Furthermore, in verse 6, the prophets are depicted as agents of God to emphasise the need to abide with the Covenant Law.

The use of the name of Yahweh may be summarised as emphasising his covenantal promises. Through the covenant, Yahweh promised to bless those who are faithful. Daniel was prompted to confess the sins of Israel. The covenant gave room for the confession of guilt for Yahweh to demonstrate his loving kindness. Prayer and fasting were also used as forms of resistance against the empires, as noted in Chapter Two. The next section will focus on the responses to Daniel's prayer in Daniel 9:24-27.

4.5.7 The anointed prince

The identity of the prince from the house of David cannot be left unmentioned. Longman III (2007: 16) states that Daniel 9:25, 26 "associates the root Messiah with a name from the royal courts". "מָשִׁיחַ נָגִיד (Messiah the prince)" was virtually the eschatological figure and not a historical present king. Focus is on a figure who inaugurates an eschatological era, beginning with the present and culminating in the future.

Tanner (2009:181-200) ascertains that Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Julias Africanus, Origen, Eusebius, Apollinaris, Jerome, Augustine and many Jewish scholars all offered the messianic interpretation of Daniel 9. The messianic interpretation presupposes a time of crisis when the readers needed to remain hopeful.

Fitzmyer (2007:56-64) considers the role played by Daniel 9:25-26 in the emergence of messianism. He locates the historical circumstances in the Second Temple period when the book could have reached its final form in the Septuagint. The time which he assumes to be 165 BC was a period associated with Antiochus Epiphanes' endeavour to Hellenise the Jews and his eventual desecration of the Temple. Fitzmyer (2007:60) situates Daniel 9:25-26 in the historical circumstances surrounding Daniel, supported by the message of Jeremiah 25:11-12 that the restoration of the Davidic kingdom would be realised at the end of the seventy years. The postponement to seventy weeks (490 years) is regarded by Fitzmyer (2007:61) as an estimated period that ranges from the edict of Cyrus who was the Messiah (Is 45:1) up to the persecution of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who is referred to as bringing the abominations that desolate. The anointed one that is cut off, in this case, refers to Onias III, who was discharged from his priestly office while "the prince" refers to Antiochus himself.

Situating Daniel 9 in the Second Temple period confirms that messianic hope was generated by the circumstances in the community of Yehud. When the community of Yehud was subjected to foreign domination, it anticipated deliverance based on the termination of foreign domination.

Kessler (2008:159-160) gives a comprehensive social history of the period which led to the Maccabean revolt. That history begins with the campaign of Alexander the Great that resulted in the Persian Empire's loss of grip even without a fight and its final breakthrough in 333 BCE in the battle of Issus. After Alexander's death in 323, his generals fought for the control of the Empire, resulting in the collapse of the already

unified world of the Empire, which then divided into two.[20] The Ptolemies took control of Egypt and Palestine for almost the whole of the third century. The Seleucids controlled Syria and Mesopotamia where they enjoyed stability in the third century. Antiochus Epiphanes, the Seleucid, built a military fortress in Jerusalem and the occupying forces had the freedom to worship other gods even before the most pious Jews. Unlawful sacrifices in the Temple resulted in the revolt of the most pious Jews in the name of the Maccabees in 167BC.

Pierce (1989:211) refers to two scholarly views in the interpretation of Daniel 9. Firstly, Daniel 9 is a pseudo-epigraphic history of the second century BCE that narrates Antiochus Epiphanes' desolation of the Temple in 167-164 BCE. Secondly, Daniel 9 is considered a prophecy of the sixth century BCE, foretelling events about the life of Jesus Christ, which probably constitute an "eschatological dimension". Tanner (2009:182) supports the second view that Daniel 9 is a prophecy of the sixth century BCE but "focussing on the postponement of the expected restoration caused by the poor spiritual condition of the remnant in the close of the exile". The postponement could have been from the intended seventy years to 490 years. Pierce (1989:11) equally supports a historical dimension which pushes the book of Daniel to the historical past. The second view does not distinguish between Daniel and prophetic literature. Daniel is counted among the books of the Writings in the Hebrew Bible and cannot strictly be regarded as prophetic but, rather, apocalyptic literature.

The appearance of the term 'messiah' twice in the passage may depict either a historical character that was anointed or an eschatological figure. The messianic expectations were, however, high in the crisis of the audience of the book of Daniel. This research regards Daniel 9:24-7 as literature of the Second Temple period. While Cyrus played a messianic role, Darius may be regarded as the prince; but neither of them may be referred to as being cut off. Rather, the text refers to Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Considering the text as messianic may only be fitting in a progressive reinterpretation of the same text.

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[20] This is only as far as the history of Palestine goes. There were four parts of this new empire, as this study indeed has noted earlier.

4.5.8 Summary

The book of Daniel has been regarded as consisting of prophecies which were fulfilled in the coming of Christ. This research affirms that the initial meaning reflected on historical figures of the time of Antiochus Epiphanes within the crucial moment when the Second Temple Jews were in desperate need of redemption. Messiah or the Prince likely refers to Antiochus Epiphanes and the cutting off of the messiah likely refers to his death.

4.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have tried to trace the roots of hope in the Old Testament. Hope among the Hebrews appeared to be based on the legitimisation of the perpetual Davidic kingdom through which kingship focused on the realisation of peace and prosperity for ancient Israel. The emergence of apocalyptic literature brought with it various worldviews and ideologies for interpreting human life. Apocalyptic literature also brought hope for the realisation of the eminent event that would culminate in the end of the world and the beginning of a new age. Daniel is accepted widely as the only apocalyptic book of the Old Testament. It constitutes a type of literature that inspires hope in a people under imperial domination. The oppressed Jews hoped for divine intervention of the messianic figure as the "son of God" and as the "messiah prince" who would usher in an era of prosperity. Hope of the resurrection of the dead would give courage to those under persecution to endure even unto death. They remained hopeful that there would be a joyful and prosperous future. Situating hope during the rule of Seleucids makes the purpose of hope to be remaining faithful and continuing to adhere to the Torah, despite impending persecution.

Having shown that the book of Daniel was written to offer hope, it is not an exaggeration to argue that the book continues to be read to encourage those under oppressive powers. Hope becomes their optic. Toffelmire (2011:112) asserts that "Scripture is not bound only to its ancient con- texts (though this is vital to be sure), but it carries its greater context with it in the community that returns to it continually". In the next chapter, I try to reread the book of Daniel, in particular, the text of Daniel 9, informed by the African

context of Zimbabwe, a context typified, as has already been outlined in Chapter 3, by a multi-layered crisis

CHAPTER FIVE
APPROPRIATION OF DANIEL 9 TO GENERATE HOPE
IN THE 21ST CENTURY ZIMBABWEAN CONTEXT

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter explores how the outcomes of a historical critical study of Daniel 9 could be appropriate for generating hope in the hopeless context of the 21st century Zimbabwe, thus, creating a dialogue between Chapter Three (the 21st century Zimbabwean context of hopelessness) and Chapter Four (the historical critical reading of Daniel 9). The historical critical reading of Daniel 9 involved a brief survey of the themes of hope in the book as well as the exegesis of the chapter.

In Daniel 9, the man Daniel confirmed that Jerusalem was still in desolation. The duration of the desolation, which was expected to last for seventy years, was reinterpreted to mean 490 years. The reinterpretation of Jeremiah's prophecy by Angel Gabriel confirmed that the divine plan was still in order and the Second Temple community of Yehud was not supposed to despair. Daniel could not have remained in despair. Earlier in Chapter Two, this research demonstrated that writing, reading, praying and fasting signified non-violent forms of resistance with the hope to realise the much-anticipated independence and freedom. Since the desolation was a result of sin, Daniel's prayer of forgiveness of sin could equally address the predicament (Dn 9:3-19). Reinterpretation of Jeremiah maintained hope that the desolation would end.

After the seventy years elapsed, a new king Darius the Mede, son of Ahashverosh was installed. Earlier in Daniel 2, the dream of Nebuchadnezzar was interpreted to signify the dwindling human sovereignties that were followed by the establishment of the divine eternal kingdom. Similarly, the end of the colonial era in Zimbabwe implied that imperialism was dwindling in the face of resistance and hope. The narratives of the liberation struggle equally reflect divine involvement which, together with reinterpretation of Daniel 9, may inspire hope in the Zimbabwean crisis. The

Zimbabwean war of liberation was inspired by the words of Mbuya Nehanda, who foretold that her bones would rise (meaning that later generations would fight for freedom). Daniel 9 equally generated hope in a context in which ancient traditions were meaningful. The study of the 21st century Zimbabwean context reveals that members of the opposition parties are experiencing hopelessness.

The much-anticipated independence turned to be a nightmare. Those who were there during the colonial era testify that the situation in the then Rhodesia seemed to have been much better. The indigenous government perpetuated the legacies of colonialism and colonialism has resurfaced in the form of neo-colonialism.[21] The question is, who then shall liberate the nation from its own colonialists? Upon failing to deliver the much-yearned-for independence, the state used terror, abduction, torture and killings to traumatise the Zimbabwean population. The reinterpretation of Jeremiah's prophecy gave assurance that Yahweh was still in control. Every passing time was a step towards the end of the desolation.

In Zimbabwe, the attainment of independence from the colonial government was regarded as the realisation of the people's dream. Earlier hopes for a new Zimbabwe were thwarted as the independent state either perpetuated or radicalised colonial ideologies. Any open criticism of Mugabe's rule was met with intolerance.

The interpretation of the dwindling human sovereignties in Daniel is similar to the situation of the opposition parties in Zimbabwe who projected the end of Mugabe era. The end of all situations is certain despite the fact that colonialism was prolonged under a new guise (Mutumbuka 1981:xiii). The end of Mugabe in 2017 rekindled hopes for a new government that would restore peace and prosperity. The change of government and the coming of the New Dispensation under the leadership of President Emerson Mnangagwa allegedly did not make significant amendments of the law to address the plight of the

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[21] Musendekwa (2016:83) notes that independence did not mean freedom from colonialism. The first African country to be declared an independent state by the American colonial society was Liberia in 1847. Although the sovereign state housed former African-American slaves, the state continued with slave trade. Mutumbuka (1981: xiii) concedes that African states became even worse after independence as the indigenous bourgeois class prioritised self-enrichment as the masses continued to suffer more than before.

citizens. However, by remembering the past, the vulnerable Zimbabwean populace would understand the present predicament and generate hope by anticipating a future Zimbabwe with less desolation. The understanding of the sovereignty of Yahweh marks the basis of the diminishing human sovereignties. Yahweh has authority over all the rulers of the earth and he has decreed them into existence. Then hopelessness would diminish as the sovereign ruler controls the reigns of history.

This chapter will answer the main question, how can the reading of Daniel 9 bring hope to the hopeless Zimbabweans in the 21st century context? The research has already postulated that reading the book of Daniel with contextual lens could have something to offer. Daniel relied on the past promises to self-introspect on why the desolation of Jerusalem lasted more than was promised in Jeremiah. This chapter confirms the hypothesis that using contextual lens to read Daniel 9 could bring hope. It also uses the hermeneutics of appropriation to appropriate Daniel 9 to the crisis in Zimbabwe.

5.2 HERMENEUTICS OF APPROPRIATION

The first chapter explored various uses of ABH and notes that ABH aims at addressing the contextual needs (Ukpong 2002:7; Adamo 2015:2; Ottuh & Idemudia 2021:9). In this chapter, there is a focus on the rereading of Daniel 9 through contextual lens with much emphasis on the hermeneutics of appropriation. Rugwiji (2020:1) views the hermeneutics of appropriation as a scientific approach that appropriates themes derived from the study of ancient biblical texts to the world of the contemporary Bible readers. Aligned with this approach are various themes through which Daniel 9 may become a vehicle of hope for today.

Mamvura (2021a:1862) observes that Mugabe's replacement of place names with the names of traditional leaders and liberation heroes was meant to influence public opinion. If public opinion could be influenced by appropriating names of traditional leaders and liberation war heroes to places, then, the hermeneutics of appropriation could establish opportunities for generating hope in the 21st century Zimbabwean context of

hopelessness. The research presupposes that an appropriation of themes from Daniel 9 to the Zimbabwean context could inspire hope in the affected people.

What is critical in the hermeneutics of appropriation is that the social conditions, experiences and perspectives of each interpretive community in time and space bring out a unique theological idea of God (Gerstenberger 2002:10). Gerstenberger's view is echoed by Schüssler Fiorenza (1988:5) who argues that, "One's social location or rhetorical context is decisive in how one sees the world". Thus, there is no presupposition-less biblical interpretation, particularly, when dealing with the experiences of the oppressive rule of the post-exilic Hellenistic era.

Gerstenberger's key assumption is that each sociological layer generated different portraits of Israel's God. He further discusses Israel's views of the divine, polytheism, syncretism and monotheism. In another chapter, he outlines how ancient theologies in the Old Testament may be used to address contemporary global issues of justice, liberation, conflicting religions, sexist ecology, war and racism. The preceding sheds light on the study of the post-exilic literature, particularly, the apocalyptic literature of the book of Daniel.

On his part, Brueggemann (2005:98) argues that those on the margins have their own theology hence there is "effort from the margins". The hermeneutics of appropriation seeks to read Daniel 9 with those in the margins of society who are experiencing hopelessness because of the socio-economic and political crisis in Zimbabwe.

The idea of myth is very much relevant in the book of Daniel and van Deventer (2008:714) justifies the uniqueness of African scholarship in appreciating the congruence between African myths and philosophy. In Africa, even when real stories are told, they are told not for their own sake, but for the purpose of illustration or probably of directing focus on a certain figure such as a role model. Some stories are more memorable because of the unique lessons drawn from them. One such story is an incident that took place in Hwange tourist town in the western border with Zambia. On 29 October 2019, Rebecca

Munkombwe, aged eleven and her friend Layota Muwani, aged nine, were swimming in a river. When Rebecca heard her friend screaming from a distance, she rushed and saw Layota struggling to remain afloat. Layota was caught between the jaws of a crocodile. Rebecca rushed and jumped on top of the giant reptile and poked her fingers into its eyes. The crocodile released Layota and slipped away. Rebecca seized Layota and helped her out. Layota survived with minor injuries and she was admitted to a nearby hospital. Rebecca reported the matter to the police (Moyana 2019). The above-lived experience of hope recalls the apocalyptic literature's goal of depicting hope for the future embedded in resistance against the authorities that deny others the right to freedom and peace. Though living in a "crocodile invested", world hope assures that in the course of time, the oppressed will finally be set free.

In a separate incident that took place on 19 July 2021 in Chipinge in the Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe, a 14-year-old girl was attacked by a lion. The father of the girl, Hunesu Chunje, reported that her daughter Agnes had gone outside around 08.00 hours to collect her jacket when a lion leapt on her and bit her on her knee. Her younger brother then came and punched the lion with bare fists from behind (Dundu 2021). Hope to retain life is based sometimes on acts of sacrifice as this young boy demonstrated. From the above stories, one can appreciate the power behind stories, like the stories in apocalyptic literature.

Musendekwa (2016:88) observes that when real stories are being told, they have more to teach than their real meaning. He illustrates with Albert Schweitzer's observation of the fruit trees that grew in the forest covered by cripplers. When the cripplers were cut and pulled down, the fruit trees which were no longer producing fruit started to fruit. When considered metaphorically, this narrative could depict colonisation as cripplers that overshadowed the possibility of civilisation. Musendekwa (2016:98) cites Albert Schweitzer's reference to sangunagentas[22] and sand fleas that were imported in wooden crates to Africa and that became formidable species. Musendekwa characterises the story as metaphorical to communicate the menace of European civilisation that was imported

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[22] These ants were classified as the worst species.

to a world that was already in pursuit of civilisation. The above examples demonstrate that reading in context brings new insights from any given text. Thus, reading Daniel 9 in the Zimbabwean context could generate hope in hopeless situations.

Thus, hermeneutics of appropriation can be described as an ideological methodology that applies ancient literature to contemporary issues. The methodology finds relevance in contexts that understand literature and events as speaking beyond their literal form and raising issues that are comparable to contemporary worldviews. More precisely, it finds themes in ancient literature ideal for the contemporary world.

To sum up, hermeneutics of appropriation in this study is employed to reread Daniel 9 and appropriate the findings to the Zimbabwean context. Reading Daniel with contextual lens brings new insights that inspire hope in the Zimbabwean crisis.

5.3 APPROPRIATION OF THE BRIEF HISTORICAL SURVEY OF DANIEL TO THE ZIMBABWEAN CONTEXT

Jones (2012:546) argues that a prolonged "history of foreign domination requires that an oppressed population develop positive, proactive practices of identity formation, boundary maintenance and political resistance to survive the threat of cultural assimilation". The oppressed then, need to remain positive despite socio-economic and political crises.

The book of Daniel was intended to offer hope to the communities suffering from crumbling religious, economic and political structures. Judgement on these structures generates hope of a new creation in the suffering communities, causing them to rely on divine mercy as a source of strength (Hanson 1985:7-13). Hope transcends tragedy since, through hope, the victims of oppression commit themselves to Gods final plan and purpose, despite all forms of evil (Hanson 1985:14-15). Once the penultimate is suffering, then, the ultimate is hope. Reading the book of Daniel in the context of Zimbabwe would ultimately generate hope. Hope will give the people strength to survive

the harsh socio-economic and political crisis. The Zimbabwean citizens still have the power and edge to accomplish their dreams (Hoy 2004:11).

In this section, I compare the perpetual imperial domination of the Jews in the Second Temple period and the perpetuation of colonial heritage in the 21st century Zimbabwean context. The Second Temple period parallels the Zimbabwean socio-economic and political landscape that heavily deteriorated from 2000 to 2023. The pseudonymous nature of the book depicts exilic circumstances through apocalyptic literature which gained prominence in the Hellenistic period. The section is a dialogue between the outcomes of the historical survey of Daniel and the 21st century context of Zimbabwe.

According to Collins (1981:88-89), the text applies to more than one context since considerable continuity between the prophets and Daniel is notable. Following Collins' view, the context of Daniel finds relevance in relating the prophetic traditions to a context different from that of the prophets. In this regard, the book of Daniel also continued to speak to later contexts when appropriated to the Roman period and the 21st century Zimbabwe, for example. The book of Daniel is also regarded as significant "in all seasons" (Grabbe 2001:229-246). It was significant to the Jews of the Second Temple period, particularly, in the Hellenistic period. The book gave them hope that the unjust empires would be finally judged and the faithful Jews would be rewarded. Van Deventer (2008:714) notes the congruence between the use of myths in the book of Daniel and African myths and philosophy. Such similarities, especially in relation to the book of Daniel, become relevant and appealing to the Zimbabwean context. Furthermore, neo-colonialism in Zimbabwe compares to the experiences of the Hellenistic period in which the legacies of the colonial era that includes the governing structures and policies were upheld (Mulinge & Lesetedi 1998:17). Colonialism may not be blamed for all the wrongs in society, without taking due cognisance of the fact that the ruling elite blatantly welcomed and adopted colonial practices to fit their own power agendas. The fact is that in the second century BCE there were many Jews in Jerusalem who welcomed the modernisation of Jewish culture to conform to Greek culture. One can even argue that the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek was part of this movement. Moreover, in

political matters of governing structures and policies, the question that crops up is what would have been the alternative? The Jewish elite themselves hardly believed that going back to a time of complete isolation in their "modern world" would help in creating an identity in that world. Of course, the Maccabees had another idea and used force to try to re-establish an 'old order' that in the end also did not stand the test of time when the Roman Empire triumphed. Though a pristine past exists to which those of us in the 21st century global city cannot easily return, this research discovers aspects of congruence with the past in the reader's worldview. The book of Daniel has something to offer regarding the crisis in Zimbabwe as it had during the Hellenistic period, particularly in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes. In his comment on Daniel 3, Tucker Jr (2012:301) says:

> ...early Christian writers sought to imagine life, even life amid the threat of martyrdom, through a scriptural lens. The writers sought to align the suffering of the present community with the suffering experienced by the people of God in the scriptural witness. In so doing, the writers established continuity of identity between the people of God in the past and those in the present. In short, the suffering of the present community was not isolated in occurrence but instead represented a long history of communities persecuted at the hands of imperial power.

Tucker Jr. seems to propose a progressive reinterpretation as readers of the book of Daniel align themselves with the community suffering the threat of martyrdom. The suffering community in the present would then appropriate their suffering to suffering of those who were persecuted.

The experiences of Daniel and his friends testify that the God of Israel should be the ultimate Ruler whom all the nations would worship, including the imperial powers. Central to these narratives is the belief that all human authorities obtain their authority from God who would stand with his own. Similarly, the book of Daniel is relevant to efforts to address the crisis in Zimbabwe.

According to Rosen (2008: xxx), scholars widely agree on the motif that, "the genre apocalypse was born of socio-political crisis". This point is supported by Schwab (2006:13) who regards apocalyptic literature as a genre of the oppressed. It appears that apocalyptic literature was designed to comfort and encourage the oppressed and

powerless in times of distress. If indeed the apocalyptic genre was produced by the oppressed and marginalised people, then, that will resonate very well with the experiences of the members of the MDC-A who have withstood suffering and torture.

In the view of Collins (1981:86), the tales in Daniel should, therefore, be understood as "vindication of the heroes persecuted for their faith during the time which the dominion of God is invisible and only made visible in the second half of the book". The visions of the second half assert God's dominion. Daniel 9 brings to the fore the predetermined end of the destruction of Jerusalem. The book of Daniel therefore could equally be used to respond to the crisis in Zimbabwe as predetermined and under divine control.

Anxiety, worry and horror brought about by perceived dangers of the post-exilic may have given rise to apocalyptic literature. Anxiety sets in when the exact duration of the terror is unknown. Additionally, the use of terror as a social control tool by the state is possible. The entire populace is the target of governmental terror (Portier-Young 2011:140–142). The apocalypse becomes a significant resource for Zimbabweans in times of crisis. By reading Daniel 9 in the context of Zimbabwe, citizens may identify with the audience of Daniel and remain hopeful that the promise of the end of desolation would one day be fulfilled.

Hellenisation provoked various reactions including the fact that some Jews and other pro-Hellenists enjoyed profitable relations with the Greeks, while others recognised it as an attack on their identity (Murphy 2012:71). Literary work on the apocalypse and military action were also Jewish responses to Hellenistic domination. Central to all the responses to Hellenisation is hope that all suffering would culminate in restoration. Nevertheless, in the Zimbabwean context, those who are in the opposition circles, push the government to make reforms in a way that would be beneficial to the nation.

Apocalyptic literature must have helped to interpret the political turmoil experienced in the post-exilic era (Drane 1987:201). Daniel's prayer gives honour to God and not to Antiochus. Plunging the Zimbabwean nation into prayer would equally honour Yahweh

and not the authorities. Removing focus from the human authorities would demonstrate that the nation disregards their authority.

Apocalyptic literature also stimulates hope by prompting the victims of torture and abuse to visualise the world to come (Schwab 2006:14). Thus, apocalyptic literature becomes relevant to victims of political violence, such as those in Zimbabwe.

Apocalyptic imagination thrived during the intense suffering of the Jews under foreign rule, particularly under Antiochus. The rule of Mugabe and Mnangagwa shows similar characteristics, as Mnangagwa inherited the legacies of Mugabe (Chifamba 2021). Most probably, both share similar political strategies. Both have never tolerated the opposition, especially the mainstream opposition, that is, the MDC-A, which has now morphed into the Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC).

The emergence of apocalypticism among "peripheral or colonized peoples and the dominating and colonizing powers" (Cook 2014:30) suggests why the ruling class and the opposition appeal to apocalyptic literature in times of crisis. It is during an era of crisis that apocalyptic literature finds full expression.

Jewish apocalyptic writers assumed that Israel was righteous and apocalyptic traditions are, therefore, designed to give people hope and encouragement in times of distress (Villagomez 1998:204). Since it is a literature of the marginalised, the ruling class could manipulate apocalyptic expectations by claiming that they were already fulfilled (Boccaccini 2004:21). Based on the above arguments, apocalyptic hope finds fertile ground in the Zimbabwean context where ordinary citizens are hoping for change.

Apocalyptic literature responds to severe crisis because crisis triggers a sense of utter despair. In as much as apocalypticism became central to major opposition movements of the first century, Portier-Young (2013:145) claims that "Conquest created an empire; ongoing military activity, occupation, taxation, tribute, and colonial power maintained it". Similarly, the struggle that led to the liberation of Zimbabwe from colonial rule

perpetuated colonial structures so that the leaders further faced resistance from the common people, giving room to the development of opposition parties.

From the onset, apocalyptic writings offered hope to those suffering religious, economic and political persecution. However, while the suffering Zimbabweans appeal to apocalyptic literature, the political elites respond with a counter discourse, resulting in what can be called an apocalyptic complex. Clarity can be obtained from the understanding that even apocalyptic literature such as the book of Daniel was not only appropriated by the Jews suffering under Hellenistic rule but also manipulated by Hellenistic rulers to favour their own cause even though the book should give voice to the vanquished (Rappaport 1992:424). The Hellenistic rulers manipulated apocalyptic literature by co-opting "hegemonic social institutions to reinforce its value and cosmology" (Portier-Young 2011: xxii). It is equally significant to note that apocalyptic literature was an enterprise of the learned members of the aristocracy.

In as much as the appeal to history stimulates a sense of belonging in time and forms the root of apocalyptic thought (McGinn 1979:30), the appeal to history has been maximised by the political elites in Zimbabwe. While the marginalised political entities adopt a new narrative even though some of them have suffered for freedom in the past, the political elites rely on the history of the liberation struggle.

Apocalyptic literature generates hope for the redemption of the oppressed societies when the oppressors are subjected to divine judgement (Collins 2003:18; cf. Hanson 1985:3). Apocalyptic consciousness would be experienced not only in the marginal societies, but also by the considerably wealthy and powerful. Apocalyptic literature would trouble their minds, as the spiritual economic and political structures that undergird their position are unstable and about to collapse (Hanson 1985:3). This can be the reason apocalyptic imagery was, therefore employed by those who resisted the empire. Ordinary citizens in Zimbabwe hope for a regime change and the judgement of the perpetrators of injustice. The ruling party, instead, claims to assume messianic functions as those which were mainly performed by the freedom fighters that brought independence.

Mortimer (2002:17) contends that apocalyptic literature aided the original reader to find meaning and hope in a seemingly impossible situation. Finding meaning and hope is done by means of imagination rather than by human reason. Imagination focuses on the culmination of a divine plan that would bring lasting solutions in hopeless circumstances. In the Zimbabwean context of crisis, imagination generates the notion that divine intervention would end the multi-layered crisis.

Apocalyptic texts were composed in language of apocalyptic eschatology, a perspective of people in crisis. These texts are generated among marginal groups of people and written by a pseudonymous author to give the texts authority in their contexts (Vorster 1986:172). The book of Daniel is one of such texts that suggest that the agonies of the present age were prearranged by God to reveal that the triumphant divine plan and purpose are at hand (Bright 1980:424). If the findings from the historical critical analysis of the apocalyptic literature are appropriated to the Zimbabwe crisis, they may give hope and confidence as the contemporary crisis is limited to this world. Beyond this world is life everlasting for those who are faithful to Yahweh, but those who do not believe will receive eternal judgement.

The memory of atrocities and trauma trapped victims of the state of terror that intruded into the present and alienated them from hope. Traumatic memories are unspeakable and are therefore encoded in images and vivid sensations (Portier-Young 2011:174). This resonates with the view of Vorster (1986:178), who argues that the past is significant in order to visualise the future, even the eternal future. In this regard, the memories of the victimised and the traumatised generate apocalyptic visions. Amidst the crisis in Zimbabwe, victims visualise a future characterised by peace and justice, as portrayed in apocalyptic literature.

An apocalypse is regarded as being pessimistic about the fate of the righteous in the present age and the termination of history (Aune 2005:237). This may reliably be the

potential position of the Citizens Coalition for Change[23] (CCC). Mugabe later lost grip of power, which resulted in what Mackintosh, (21 Nov 2017) describes as "the coup-that-wasn't-a-coup". Thus, Mnangagwa's government could have difficulty in making legitimacy claims, except after winning free and fair elections. His ascension to power may be described rather as a "military assisted transition" (Crisis Group 20 Dec 2017). Power was taken from Mugabe through violence.

Mugabe claimed to be a sovereign ruler by capitalising on the liberation war rhetoric. However, the state inherited structures of colonial domination and those subjected to it responded by resisting their legitimacy. Sanders Hellholm and Vielhauer (1983:457) consider that apocalyptic literature was penned by the oppressed within or those purported to be suffering during the Second Temple period but the situation in Zimbabwe is more complex. Clair (2009:235) opines that resistance and oppression are self-contained opposites. Resistance serves as the foundation of hope, as Estermann (2003:112) asserts that hope is "born out of a situation of despair, poverty, marginalisation and exploitation". Without despair, there is no hope. The ruling party even went overboard by manipulating the anticipation of the full restoration from white supremacy. However, the mainstream opposition resisted. For example, after Mnangagwa was installed as state President, the opposition also installed Chamisa as the President.

Thus, the aim of apocalyptic literature is to interpret current circumstances while considering the future (Collins 1986:6). If this aspect is valid, it is more concisely relevant to the opposition whose hope is enshrined in the future. According to Taylor (2016:26), apocalypses presuppose a period of violence which requires divine intervention to vindicate the righteous who suffer oppression in the hands of their contemporaries. If this idea is correct, then, the mainstream opposition party in Zimbabwe should remain hopeful that their suffering would lead to divine intervention in their favour. This was the reason that some members of the then CCC remained adamant despite that they often had been thrown into prison.

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[23] This party is the rebranded version of what was formerly known as the MDC-A.

In Zimbabwe, the authors of apocalyptic literature are more anonymous than pseudonymous. An example of such anonymous writers is the 'hacktivist' who hacked the Zimbabwe government websites claiming to be a "cyber freedom fighter". The 'hacktivist' was provoked by the shutting down of internet access for more than a week. He expressed disappointment over the government's oppression and brutal killing of innocent people and used this as the basis for a cyber-war (New Zimbabwe 20 Jan 2019).

Anonymity, in this regard, is used to transmit messages that presuppose authority and issue warning. It is assumed that if the anonymous hackers can penetrate the national websites, they have power to penetrate the banking sector as well and sabotage the economy as punishment. The anonymous writer might be protecting him/herself from the possible danger of retaliation. However, the message has some apocalyptic intentions, as it is partially pseudonymous.

Similar occasions of anonymity include the leakage of highly confidential state information to the public by a blogger who called himself "Baba Jukwa". He could be a disgruntled ZANU-PF insider holding an anonymous Facebook account. In efforts to identify the individual blogger, a number of people and/or news outlets have been implicated, including the Sunday Mail Editor, Edmund Kudakwashe Kudzai (Taylor 2014).

Anonymity might not fully engage all aspects concealed in a pseudonymous writing. Rather, it conceals the writer out of the fear of danger. Pseudonymity aims to give the text authority. Pfukwa and Barnes (2010) published an article titled "Negotiating identities: Guerrilla war names in the Zimbabwean war of liberation". They argue that during the guerrilla war of resistance in Zimbabwe (from the late 1950s to 1979), changing names served to conceal identities. The liberation fighters concealed their names in order not endanger their families by exposing them to victimisation by the Rhodesian forces. Since the change of names was done in a conflict environment, it was used to chronicle popular resistance (Pfukwa & Barnes 2010:210-211). Changing one's name is also supported by Alexander and McGregor (2004:96), who note that since

changing names was done during inductions, it became a kind of initiation in which the guerrillas assumed new identities as freedom fighters. When there are political tensions, memories of the liberation struggle are kindled and the liberation names are revealed to open the wounds of the struggle and intimidate resisting masses. However, these wounds may be evidence that a new Zimbabwe can be realised by understanding a past that did not deliver the much-anticipated promises, as was the case in Daniel 9.

The trauma of the liberation struggle became entrenched in the memories of many citizens. These memories are now transmitted from one generation to another to form a very negative heritage that is not easy to deal with. According to Muzondidya and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2007:284), "Zimbabwe struggled to develop into a united nation-state because of its negative legacy of racial and ethnic polarisation inherited from both colonialism and African nationalism". Zimbabwe maintained ethnic differences inherited from the colonial boundaries that limited certain races to specified areas. Thus, the nation of Zimbabwe has a long history of schism.

The nationalist ideologies of the liberation struggle have been acculturated by citizens and cannot be forgotten, as they prioritised "regime security" over "human security" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2003:104). According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2003:106), the Zimbabwean state ideology evolved into a nationalist intolerance that treated with impunity, any resistance movement against the revolutionary state. If Ndlovu-Gatsheni's view is correct, then, the revolutionary spirit that is embedded in the nationalist movement would degenerate into apocalypticism in Zimbabwe. Nationalism becomes undemocratic and propagating the nationalist ideology would render also the state of affairs undemocratic.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2003:107) argues that the spirit of nationalism is intolerant to the pluralism of various social strata such as labour organisations, churches, students, women and youth, for it generates hostility among splinter groups. Rather, the liberation struggle is interpreted by the nationalist leadership composed of the petite-bourgeois class. Hegemony and authoritarianism become the culture of the day which is also

characteristic of apocalyptic discourse. The apocalyptic discourse finds relevance in the context of despair, such as that being addressed by the book of Daniel, thus making Daniel relevant for the 21st century Zimbabwean context.

One critical thing that makes apocalyptic literature applicable in Zimbabwe is how history has been adopted. Phimister (2012:28) observes that history is closely aligned to the ideology of hegemonic nationalism. Hegemonic nationalism legitimised the sovereignty of ZANU-PF as the political party that ruled since political independence (Nyamunda 2016:73). Inadvertently, the ruling party, therefore, has often been legitimised as the one and only heir of the ancestral spirits (Phimister 2012:28). The legitimating of ancestral spirits was intended to capitalise on nationalist mythology and the liberation rhetoric. Hence, memories of the liberation struggle survived well beyond the independence celebration of 1980 and inspired the hearts of younger generations for more than a decade after independence (Mhanda 2005:1). The ruling party has capitalised on the trauma of the liberation struggle as a weapon against the opposition parties. Thus, the rise of opposition politics in Zimbabwe has been triggered by the 21st century crisis.

The telling and retelling of the stories of the liberation struggle was used to inculcate nationalist ideologies to later generations. Stories of the liberation struggle were told to emphasise the legitimacy of the ruling party. However, independence is inevitable when most of the citizens experience untold suffering perpetuated by neo-colonialism (Durokifa & Ijeoma 2018:356). While liberation stories were intended to build hope, they lost weight due to people's prolonged suffering. Such circumstances of despair can identify with the background to apocalyptic discourse in the book of Daniel.

Legitimacy is not attained through the liberation rhetoric; it should be based, rather, on the democratic process that is based on elections. By claiming legitimacy, the ruling party monopolises the right to lead the country and undermines the credibility of the opposition parties and their leaders. The legacy of the liberation war generates fear, suspicion and a "siege mentality" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2003:108). All chances of success in the succession race become impossible if one has not been involved in the liberation struggle.

It was believed that the freedom fighters were stimulated by ancestral spirits and spirit mediums during the Second Chimurenga (Fontein 2006:141). The liberation war fighters reinterpreted their experiences considering earlier liberation struggles. Fontein (2006:143) avers that nationalism in the Great Zimbabwe monuments symbolised past achievements. Similarly, the erection of Mbuya Nehanda's statue is an ongoing reverence to the ancestral spirits as custodians of the independent state. The Zimbabwean history has become the centre stage for apocalyptic rhetoric during the 21st century Zimbabwe, making the apocalyptic genre relevant.

The historical context of the audience of Daniel stimulated the generation of apocalyptic literature as literature of hope. The book of Daniel, particularly Daniel 9, was written to oppressed or peripheral Jews who resisted Hellenisation. Apocalyptic literature encourages those suffering imperial domination to remain hopeful. The audience of Daniel had to focus on the future to remain hopeful amidst state political turmoil. Similarly, the Zimbabwean crisis finds meaning from apocalyptic literature. Apart from the fact that the book of Daniel can be appropriated to the Zimbabwean context, it is also within the Zimbabwean religious milieu that a firm foundation can be built for the hope of a transformed future.

5.4 HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF DANIEL AND ZIMBABWE'S POOR POLICIES

In Chapter Four, there was a discourse on the Seleucid Hellenist ideologies that deprived the Jews of their freedom. The most critical moment was during the time of Epiphanes. He made up for his failure to annex Egypt by re-conquering Jerusalem and terrorising the Jews. His reign of terror left the Jews in despair. As has already been foregrounded in this work, the book of Daniel was written to stimulate hope. This historical background assists in our understanding the 21st century Zimbabwean crisis. Zimbabwe relied on colonial heritage that privileged the ruling elite and disadvantaged most of the Zimbabwean citizens. Furthermore, the land reform programme that could have been beneficial to the Zimbabwean populace was used in response to the rejection of the new constitution that favoured the ruling elites. The atrocities that Antiochus Epiphanes

inflicted on the conservative Jews can be easily appropriated to the Zimbabwean context of socio-economic and political crisis characterised by terror, trauma and agony. When the book of Daniel is read under such conditions, it may give hope to the hopeless.

Alexander's successors did not only inherit his fragmented kingdom, but also his Hellenistic ideology of military conquest (Portier-Young 2011:50). Similarly, Mugabe's successor is a perpetuation of ZANU-PF hegemony that was founded on colonial heritage. Being successors of white supremacy, they only replaced the colonial mentality but retained the colonial laws that restrained freedom of expression and freedom of association.

According to Bright (1980:418) the succession of Antiochus III by his son Seleucus did not make any considerable change from his father's administration. The succession story seems to inform what happened in Zimbabwe. After the death of Mugabe, Mnangagwa seemed not to have diverted from the left nor to the right but, rather, he also inherited the structures of domination that kept Mugabe in power close to forty years!

In Mugabe's 1980 inaugural speech, he was ideologically imperialist (Crisis Coalition of Zimbabwe 2013:2). Thus, he perpetuated imperial ideologies and limited human sovereignties like what is alluded to in the book of Daniel. Mugabe's era may be reinterpreted to entail the postponement of real freedom and existence of perpetual suffering after the liberation struggle as signified in Daniel 9. The liberation struggle failed to offer the much- anticipated freedom. Daniel 9 gives hope because the Jews did not realise the liberty they had anticipated at home. The end of suffering in all cases would automatically mean the realisation of the hoped-for freedom.

The 70 years of desolation were translated to refer to 70 weeks of years (490 years). Yahweh had predetermined the various dispensations that were going to pass before the desolation ended. The reinterpretation could further refer to the end of the present age and the establishment of the new age. In the earlier days of independence in Zimbabwe, the Lancaster House constitution was blamed for safeguarding the interests of the former

colonisers (Yeros 2012:5). White farmers perpetuated colonial occupation of land since the Lancaster House constitution was prohibitive of a take-over by blacks. Since 1980, the nationalist government blamed the presence of white farmers for obstructing development. According to Yeros (2012:5), the nationalist government comprised a petite bourgeoisie class that perpetuated imperialism, thereby betraying the Zimbabwean masses. Thus, nationalism becomes an agent of neo-colonialism. Mulinge and Lesetedi (1998:17) argue that neo-colonialism maintains legacies of the colonial era. They further associate neo-colonialism with structures and policies inherited from the colonial era. Joshua Nkomo criticised Mugabe's upholding of colonial laws in a letter to Mugabe. Mugabe employed some of the legal measures that the colonial administration had previously used to suppress the native population. Nkomo criticised Mugabe for continuing to enact infamous colonial laws that violated the rights of indigenous people (Nehanda Radio Dec. 2013:80).

Under Mugabe's leadership, Zimbabwe's new administration kept up the imperial features of the colonial past, which were meant to keep up the oppressive mechanisms of the era and drive the people into despair. Musendekwa (2016:83) argues that the ongoing violence and brutality towards indigenous people have worsened the living conditions of the people since independence and thwarted any aspirations for the much-desired peace and prosperity. There is always optimism after reading Daniel, that Yahweh will abolish all human sovereignties. The colonial legacies in Zimbabwe were maintained and they may have even gotten worse. According to Ranger (2007:162), the Mugabe administration dealt with political opponents using colonial systems in trying to retain power.

To safeguard the interests of the governing elites, the government has maintained harsh policies. Mugabe, who was imprisoned during the fight for independence, followed in the footsteps of the white colonial authority, which was his predecessor. Leaders in Mugabe's government have excercised abhorrent oppression on the people. Mugabe, who liberated the country, became an oppressor by siding with the colonial authority (Mwananyanda,

Amnesty International, 6 Sept 2019). The leaders of the independent state oppressed the people because they seemed to want to revenge for the oppression they had experienced.

When a revolution occurs, according to Clark (2002), it does not only transfer political and economic power, but also establishes a new type of hegemony through experience and consciousness. A new administration that was almost identical to the colonial government was created by the independent state. As a result, the Zimbabwean government instituted measures that continue to erode the rights of the general populace. The Public Order and Safety Bill, which forbids any unauthorised gathering, is one example. The same law forbids criticising the president in any way. Another illustration is the Access to Information Bill, which established restrictions on journalists' obligations (Vao News, 27 Oct. 2009). These laws serve comparable purposes as the colonial government's statutes.

Mugabe's mismanagement was so bad that it was even predicted that the end of his reign would bring about several outcomes, including the hand-picking of a successor, his demise, a coup or pandemonium (Todd & Stewart 2006:22). Future predictions not only inspired optimism, but also discouragement.

Mhanda (2005:1) refers to the changes brought about by colonisation. The liberation struggle was a result of the expansion of urbanisation, which led to the rise of the petite bourgeoisie class and peasant class. The peasants fought against being exploited and displaced, while the petite bourgeoisie sought to approximate the status of their white colonialists.

After the struggle for independence, promises that were made were not always kept. Land disparity was not significantly reduced by the distribution of 10 million hectares to 168 671 families between 2000 and 2009 (Moyo 2011:496). Scholars criticise some of the elite members of the ruling political party for acquiring more than one farm each, adopting the practices of the colonial farmers. Thus, land reform caused more harm than good. The sanctions of the West against powerful statesmen led to the collapse of an

already deteriorating agricultural economy. Due to the requirement that the recipients of the land be devoted to the ruling party, the land reform consolidated the ZANU-PF's hold on power.

In the book of Daniel, the traditional Jews of the Second Temple who rejected Hellenisation came under pressure from the divided monarchy that remained after Alexander's death. Antiochus Epiphanes' Hellenisation strategy was also in response to his inability to capture Egypt. He took control of Jerusalem and imposed a terror regime on the citizens. Similarly, in Zimbabwe, colonial legacies favoured the ruling elites who lived among the populace, causing many to question the meaning of independence. The FTLRP, which was set up to resolve the land imbalance, was a response to the rejection of the new constitution because it not only resolved the land question, but also favoured the ruling class.

5.5 SELEUCID STATE TERROR AND STATE TERROR IN ZIMBABWE
The Seleucid context and the Zimbabwean context may contrast in various ways but this research finds congruence between them. The Hellenistic empires used terror as a control strategy. The main tenets of terror, as noted earlier, are summed up by Portier-Young (2011:140) as fear and anxiety, destruction, violence and abduction. The edict of Antiochus was even much harsher as he targeted the control of the religious space in the Jerusalem Temple, an aspect that is addressed by Daniel 9. These strategies are not peculiar to the ancient world but are also witnessed in Zimbabwe.

Due to the harsh economic environment of the 1990s, the state relaxed the colonial laws regarding urban housing. Consequently, there was mushrooming of backyard shacks among urban owners to provide much-needed accommodation. The rise in unemployment also led to the establishment of informal markets and workshops in and round the city and town centres as well as residential areas. The state used this situation to gain loyalty from the populace. More shacks were erected in open spaces as many urban dwellers attempted to earn a living. The exercise did not proceed because of the introduction of OM (Mlambo 2008:10). As part of OM activities, a settlement in the

outskirts of Harare at Churu Farm was obliterated in 48 hours and residents were relocated to Pota Farm where they lived in misery (International Displacement Monitoring Centre 2007). It seems that the destruction of houses, squatter camps, informal industries, infrastructure and crops in urban areas was carried out to thwart any form of resistance before or after the parliamentary and presidential elections.

The most dramatic violence is best explained by the militarisation of the state. Dzimiri (2017:52) blames the military for perpetuating electoral violence during the elections of 2002, 2005 and 2008. According to Human Rights Watch (2008), the acts of violence include torture, kidnappings, murders, rapes and sexual abuses. People are forced to realise that life beyond this world is preferable when they are so anxious for freedom. Like the hope of the resurrection in the book of Daniel, death would launch a person into a life beyond this one.

Several reports of kidnappings and acts of torture allege that victims were those who opposed the ZANU-PF regime. If this is the case, it may have been a strategy for handling all types of resistance. It is important to mention Dr. Peter Mugombeye's kidnapping and torture at this point because he was a vocal member of the Zimbabwe Doctors' Association. Three unidentified men kidnapped him from his home in the Budiriro area (Mavhinga 2019) after he organised several protests that demanded a salary increase for medical professionals. In the book of Daniel, the atrocities of Antiochus IV Epiphanes were mainly aimed at abrogating the resistance and opposition from the orthodox Jews (Bright 1980:419). Similarly, atrocities that were stimulated by various operations seemed to be for the good of the nation, on the surface, but they were aimed at silencing the opposition.

The Jews, who were pro-Hellenistic, found honour in a Greek identity by participating in gymnasium games. Nonetheless, they were embarrassed to expose their circumcised bodies (Drane 1987:192). The Jews made foreskins for themselves. That resembles the mind-set of several opposition figures that defected from their respective parties to join

the ZANU-PF and were sumptuously rewarded (Nkomo, New Zimbabwe 17 March 2021; 8 May 2021).

Terror during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes was employed as a state mechanism for social control. Antiochus used various strategies of terror in Judea, from the revolt of Jason to the mission of Apollonius. Similarly, in Zimbabwe the ruling government often used terror to prevent citizens from joining the opposition parties. The state inculcated the spirit of nationalism and patriotism in the people. Consequently, rules preventing anti-nationalism were constituted to protect the interests of the state. Anyone who opposed the state was considered a bootlicker of the enemies of the state. Under such conditions, many Zimbabweans left the country for neighbouring countries and abroad, as highlighted in Chapter Three.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes' atrocities were aimed mainly at abrogating resistance and opposition from the orthodox Jews (Bright 1980:419). One such example came in the wake of Jason's revolt when Antiochus terrorised Jerusalem's inhabitants through abduction, massacre, home invasion and temple plunder and through the spectacular display of power and shattering of any will to resist him by creating deep insecurity. By enslaving and massacring the people, he shattered all hopes for independence. The survivors of horror were exposed to terror and insecurity, as they suffered also the painful aftermath (Portier-Young 2011:143). The international response to acts of terror in Zimbabwe was the imposition of sanctions against perpetrators. The sanctions were imposed to punish the perpetrators of violence with the hope that they would desist from violence and comply with international democratic principles.

Slavery played an economic role because slaves contributed significantly to the economy during the Hellenistic Empire. War captives could be sold at a price ranging from 100 to 300 drachmas each. Equally, Antiochus imposed his own social order as he negated the existing one (Portier-Young 2011:147-148). It was argued above that, in the case of Zimbabwe, the social order similar to the previous was maintained. However, murder has also been used as a weapon in Zimbabwe, especially in 2008. Exposing such ruthless

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practices by summoning prayer and fasting would demonstrate powerful resistance and shame the authorities. Daniel's confession of guilt went beyond exposing the evil that was taking place. The Zimbabwean people should also expose similar injustices in their context.

The defilement of the Temple by Antiochus was similar to Belteshazzar's desecration of the Temple treasures after which his kingship was brought to an end. Antiochus repeatedly looted the Temple treasures (Drane 1987:199). The use of church space to solicit political support by politicians and the subsequent demise, especially of Mugabe, would be attributed to the climax that resulted in his demise. A Shona proverb says, "*Kana ngoma yoririsa inenge yoda kuparuka*", literally meaning, "When the drum is beating too loudly it is about to crack".[24] The proverb means that when one's conduct is getting out of hand or has become excessive, one is about to get into trouble. If the notion of the cutting off of the Prince in Daniel 9 signified the end of the desolation, then, the climax signalled the end of an era of terror and trauma. Based on that argument, Zimbabweans also may maintain optimism and, in that way, resist the severity of the torment.

After the temple plunder, Antiochus proceeded to appoint new officials to rule the region. Philip was stationed by Antiochus as commander of a group of mercenaries that threatened the Judeans externally. The threats were compounded by the actions of Menelaus who betrayed his people. Antiochus also added to his oppressive structures by sending Apollonius with 22 000 mercenaries to occupy the city. He attacked the city on the Sabbath by transforming a military parade to a gruesome massacre of spectators before soldiers attacked the city (2 Macc 5:25-26; Portier-Young 2012: 158-161).

Apocalyptic writers expose the spectacle by regarding imperialism as a visible negation of life. The visible had no part to play in the eternal. Urban settlers fled into the wilderness, which was a signal of rejecting imperial rule (Portier-Young 2011:167-169). In contrast, the pro-Hellenistic group found honour from Greek identity as they

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[24] This Shona proverb is also used in other African languages, for example, the Yoruba of Nigeria.

participated in sporting. In Zimbabwe's 21st century context, state terror did not bring honour to the state but shame. Daniel is one such book that alludes to life after death, a phenomenon accepted among the Shona people of Zimbabwe. The atrocities imposed by the state may not minimise the eternal plan of Yahweh, rather, it would expose the perpetrators to eternal punishment.

Election violence that surged because of the militarisation of the state during the elections (Dzimiri 2017:52) reminds one about the presence of the army in Jerusalem and the eventual persecution as well as the traumatisation of the Jerusalemites. The people fear confrontation with the state because of the massive display of repression (Masunungure 2011:50-51).

The accounts in the book of Daniel depicted a context in which faithful Jews maintained their identity and were models for later generations. Similarly, exile was successfully used during the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe. Those who went into exile managed to develop support from the outside world and to organise training for guerrillas. Many Zimbabweans left the country mainly as resistance against the state and with the hope to improve their living conditions in a better economic environment. Exile thus became restorative and a source of hope for many Zimbabweans.

Citizens, however, should not sit back; they should act as a redemptive force. Earlier in this chapter, there have been two stories of young children who rescued their fellows. One rescued the friend from the crocodile's jaws. Another rescued the sister from the lion. Citizens should unite and resist repression with the hope of establishing a government of the people. According to Lamarche, Toysen and Wishart (2019:14), hopes for a new Zimbabwe were invested in the opposition party. However, this cannot be enough; rather, a government should emerge through a democratic election.

Rumors of Antiochus Epiphanes' death in battle spread while he was in Egypt fighting the Ptolemies. When Jason heard the rumour, he organised war to reclaim his priesthood (Pfeiffer 1973:563). Thus, resistance is implied by death rumors. Mugabe's death was

frequently reported well before it happened. That might have been a tactic to defy his authority. He however gave a stern reply.

Jason's resistance prompted Antiochus to tighten the grip on Jerusalem. This idea may correspond with the views of Pfeiffer (1973:564) who argues that upon Antiochus' failure to annex Egypt, his only option was to maintain his grip on Palestine. In justifying the reasons for Antiochus' solidifying of his control over Jerusalem, Portier-Young (2011:136) argues that Antiochus was frustrated by Jason's revolt against Manelaus. Antiochus was to reassert a city that he had hurriedly given the status of a *polis*. He then sent his general, Apollonius, to occupy Jerusalem. Apollonius targeted the rebellious elements that resisted Menelaus' power. He destroyed the city walls and built a new fortress on the site of the citadel. In Zimbabwe, the white farmers who resisted the FTLRP were killed. However, their death led to isolation and the application of punitive measures against the perpetrators. That would generate the idea in Daniel's prayer of confession that the nation had sinned and required divine forgiveness to fulfil his promises.

It has been said that Mugabe's accession to political power represents the establishment of a political monarchy. The nation was unable to achieve its hard-won independence because of Mugabe, who not only committed the abuses associated with imperial ideas, but also adopted them (Ranger 2007:162). Hope for the nation is no longer vested in the indigenous government but in a foreign land. The 21st century Zimbabwean citizens had shifted from changing the status quo by leaving the country. The fact that the situation had worsened is proved when some Zimbabweans found refuge in Britain, the former coloniser. However, those currently living in Zimbabwe may appeal to apocalyptic literature to cope with their predicament. Furthermore, Yahweh's response in Daniel postponed the end of desolation from seventy to 490 years. That period could inspire the community of the book of Daniel to be hopeful that even in that distant future, Yahweh's new promises were to be fulfilled. In Zimbabwe, it is critical to reinterpret the promised outcomes of liberation, considering that colonisation itself left an indelible mark on the ruling party.

The colonial heritage made the government of Zimbabwe a new coloniser as the liberating government became oppressive (Mwananyanda, Amnesty International 6 Sept. 2019). Revolution in Zimbabwe did not only transfer power but created a new form of hegemony (Clark 2002).

Under such leadership, Daniel appeals to prophetic traditions at a time when Darius, a Prince, took over from his father. A Zimbabwean reader of Daniel may understand that human sovereignties would never remain forever. Rather, a time would come when these human kings would die and new ones would take over. The changing of kings would also be associated with various upheavals (Dn 9:24-27). The seventy years' period is reinterpreted to understand the developments that led to the unity government, the circumstances that ended Mugabe's power as circumstances stimulated by the sovereign plan of Yahweh. That understanding of the past would give hope for the future of the nation.

According to Portier-Young (2011:176–178), Antiochus' decree forbade the Jews in Judea from practising their religion. He forced new religious rituals upon the conservative Jews, also tormenting, torturing and slaughtering them. He was able to influence people because Menelaus, the high priest and leader of the Jewish aristocracy, desired complete Hellenisation. Jews who were Hellenists were employed to stifle and eradicate Judaism. The Seleucids ordered the abandonment of Jewish ideas but pious Jews refused to renounce their religion. Antiochus consequently used the weapon of persecution to demonstrate his dominance over the nations under his jurisdiction. He set out on a mission to establish his empire as the lone source of power.

The edict forbade the practice of Judaism in favour of total Hellenisation. The practice of circumcision was outlawed to the point where mothers who performed the procedure on their children risked execution. The death penalty was applied to those who possessed copies of the Torah (Anderson 1975:575). Levine (1988:182) notes that they were forced to practice idolatry by offering pigs as sacrifices, circumcision was prohibited, they were

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not to observe the Sabbath and festivals or to consume certain foods and the Temple was desecrated. People's devotion to their culture and religion was the subject of fresh tales.

In Zimbabwe, policies that undermine freedom of expression and freedom of association were introduced as earlier explained in Chapter Two. Therefore, the government of Zimbabwe was eager to deal with any violent resistance like strikes and demonstrations and to deal with them ruthlessly. Silent resistance became a way of resistance. In his prayer, Daniel confessed that Yahweh is great and awesome, one who keeps his covenant promises (Dn 9:4). He acknowledged that Yahweh was yet to fulfil his promise through the prophets. The name Yahweh itself confirms an immutable character who upholds his promises from the beginning to the end and who remains unchanged forever.

The postcolonial government in Zimbabwe adopted the imperial hegemonic structures of the colonial era. According to Otu (2010:190), hegemony is perpetuated in Zimbabwean politics (Mpofu 2015:9-10). From that perspective, the political independence did not provide the much-desired national liberation. The bourgeois class of Mugabe and his ZANU-PF leadership imitated the imperial hegemony of the colonial era with a sovereignty that is devoid of economic benefits for the general populace which was mounting resistance. The MDC is regarded as one of the most powerful revolutionary parties to resist the hegemonic government of Mugabe (Otu 2010:203).

Mugabe's claim that Zimbabwe is a sovereign state rhetorically implied that his sovereignty was limited and could imminently occur. The book of Daniel confirms that human sovereignty is temporary but divine sovereignty would last forever. The book emphasises hope for imminent deliverance and the vindication of the faithful. The visions in Daniel serve as evidence of what should happen and how it culminates in the judgement of human sovereignties and the establishment of the kingdom of God (Beasley-Murray 1983:56).

The idea is clearly outlined in both the narrative section (Dan 1-6) and the visionary section (Dn 7-12). The liberation rhetoric that mingled with nationalist mythology,

culminating in the acquisition of independence in 1980, survived in the minds of later generations. Even though the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe was an uprising against the colonial masters, the struggle becomes a source of inspiration for the maintenance of power during the first decade after independence (Mhanda 2005:1).

The stories of the liberation struggle have been told and retold to generations which were not directly involved in the liberation struggle to impart in them the liberation spirit. The circulation of these stories became more prevalent when the majority of the postcolonial generation started to question the place of independence as they experienced the crisis of neo-colonialism which was the continuation of colonial policies (Durokifa & Ijeoma 2018:356). The circulation of the stories of the liberation struggle was rhetorically meant to maintain hope for the new generations. However, when such stories were told, they continued to lose power as the crisis became prolonged. Since these stories were told for a purpose, they were not told plainly but they adopted the apocalyptic form, mainly to legitimize the sovereignty of those in power. In turn, however, hope for the true independent state is recast in a future kingdom to stimulate apocalyptic hope of an eternal kingdom with God being above all human sovereignties.

According to Manyeruke and Hamauswa (2013:282-283), "The transformation of prophetic activities as well as the predominance of Christianity in Zimbabwe is taking place at a time when Zimbabwe is undergoing deep economic, social and political crises". Manyeruke and Hamauswa (2013:346) conclude that, "Historically, people have been known to seek messianic solutions amidst the challenges they may be encountering". This would concur with the idea that the crisis moments triggered apocalyptic hope, since messianic expectations are more common in apocalyptic literature.

Witherington (2003:60) considers the book of Daniel as well as apocalyptic literature as resistance literature. Resistance literature empowers readers to resist the traumatic conditions of the exilic period (2003:160). Resistance literature finally gained audience due to the traumas of the postexilic era. Witherington's view aligns with Lucas (2000:66)

who regards the book of Daniel as an authoritative representation of Judaism in Palestine during the first half of the second century. The intention of apocalyptic literature is, therefore, to change the mind-set of the readers so that they are not despondent, but rather, courageous and hopeful (Sangtinuk 2010:35).

The forms of resistance to imperialism are always informed by the hope for the time that the nation would be free. The contemporary Zimbabwe reader may find encouraging material from the biblical Daniel. Written records remain evident, like the writings on the wall in Daniel. Courageous young women and men not only may suffer because they hope for divine intervention, as in the case of Daniel's friends, but also stirred by the spirit of resistance which believed that even when killed, it would not be the end. The African philosophy of spiritual immortality is characterised by testimonies of those who were killed but were ushered also into a spiritual realm where they became invincible. One such example is from NewsdzeZimbabwe (11 July 2020) that reported the death of Foster Machaya, son of Former Midlands Provincial Affairs minister, together with Willard Mugadza, a Gweru popular gold baron. Foster was accused of killing an MDC supporter, Moses Chokuda, in March 2009 and his body remained in Gokwe Hospital mortuary for two years. Foster was pardoned while his brother Farai was sentenced to only eighteen months in jail. Mugadza was on bail after having killed a workmate. Both killers died later on, after the car they were travelling in, veered off the road and overturned several times. The incident is closely related to the activities of the avenging spirit of Chokuda.

Another story, reported by Gukutikwa (2021), confirms that four family members of Manzenda Denga, son Godfrey Denga, Agnes Mauchaza, Docus Ndova and Danmore Mukanjiri were being haunted by *ngozi* (avenging) spirit after their family members participated in the murder of Ruwizhi Makondo Mashato in 1992. It is alleged that Mashato's private parts were first cut off before he was decapitated. Those that were privy to the mystery said that the avenging spirit demanded a herd of fifty cattle, and failure to pay meant that all family members of those involved would perish. The avenging spirit is also reported as saying Mashato felt excruciating pain when his private

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parts were being removed, hence, the victims of the *ngozi* spirit would first have their private parts removed before they die.

From the examples given above, the killing of a body would never quench the spiritual revolution. Rather, it sows the seed of revolution amongst the youth that would remain even in later generations. Zimbabweans still believe in cultural practices, including the existence of avenging spirits. The belief in the avenging spirit is an old belief that gives martyrs the courage to resist even unto death.

To sum up, the book of Daniel addresses issues that relate to the period in which the Jews were subjugated by the Greek Empire. Antiochus Epiphanes was one of the most ruthless members of the Seleucid dynasty who made an edict to Hellenise Jews by force. State terror was used as a control strategy to abrogate resistance. The climax was the desecration of the Temple that attracted armed resistance. The Jews believed that those who died in the struggle would be rewarded in the afterlife. For many who have been tortured, terrorised and traumatised in Zimbabwe, the book of Daniel may assure them that this life is temporary. They may identify with the audience of Daniel in their belief that those who engage in killings would be avenged.

5.6 APPROPRIATION OF THE PROMISE OF RESTORATION IN DANIEL 9 AND REINTERPRETATION OF THE ZIMBABWEAN SITUATION

Jeremiah was the resource that gave assurance that after a stipulated period, Israel would be restored. Daniel realised that the period was already over but there was no restoration. After appealing to Yahweh in prayer, Yahweh responded by extending the suffering from seventy years to seventy weeks of years, that is, to a time further in the future. Recasting the much- anticipated promises of the liberation struggle would encourage Zimbabweans to cope with the present predicament and to remain hopeful.

Postcolonial Africa should be realistic when it comes to hope. In this research, it is assumed that the incumbent political leaders engage in falsification as they manipulate the independence as a product of the liberation struggle. Their policies mirror those of the colonial past such that the majority rule has become more desperate than the colonial

past. The colonial spirit is camouflaged by socialism and patriotism, yet it terrorises the voiceless and reduces them to nothing, as no one is able to intervene in the governance of the sovereign state. Outside are former colonisers. In Zimbabwe, Mugabe could be heard saying, "Blair, keep your England I keep my Zimbabwe". Britain, the former colonial master, is silenced. Any attempt to punish individual members of the Zimbabwean state did not spare the suffering majority. They were caught in the crossfire. A contemporary adage says, "If you miss the ball get the man". The political leaders missed their finances then vented their anger on vulnerable citizens.

The desolation of Jerusalem can best be explained by the circumstances surrounding the writing of the book of Daniel. Earlier in this study, the book of Daniel in its entirety[25] is recognised as apocalyptic literature, the genre that is aimed at addressing crises. The prominence of apocalyptic literature was visible during the period of Greek Hellenisation. The period can be viewed from two dimensions. There were Jews who were pro-Hellenistic and those who were anti-Hellenistic. Both social groups viewed apocalyptic literature differently. The pro-Hellenist capitalised on the status quo and became part of the elite community. Those who were anti-Hellenistic sought for their freedom. The period of Antiochus IV Epiphanes was of persecution and suffering among the conservative Jews. Although the context of Yehud is geographically distant from Zimbabwe, most African Old Testament scholars acknowledge the presence of Africans in the biblical text (cf. Adamo 1989:17-25; 2001:46-47; Dada 2010:161; Rugwiji 2013:17). This research therefore appropriates the selected Old Testament text to the Zimbabwean situation. The tension between the pro-Hellenists and the conservative Jews seem to have parallels in the dominant and the dominated in Zimbabwe. A few Zimbabweans who were in positions of power enjoyed the independence by using the power at their disposal to manipulate the Lancaster House constitution for their benefit. After two decades, none of the benefits promised was fulfilled. The poor became poorer and the rich became richer. Poverty was the main reason for the liberation struggle. The colonial government enjoyed the national and natural resources.

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25 Most commentators agree that only the second part is apocalyptic.

5.7 SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

Collins (1984:65) links the sovereignty of God with the confidence of the exiled Jews in service to foreign kings. This confidence was based on the knowledge that their God remained in control "despite appearance to the contrary". The Jews were encouraged to maintain confidence in God regardless of the presence of seemingly all-powerful rulers (Longman III 1984:65).

At the outset, one may find that a strong claim about God's sovereignty produces a pacifist stance rather than resistance. Staying out of the way meant being isolated from the world where God is working; claims about God's sovereignty stresses that people do not make history but God uses people to accomplish his ends.

Divine sovereignty inspired hope that all human sovereignties would end. Human kingdoms would come to end. Daniel 9 refers to the first year of Darius. Though the figure of Darius is considered unhistorical, his reign represents kingship that would not last forever whereas Yahweh is above and in control of all human kingdoms. Yahweh predetermined the period of human kingdoms. Similarly, Zimbabweans may be encouraged to remain hopeful. The Shona people have a very similar divine name to the Tetragrammaton. Believing in one who dwells from everlasting to everlasting assures believers that he remains in control.

The Shona people believe in the confession of guilt, especially when the newly born baby refuses to suckle from the mother. It is believed that the mother would have transgressed through witchcraft or infidelity during the pregnancy or after birth. Therefore, both parents are called to confess their sins. The mother of the child confesses her guilt before the husband and his entire clan. The wife's parents would then pay a fine to the husband. Once that is done, the husband would forgive and the child would breastfeed (Mutumburanzou 1999:15). Appropriation of the findings of historical critical reading of Daniel 9 to the Zimbabwean cultural context may bring a clear understanding of the power embedded in the prayer of confession and sometimes coupled with fasting.

Nelson Chamisa, one of the aspiring candidates for the presidential election, is both a politician and a pastor. He took a giant step by calling for week of prayer and fasting from 29 July to 4 August 2019. He used his Twitter and Facebook accounts to call on all, near and far, in the homeland and in exile, to participate in fasting and praying. The main purpose was to pray for divine intervention, divine providence, wisdom and power in the Zimbabwean crisis. His call for prayer and fasting turned into demonstrations which were, therefore, banned (Tarusarira 2020:33). Prayer and fasting evoked mass resistance in urban areas as people became aware of how much they were suffering under the harsh economic conditions. Chamisa demonstrated the wisdom that none among the previous aspiring candidates had shown. From that time, he commanded great support at home and in exile.

There are a number of names for Yahweh among the Shona people. The following is the etymology of some of them as presented by Chimhanda (2013:5). The Bantu believe in the unity of the physical and spiritual, the visible and invisible worlds. There is belief in the Supreme Being who is spirit and mystery. Shona Bantu Christians in dialogue with traditional religion refer to the Being, Mwari. The Shona has no coherent Mwari myth though. The etymology of Mwari, the Supreme Being and Creator of all things is from *muhari* (in the pot) or *Maari* (in Him/Her) or *Mauri* – indicating the enigmatic character of Mwari. The latter corresponds to the character of Yahweh; the God of Israel described as *I am who I am* (Ex 3:14).

The name Mwari is very close to the name Yahweh. The name Yahweh is a divine self-revelatory name to Moses who had asked, "If they ask me who sent you what will I say?" God responded, "I am He who I am" is my name" (Ex 3:14). Shona language, which is spoken by many people of Zimbabwe, has an alternative name for Yahweh. They call him Mwari. Mwari is built as Mu – ari /mu/ refers to class 1 prefix. /- ari/ means existing or being. Due to the vowel coalescence, the /- u-/ of /mu-/ and the /-a-/ of /-ari/ leads to glide formation /w/ to form Mwari. It means that /mu-/ is the Noun Prefix and the Noun Stem /-ari/ gives the complete Noun Mwari of Noun Class 1 which is (Mwa + ari).

The idea of God being mediated by angels as depicted in Daniel 9 where an angel of God appeared in response to Daniel's prayer is peculiar to the African belief system. The African belief in angels is not widespread although Africans believe in the existence of mediators between God and his people. The worldview of the Shona people regarding divine mediators could help them to understand the intervention of the angel in Daniel 9, thus, making Daniel 9 more relevant. For example, the Shona people of Zimbabwe have a history of believing in prophecy, like Daniel who believed that Jeremiah's prophecy about the end of Jerusalem's desolation would be fulfilled. The Shona belief in prophecy is informed by the narratives from the first Chimurenga (1896-97). These narratives have been highly regarded as prophetic. The founders of the liberation struggle include Mbuya Nehanda, Chaminuka and Kaguvi. Sabao (2019:75-76) rightly states that the religious beliefs of the Shona people are closely aligned to the liberation struggle as evidenced by the role of Chaminuka, Nehanda and Kaguvi.

Mbuya Nehanda reportedly promised that her bones would rise *(mapfupa angu achamuka)*. The resurrection implies that her spirit would inspire later generations to carry on the struggle until independence (Fontein 2006:141). Such promises prompted participation in the liberation struggle as empowered by the spirit of Mbuya Nehanda. Those who participated in the struggle believed that they were the bones of Nehanda risen to complete the struggle.

The ideological heritage of the teachings of the liberation struggle was eventually taken as the determining factor for appointing the country's leader. As a way of legitimising Mugabe as the perpetual leader, it was claimed that he was anointed by Mbuya Nehanda (Musendeka 2011:54). Earlier, Canaan Banana had suggested that the Bible be rewritten to replace biblical names with the names of national heroes. For example, he proposed the name of Abraham be replaced with Mbuya Nehanda (Musendekwa 2018:10). When Mnangagwa took over from Mugabe, he was not left out. He erected a statue of Mbuya Nehanda near the centre of Harare, the capital city. Figure 1 below is the image of the monument that was erected in honour of Mbuya Nehanda.

Consequently, Bishop Ancelm Magaya criticised Mnangagwa for taking the nation back to paganism since the installation was done in a worship style (Sambiri 26 May 2021). The erection of a church building at the site of the well, from which Mbuya Nehanda drank water, was an abomination to Mnangagwa. Nonetheless, on the day of the installation, Mnangagwa punctuated his speech with the word "Halleluyah" as if his speech was a sermon on the great African goddess. Magaya's view is that Mnangagwa erected a statue which set back the great Christian nation into paganism. He then called the nation to desist from such pagan practices.

Figure 5.1: Statue of Mbuya Nehanda

Since Nehanda is regarded as the great ancestral spirit, the ruling party became the custodian of the liberation narratives to confirm that they were ordained by Mbuya Nehanda to perpetuate the struggle during the second Chimurenga. Mnangagwa's erection of the statue rhetorically invokes the Nehanda spirit to be with him as the spirit was with Mugabe.

Chaminuka is the spirit regarded by oral tradition as the spirit that predicted the conquest of the Ndebele people by the Shona people and the prediction of the conquest by colonial

settlers (Fontein 2006:144). While these mythical stories were not properly documented, they were mostly handed down through oral tradition. It has been told that Pasipamire was Chaminuka's medium, revered as a god that dwelt in Chitungwiza, close to Harare. He was believed to have owned the land that the Ndebele and white hunters sought permission to kill elephants from him. Pasipamire was then assassinated by the Ndebele warriors when they deceived him that they were seeking hunting permission (Ranger 1982:349). Later, tradition hailed Chaminuka as the provider of rain. If there was no rain on the land, it was believed that Chaminuka was annoyed (Sabao 2019:70).

Kaguvi is regarded as the spirit behind the liberation struggle along, with Nehanda. The spirit medium was executed, together with that of Nehanda. They were hanged in Salisbury (now Harare) for participating in the resistance of 1896-1897 (Sadomba 2008:130). The medium of Kaguvi was one of the last to be captured, together with the medium of Nehanda, before being executed (Lan 1985:6). Kaguvi was regarded as one of the mediums who offered war strategies and guidance during the liberation struggle (Mamvura 2021b:25).

It is believed that Kaguvi converted to Christianity, an aspect that demonstrated the shallowness of the conversion of indigenous people in the early days of missionary work in Zimbabwe. Kaguvi and the priest probably misunderstood each other. The statues of Nehanda and Kaguvi were installed by Mugabe at the entrance to the Parliament building (Mamvura 2021b:24). Kaguvi became the greatly formidable force not only in Harare, but also in Chegutu (formerly Hartley) (Beach 1979:395). Kaguvi had earlier on been unpopular until the time he was appointed by Mashayamombe to be ruler of Chegutu and Chivhu (Beach 1979:399).

In short, a shared understanding of Yahweh/Mwari between the audience of Daniel and the Zimbabwean context stimulate a common appreciation of divine sovereignty. The fact that divine sovereignty supersedes human sovereignties stimulated hope that one day all human sovereignties would come to extinction. Yahweh, as eternal Sovereign, determines the period that human sovereignties may rule. Consequently, due to the

understanding that Yahweh sends his intermediaries to interpret earlier traditions, Zimbabweans, in their various religious affiliations, also believe that intermediaries like Nehanda who promised the resurrection of her bones bring a message of hope that Yahweh would in the future, use the next generation to set the nation free from imperial domination.

5.8 HOPE IN THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH

Reference to the Messiah Prince in Daniel could refer to the historical figure which some scholars associate with the death of Antiochus Epiphanes. The pious Jews hoped that some of the atrocities of that age could be terminated by death. They believed in the resurrection of the dead—the righteous would be raised to eternal glory and the unrighteous to eternal judgement. Similarly, the death of the Prince is characterised by the termination of human kingdoms. Daniel 9 could help the marginalised Zimbabweans to remain hopeful that the present leadership will one day end.

Recently, a Kenyan prophet claimed to be a Jesus the Messiah but had to seek refuge when people wanted to crucify him on Easter eve. Musendekwa's article in the *Ecclesia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* of 2018 titled, "Messianic characterisation of Mugabe as rhetorical propaganda to legitimise his authority in crisis situations", explored various messianic titles conferred on Robert Mugabe during his tenure as the President of Zimbabwe. It seems that his assumption of such titles was not only related to his liberative role, but also his 'divinity'. Nonetheless, it seems that the same political rhetoric is being used to legitimise President Emerson Mnangagwa, Mugabe's successor. Characterising the political leaders as divine messianic figures seems to prophesy their demise. A political rhetoric, therefore, should refrain from adopting religious titles that the leaders do not deserve and from the inappropriate rendering of political figures as messianic characters comparable to Christ. It may be argued that any such rendering is evidence of the nearness of their end.

The armed resistance that culminated in the attainment of independence in 1980 emanated from the hope for social, economic, political and religious freedom. Mugabe,

being the first Prime Minister and later State President, assumed the role of a messianic figure. The impact of Christianity which has high regard for spiritual leaders as messianic characters is seen in the propagation of religious ideologies that informed the new government. This is how Mugabe failed the citizenry by not triggering new hopes for redemption towards the end of his rule. The messianic characterisation during this period was rhetorical propaganda at a time when the hopes of the masses were shifted to opposition parties (Musendekwa 2018:1).

It is observed that Mugabe's loyalists declared him the messiah at the height of continuous resistance. Considering Mugabe as messiah was rhetorical propaganda to retain him in power. People's high hope for change, which stimulated the formation of the MDC by a trade unionist, Morgan Tsvangirai, was manipulated by Mugabe's loyalists who resuscitated the memories of the pre-liberation struggle when expectations for a deliverer were very high. The messiah would emerge to liberate the nation from political oppression (Musendekwa 2018:1).

Declaring Mugabe as a messianic figure was a manipulation of the masses' expectation. His sympathisers declared him the Messiah to undermine any opposition to his rule. Mugabe was then declared the sole legitimate and anointed national leader. The messianic expectations emanated from Shona faith traditions which associate all social crises with external spiritual forces. The emergence of a new socio-economic, political and religious crisis produced a new phase of messianic expectations (Musendekwa 2018:2).

According to De Jonge (1992:777), historians and social anthropologists use the terms "messianism" and "messianic" to denote change in history especially the developments which took place later in Western history and contexts mostly in relation to Western colonial, missionary and modern influences. The messianic expectation entails the expectation of a saviour called a messiah.

Daneel (1984:40) negates the judgment of messianic movements in Africa which Western scholars view as post-modernist. He bases his argument on empirical facts about the independent churches among the Shona peoples of Zimbabwe. Daneel posits that the Messiah figures are concerned with the contextualisation of Scriptures to their own socio-cultural and religious circumstances.

The social challenges that emanated from colonisation resulted in the marginalisation of the indigenous people. Having lost their fertile tribal land to the white minority elites, they intensified the resistance as they sought to rectify the situation through spiritual agencies. Assimeng (1969:8-12) recognises two main types of movements, namely the nativistic type and the syncretistic type. The nativistic yearned for the restoration of promised stability, happiness and social security that include land restoration. The syncretistic preserve the native identity combined with Christian practices as in the African Independent Churches.

The local elite community among the indigenous people perpetuated the economic disparity of the colonial economy by excluding other members from economic benefits. Zimbabwe significantly inherited injustices which the natives needed to address under the rubrics of black empowerment. Privileges were conferred on individuals, thus, undermining the long anticipated equal opportunities (Roftopoulos & Savage 2004).

The crisis in Zimbabwe was exacerbated by the referendum of February 2000 which some scholars regards as the watershed of the downward shift of the political, economic and social landscape. The land redistribution carried out earlier through the willing-seller-willing-buyer agreement, which was reasonably successful, was ruined by the land invasion. Poor economic policies like the ESAP resulted in public protests. The year 1990, for instance, experienced growing public protests because of a series of corrupt scandals ignored by those in power or met with authoritarian response (Hamar & Roftopoulos 2003:1-7). The nation was exposed to an open-ended search for hope of a better future in the presence of Mugabe the liberator. The liberator had turned oppressor. To cover up for all the government's failures, he was declared the messiah. President

Mugabe was hailed as a black political Moses (The Zimbabwean 2011), real Angel Gabriel (SW Radio Africa 2011), "the son of God", "our Jesus Christ" and "King Mugabe" (The Zimbabwean 2011). In this way, he was depicted as the royal king whose rule could not be resisted. This was the feedback from the unwavering resistance from the rising opposition.

Messianic characterisation in Zimbabwe is triggered by crisis. Instead of addressing existing crises, people's expectations are manipulated without any effort to avert these crises. Messianic characterisation does not provide hope of the resurrection of the dead, judgement and the consummation of the divine plan. The rise of messianic expectations was founded on the need for liberation from colonial domination. Messianism in current political circumstances is a rhetorical strategy of legitimisation of those in power in a hopeful moment for change (Musendekwa 2018:13). The characterisation of political figures seems to confirm their limited sovereignties. Daniel 9:26 refers to the cutting off of the Messiah, meaning his death.

As already mentioned, messianic expectation is frequently linked to apocalyptic literature. The apocalyptic book of Daniel is set at a time people experienced suffering and waited for the coming of a new age. The book's visionary aspects expose readers to what should be expected from a deliverer. As Ruether (1972:237) notes, messianic hope developed from the seed of ecstatic vision found in the religions of ancient empires. The ecstatic visions are open to a futuristic anticipation of victory of the righteous over imperial domination. Futurist anticipation is supported by Bauman (2015:342) who claims that the future is open forever and the present can never contain it. In Zimbabwe, the future holds the solution to the current problems.

The presence of any text in the Torah and the Writings that could have originally portrayed a literary and historical messiah is refuted by Longman III (2007:13). He uses certain biblical passages as examples to show that no passage can ever demonstrate the possibility of a "future messianic figure". The New Testament and Intertestamental sources, however, are replete with antiquated messianic references to the Law and the

books. The word messiah, however, does appear throughout the Old Testament in relation to priests, monarchs and prophets. The idea that the future contains a promise for humans in crisis is supported by all theories about whether the Messiah is historical or eternal.

The New Testament also alludes to a variety of 'cultural expectations' about the Messiah. Therefore, we should also look closely at the period in between—the apocryphal writings and the Qumran documents (Porter 2004).

The messianic expectations have been used to interpret the book of Daniel. The current state is not expected to persist in the future; rather, it would need to change. Tanner (2009) contends that the bad spiritual state of the remnant at the end of the exile is what led to the anticipated future restoration. The persecution of the remaining people by the Seleucids under Antiochus Epiphanes may have been a defining feature of the dismal spiritual conditions. The Maccabean uprising temporarily assumed a messianic character. Meadowcroft (2001:431) refutes the idea that the Messiah is a historical figure since the attributed periodisations do not possess literal meaning. However, most scholars consider the messiah to be a historical figure, a position also held in this research. In Zimbabwe, there may be a need for a deliverer in line with messianic expectations. Understanding messianic hope of Daniel 9 will help ease the depressing conditions in Zimbabwe.

Messianic hope is one of many hopes and it is described as "the reinterpretation of the past expectations" or as "a developmental process of hope and expectation for a deliverer in a time of crisis" (Juel 2000:889). Therefore, hoping for the arrival of someone who would usher in a future defined by peace and prosperity is conditioned by the crisis situation. Anticipation of a political figure among members of the opposition could help to restore hope among them. A future leader in Zimbabwe who does not belong to the political party responsible for the country's protracted years of misery and despair can be anticipated.

According to Ruether (1972:237), the king represented God before the nation of Israel as "son of God" and collectively represented the people before God as "son of man". Messianism emerged from the kingship ideology as a throne name of the Davidic king to imitate the aspirations of kings in the ancient Near East. When Mugabe took over government, he purposefully used imperial terminology to assert his messianic status. Mugabe's kingdom mentality caused him to refuse to name a successor by assuming a messianic role. However, Daniel 9 shows that human kingship does not last indefinitely. Since Yahweh ought to be the supreme and everlasting king, kings were granted limited sovereignty.

According to Block (2006:40–50), the triumph of the Rock, the triumph of the Son of Man and the Saints of the Most High in Daniel 7 and the triumph of the Anointed One in Daniel 9 define the book of Daniel's messianic character. The Son of Man's relationship to the saints of the Most High suggests that Daniel's messianic heroes embrace people and communities (Meadowcroft 2001:430) and inspire them to take part in the fight for liberation.

The fifth figure, "one like the Son of Man" is depicted as the messianic figure who stands in for the "Most High" throne. As Daniel saw the Ancient of Days seated on the throne of heaven and surrounded by celestial armies, the judgment took place (Stokes 2008:340). This narrative elevates the Messiah's divine status. The Messiah would be greater than the transitory kingdom and a marker for the everlasting one. After the human figures were gone, the divine would remain in authority. The New Testament's reference to Jesus as the "Son of Man" alludes to Daniel 7:13 (Bock 2012:399). Consequently, the title "Son of Man" implies that Jesus is the Messiah. All expectations of a human saviour would ultimately diminish.

The book of 1 Enoch (37–71) alludes to the "Messiah" as the "Son of Man" and the "Righteous One" (Stuckenbruck 2014:92). He was given that name before the earth was created. He represents God as "Head of the Days" and "Lord of the Spirit" to the downtrodden and just and He punishes evil landlords and monarchs. According to

Stuckenbruck (2014:92), the messianic references include the following: 1) allowing reference to the Messiah as God's appointed ideal monarch; 2) without saying whether the figure is angelic or divine; and 3) enabling the Messiah to be a figure with various titles that drew the tradition from Daniel 7:9–14. Anxiety for a period of extreme change in Zimbabwe may cause a move towards the divine. The identity of the prince of the house of David cannot be left undisputed, as Bruce (1975:307) suggests that the term should not be understood as a physical descendant of the house of David but as a pointer to the second David with the same sacral endowment as the historical David. Longman III (2007:16) considers that Daniel 9:25, 26 refers to the Messiah with the eschatological figure and not a historical king. The focus is on a figure who inaugurates an eschatological era, beginning with the present and culminating in the future. Yahweh becomes the sole determinant of events. Hope for Zimbabwe therefore may be generated with the idea that Yahweh is in control.

Meyers (2017:205) claims that Jesus is the Messiah who goes through every stage of suffering with humans, including death. The crucifixion of Christ, however, represents both Christ's death and resurrection; hence, there is still hope. The accompaniment of one like the son of God in the fire with Daniel's friends gives hope that one unseen God will become visible during the fire. Therefore, giving up their faith in the face of suffering, persecution or even martyrdom would seem futile to the faithful.

Lewis (2010:37) states that the Second Temple society had to wait patiently for day of divine judgment. The notion is reinforced by Garrett (2010:29), who asserts that God or the Son of Man or the Messiah is the main protagonist while Satan is the adversary.

Except for the ultimate fulfilment of the divine purpose with his creation and his predefined expectations with the universe, yearning for the fulfilment of the seventy weeks of years does not result in anything worthwhile. Those who pledged themselves to the Lord until death would be raised at the end of the seventy-week span of time. As persecution increased under Antiochus IV and under foreign dominion, the wise who stayed steadfast to Yahweh expected God to establish his own kingdom. The

knowledgeable foresaw the end of all foreign hegemony (Reddit 1998:474). Even in the terrible Zimbabwean condition, there is still one more stride of optimism.

In short, messianic hope can be conceived as having many facets. Members of the governing class see themselves as the messianic deliverers who fought for independence. When they noticed that some citizens' hopes have been diverted to the future, they exploit religious allusions to assert a messianic role. The optimism switches to the eschatological figure as it took longer for the much-desired peace and prosperity to materialise.

5.9 CONCLUSION OF CHAPTER

Daniel 9 could be applied to the predicament in Zimbabwe to inspire hope, as Yahweh always followed through on his promises. As the God of all time, he will put an end to the current suffering. All of God's promises are accessible via prayer. This chapter has shown that Daniel 9 was written in reaction to Jeremiah's prophecy that the desolation of Jerusalem would last 490 years, not the seventy years determined earlier. Daniel 9 can be interpreted in the context of the ongoing crisis in 21st century Zimbabwe in order to offer hope. Daniel used Jeremiah, which he had studied, to help him fight the Empire in prayer and show that heavenly sovereignty is superior to all human sovereignties.

CHAPTER SIX
OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS: DANIEL 9 AS IDEAL FOR GENERATING HOPE IN CONTEXTS OF HOPELESSNESS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a summary of the research findings and the conclusions as well as suggestions for further research based on this research. The thrust of the study is the relevance of the book of Daniel to the Zimbabwean situation. Thus, the title of the thesis reads "Hope in the Midst of Crisis: Reading Daniel 9 in the 21st Century Zimbabwean Context". The book of Daniel may serve as a source of hope to the people of Zimbabwe who are in a state of hopelessness. Insights from Daniel 9 could be used to combat hopelessness. The major goal of this research is to inspire optimism amid the socio-economic and political crisis in Zimbabwe. The researcher offered illustrations of real events occurring in Zimbabwe in order to explain the Zimbabwean situation. The Zimbabweans are embracing hope in the face of adversity and in various other spheres of life.

The socio-economic and political crisis in Zimbabwe, the academic background and the researcher's disciplinary interests all played a role in the development of this thesis. The study found that people lose hope and become desperate in times of crisis. However, Daniel 9 may inspire hope when read in such circumstances. The book of Daniel is apocalyptic literature that is meant to inspire hope in hearts of the pious Jews who lived in the Second Temple period under Hellenist hegemonic frameworks of dominance. Similarly, the quality of life of Zimbabweans has been declining from the beginning of the 21st century hitherto. Daniel 9 may help inspire hope in such a hostile socio-economic and political situation.

6.2 OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

At the initial stage of the study, I mentioned the need to assist the suffering majority of Zimbabweans to maintain hope in their situation of hopelessness. Zimbabwe achieved independence in 1980, following several decades of colonial rule by the British

government. The independent state fell short of expectations, however. The socio-economic and political crisis in Zimbabwe worsened from the beginning of the 21st century. Due to corruption and poor management of public finances, the nation's economy declined. The rise in the violation of human rights and the increase in unemployment rates led to worsening social conditions. Political violence became pervasive. The country was thus plunged into hopelessness.

With reference to the Zimbabwean context, I have observed that Daniel was written as a book of hope for those facing hopelessness. In times of crisis, literature that offers hope can be considered helpful.

The main question that guided this study is *"Why would the findings of historical critical reading of Daniel 9 be considered appropriate for stimulating hope in the 21st century Zimbabwean context of hopelessness if read through a contextual lens*?" Thus, because the outcomes of the historical critical reading of Daniel 9 reveal that Daniel 9 was written to a people who were in a hopeless situation, appropriating the findings of the reading of Daniel 9 to the situation of hopelessness among members of the opposition parties in the 21st century Zimbabwean context of crisis may be ideal for generating hope. The ongoing crisis, which started in 2000 and persisted to date, has left many members of the marginalised society feeling helpless and dejected. Daniel 9 is the result of contemplation after reading the passage in Jeremiah that predicted that Jerusalem would be desolate for a period of 70 years. Although Daniel 9 is set during the Babylonian exile, its intended readership is from the time of the Second Temple, when Greece ruled over Israel as an imperial power. Daniel's analysis of Jeremiah is full of wisdom. Daniel continued to believe that the restoration of Jerusalem would also result in the recovery of the Judean kingdom. Jerusalem was not to be restored after 70 years, but rather after 70 weeks of years. It is made clear that the reinterpretation requires divine inspiration through Gabriel as the interpreter of prophetic traditions. The subsequent events that were to occur prior to the end of the devastation show that Yahweh is in control of shaping the path of history.

As a follow-up to the outcomes of this research, the present chapter's heading is *DANIEL 9 AS IDEAL FOR GENERATING HOPE IN THE CONTEXT OF HOPELESSNESS*. My speculative hypothesis was that reading Daniel 9 with a contextual lens would inspire hope in the bleak Zimbabwean situation. I first learned from this study that the gloomy and depressing Zimbabwean predicament deserves apocalyptic literature which is a literature of hope. Thus, reading from Daniel 9 in particular should inspire hope in Zimbabweans who are in a turbulent environment. Secondly, I noted that the aim was to stimulate the historical context of Daniel 9 by applying historical critical reading techniques of the text and its development. Finally, Daniel 9 is a useful tool for inspiring hope in Zimbabwe's dilemma.

I discussed the change in hermeneutical principles from conventional methodology to contextual approaches that address modern challenges in Chapter One. In dealing with contextual concerns and the exegetical process, two techniques are crucial. African Biblical Hermeneutics is, therefore, essential for analysing recent exegetical discoveries. African Biblical Hermeneutics is considerably more complex; therefore, to make it comprehensive, I narrowed it down to the Hermeneutics of Appropriation. The exegesis of Daniel 9 was conducted using historical criticism as a methodology. Historical criticism considers and critiques the major ideas, the themes and/ or verses of Daniel 9 as well as the historical setting of the book of Daniel. By contextualising the results of the historical critical exegesis of Daniel 9 to the Zimbabwean context, the essence of the research was corroborated.

In Chapter Two, I showed from the literature reviewed that negative experiences and the recurrence of unanticipated events are conditions for hopelessness. In Zimbabwe, religious optimism is being used to justify persecution. Thus, hope is not centred on the triune God's rescue of the underprivileged. The Hellenistic imperial philosophies that have some resonances with the realities in Zimbabwe after independence served as evidence to consider the book of Daniel an apocalyptic literature relevant to the 21st century.

In evaluating the conditions of the marginalised, whose suffering inspires faith for impending divine intervention, apocalyptic theology is pertinent. The presuppositions, attitudes and beliefs of the marginalised consequently create expectations that are identical to those that gave rise to apocalyptic literature. Apocalyptic literature is pertinent in addressing such situations, as in the case of Zimbabwe's marginalised people. Daniel's audience fought against the Hellenistic imperial beliefs, especially under Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Resistance was the refusal to abide by the Hellenistic imperial regulations that forbade Jewish religious practices. Daniel 9 is set in a context where Daniel used Scripture reading, fasting and prayer to resist the Empire. Despite the abundance of messages of hope found in the book of Daniel, the church has done very little to foster hope in the suffering Zimbabweans.

In Chapter Three, it was revealed that between 2001 and 2003, Zimbabwe was well known around the world for its significant socio-economic and political crisis. Due to state terror and bad governance, the complex situation worsened. Colonial history and the defence of powerful people's political interests shaped the Zimbabwean national policies on governance. The colonial past had an impact on policies that reduced political independence to nothing more than the maintenance of colonial imperial ideologies. The state put into place laws that violated the rights of the marginalised and favoured the powerful. For instance, the FTLRP did not seek to resolve the land discrepancy between indigenous Zimbabweans and their colonial overlords. Instead, it was employed to punish white farmers who were thought to have given money to the opposition party to campaign against the new constitution at referendum.

The democratic space was being reduced by the new constitution, which favoured those in positions of authority. Additionally, the regime employed terror to eliminate all forms of resistance. The use of violence, torture, kidnapping, incarceration and murder was done to inspire terror. A quarter of the population left the country in search of safety or work elsewhere. Since independence, the state has overlooked the growth in population in the metropolitan areas, the reduction of available housing and the informalisation of the industrial sector. As a result, unofficial communities and businesses grew rapidly in

and around the urban centres. The state implemented the colonial urban policy to disenfranchise opposition members as soon as the opposition parties gained popularity in urban areas. The operation removed all occupants of informal settlements and destroyed all illegal constructions. The church made very little, if any, effort to give hope to the dejected and afflicted citizens of Zimbabwe.

In Chapter Four, I have argued that the book of Daniel as apocalyptic literature was written to give hope to pious Jews during the Hellenistic period. The book's anecdotes depict a Jewish sect known as the "wise" in the Babylonian royal court, who objected eating royal food and worshipping royal deities. The author(s) disobeyed royal directives. The period of Daniel's first audience was undoubtedly one of anxiety.

Terror is historically linked to the Hellenistic era when Alexander the Great's successors, the Ptolemies and the Seleucids, fought for control. Pious Jews suffered because of the power tussle. Antiochus Epiphanes wielded all his might to annex Jerusalem. Jerusalem was forcibly Hellenised because of the fight for control of the high priesthood. Antiochus imposed a reign of terror that stifled all forms of opposition. He terrorised the pious Jews by killing and enslaving them, violating their religion, robbing and traumatising them, instilling fear and inflicting all kinds of misery. The conservative Jews were coerced into engaging in pig sacrifices as an act of idolatry. Circumcision and the observance of the Sabbath were forbidden and the Temple in Jerusalem was desecrated.

The Temple's destruction served as a turning point that sparked a violent uprising and Antiochus Epiphanes' downfall. Daniel's book inspired optimism. Those who opposed the Empire were depicted in Daniel 9. After Daniel studied the prohibited books, he fasted and prayed to Yahweh. The resurrection of those who died for their allegiance to Yahweh provided hope for a new existence after the present. The Greek Empire was overthrown, leading to Antiochus' death. The predicament of the four kingdoms in the book of Daniel confirmed that human sovereignty is waning and giving way to divine dominion.

The historical setting of the book of Daniel indicated a crisis situation, which is discussed in Chapter Five of this study. During the Hellenistic era, the Jews were subjected to imperial authority and dominance. The book of Daniel provided evidence of how devoted Jews resolved the issues they faced in the royal courts. They fought back when their religious customs were disrespected, while still indirectly opposing the colonial authority. To provide lessons for future generations, the book of Daniel was placed in exile. The audience of Daniel had to push what they had originally anticipated to a far future to maintain hope, which is justified by Daniel's hope to see the end of Jerusalem's desolation after 70 years and the later reinterpretation to 490 years.

In the same vein, people in Zimbabwe hoped for peace and prosperity when they gained independence in 1980. All hopes were dashed by the crisis that emerged at the dawn of the 21st century. Despite the delay, they kept their hope alive, according to the reading of Daniel 9. The ensuing events that were scheduled to occur such as the cessation of transgression, the restoration of Jerusalem, the execution of the Messiah, the arrival of the ruler and the determination of abominations may be considered appropriate uses of the postponement. All these occurrences point to the Jewish experiences during the Hellenistic era. If the anticipated events were considered significant throughout the book of Daniel, they might also be pertinent to the context of Zimbabwe. The much-anticipated calmness after Mugabe's demise did not come.

The Jews of the Hellenistic and post-Hellenistic era show the boundaries of human sovereignty, leading to the possibility that Zimbabwe also could become a new Zimbabwe. When President Mnangagwa came to power, he introduced what he called the New Dispensation. The book of Daniel, which teaches that Yahweh controls time and sets the seasons, provides a better explanation for this. The existing dispensation would finally cease at Yahweh's predetermined time, according to the readers of Daniel 9. The hope of a messiah would also inspire people to stick to hope for a future leader who would usher the nation to peace and prosperity.

6.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study highlights two issues, namely that African issues call for African solutions while historical analysis is essential to comprehending Daniel 9 and the environment in which it was contextualised. Holter (2011 377-389) writes that the importance of the historical critical methodology in Africa cannot be overstated. As a result, historical criticism helps readers comprehend the historical context of the text's intended audience as well as the setting in which the literature first appeared (Rugwiji 2013:20).

However, historical criticism has some shortcoming since it does not address the demands of the Zimbabwean context of hopelessness, for example. As a result, to apply Daniel 9 to the Zimbabwean setting, it was also necessary to probe the book of Daniel's historical context. As a result, the hermeneutical response to the Zimbabwean issue was enhanced by the deployment of historical criticism in the exegetical process.

The idea that ABH meets African contextual needs underlies the hermeneutics of appropriation. With that background, the readers' analytic processes would be influenced by the hermeneutics of appropriation as they look for the relevance of the text in their context. Outlining the problem's contextual backdrop and addressing methodological issues served as the foundation for this study.

The Zimbabwean crisis may have served as a lesson for African nations still trying to cope with their colonial past to avoid making the same mistakes that Zimbabwe made. Colonial legacies have contributed to the ongoing political and socio-economic turbulence in the country. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first doctoral research to apply an apocalyptic text like the book of Daniel and/ or Daniel 9 to an African context in general and the Zimbabwean context in particular.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Several issues are raised in the present study which may require further studies. The intricacy of the Zimbabwean situation lies in the fact that contrary to what is apparent from biblical teaching, exile has evolved into a tool of restoration rather than punishment. Exile served as a kind of retribution for the Israelites' transgressions throughout biblical

history. The Israelites left for Egypt with the understanding that Yahweh would bring them back to their homeland after 400 years when the sin of the inhabitants of Palestine was complete. On the contrary, exiled Zimbabweans now appear to dramatise the exilic setting of the book of Daniel by finding refuge and better livelihoods abroad. A study of the legitimacy of claiming hope, while avoiding facing the challenges directly, will be significant. Having one quarter of the population in the Diaspora, with the majority being important human capital, is tantamount to the exacerbation of the existing crisis. However, the exiles indirectly contribute to the economy by helping their families back home.

The book of Daniel was written at a time when there were no democratic freedoms, such as the ability to vote. At the end of Chapter Five, the research suggested that Zimbabwean nationals should participate in voting for leaders that would determine their destiny. There may, however, be few options for Zimbabweans living abroad to participate in such decision making. The story of Daniel showed that it was possible to make a difference in a foreign country without having a large following. Persecution served as a springboard for the propagation of the message of Israel's God despite all the attempts to restrict the right of the Jews to practice their religion. Thus, further studies could be done on the relevance of the book of Daniel in the context of democracy.

Social stratification is a barrier to social cohesion, according to this study. Socio-economic classes are observable in both the Zimbabwean context and the book of Daniel. The wealthy and the impoverished, the rulers and the ruled, the strong and the weak are the main classes. The continuing tension appears to be the norm. When the book of Daniel was written, the Jews were living under foreign rule. While devout Jews were persecuted for upholding their faith, Hellenistic Jews made the decision to profit from the status quo. Jesus claimed in the New Testament that the needy always have his support. Further studies could focus on the extent to which the book of Daniel facilitates the comprehension of social classes in the 21st century.

In Zimbabwe, one may query the place of democracy in executing justice. The principle is "If you cannot win them, join them". The situation is so polarised that change seems to be unforeseeable. Further studies should attempt to determine whether it is possible to remove those social gaps when reference is made to some religious texts.

The security services in Zimbabwe employ force against opposition groups. These service units were instrumental to removing Mugabe from power and have since forced the Zimbabwean citizenry to accept their suffering lot. According to the book of Daniel, those who worked for the empires used to help create the laws that would eventually subject the pious Jews to punishment for following their own religious traditions. Those who were directly involved died, while those they intended to kill did not. The African belief that there is life after death is connected to the expectation that the deceased's spirit will return and torment their killers. There could be further studies on the extent of the correspondence between some Zimbabwean traditional beliefs about the life hereafter and book of Daniel.

At the regional level, further studies could also be carried out to consider reading the book of Daniel in other Southern African countries where people experience similar sufferings as Zimbabweans, despite having gained political independence. Finally, because the findings of this research are conceptual, it may be helpful to carry out an empirical study of the subject matter in the future.

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