

FROM PROPHET TO WAITER: HABAKKUK'S CAMEO APPEARANCE IN THE  
APOCRYPHAL ADDITIONS TO DANIEL

David J. Fuller

McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton, ON, Canada

*Introduction*

In the collection of apocryphal additions to Daniel known as *Bel and the Dragon* (hereafter *Bel*),<sup>1</sup> the prophet Habakkuk is flown in from Judah by an angel to deliver food to a starving Daniel in the lions' den. Not only is this incident somewhat bizarre, it raises the question of why the author of *Bel* chose to insert the Old Testament figure of Habakkuk into the narrative. Also pertinent is the issue of how this episode in *Bel* relates to the Old Testament book of Habakkuk as a whole. It is the intention of the present study to investigate the use of the Old Testament in *Bel* 33-39 and the significance of this intertextuality for a first-century BCE Jewish audience. Specifically, this article will demonstrate that *Bel* 33-39 describes the delivery of provisions to Daniel in the den using a sophisticated blend of allusions and echoes to various texts from the Old Testament, resulting in a creative story that summons up an array of images relating primarily to the miraculous provision of food in a time of need, for the purpose of informing a first-century BCE Jewish audience that God was with them just as he was with their forefathers, and that a time of restoration was forthcoming.

1. A brief note of clarification is necessary regarding the title of this book. In the Christian Apocrypha, it has been preserved as an isolated work under the name of 'Bel and the Dragon', a convention adopted in the present study. However, its contents are found in chs. 13 or 14 of the LXX versions of Daniel, so some reference materials discuss its contents using that nomenclature.

*Procedure*

The procedure of this investigation will be to identify textual phenomena in the Habakkuk episode in Bel that can be meaningfully associated with passages in the Hebrew Bible, and reflect on the meaning created by the juxtaposition of the two contexts. The nature of the referents identified generally accords with the concepts of ‘allusion’ and ‘echo’ as defined by Porter, as these categories are validated through minimal shared lexical and broad thematic similarities, particularly the latter. Porter states that an allusion ‘involves the invoking of a person, place or literary work’, and that an echo comes from ‘the invocation by means of thematically related language of some more general notion or concept’. As an example of an allusion, Porter cites the references to Abraham’s sons, Sinai, and Hagar in Galatians 4. As an example of an echo, Porter cites Rom. 11.17-24, which is reminiscent of the symbolic use of branches in Isaiah and Jeremiah.<sup>2</sup> In the case of allusions, there will be a direct lexical link to point to the intertext (as in the present study, the use of the character of Habakkuk). For echoes, significant themes in this passage will be identified, and then compared to passages involving those themes in the Old Testament. The present study will walk through the Habakkuk episode in Bel and search for viable Old Testament intertexts following these guidelines.

*Context and Setting*

The text of Bel is found in both Greek versions of Daniel, the Old Greek (OG) and Theodotion (Θ). The OG and Θ both contain what are commonly known as the apocryphal additions to Daniel (the Prayer of Azariah, the Song of the Three Children, Susanna, and Bel and the Dragon), but place these added texts in different places in relation to the MT text of Daniel.<sup>3</sup> Besides this, the OG and Θ differ considerably in

2. See Stanley E. Porter, ‘Further Comments on the Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament’, in Thomas L. Brodie *et al.* (eds.), *The Intertextuality of the Epistles: Explorations of Theory and Practice* (NTM, 16; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2006), pp. 98-110 (109-110).

3. Carol A. Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2014), pp. 4-5; John J. Collins, *Daniel* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), p. 3. The story of Susanna is the most flexible element, appearing at the very beginning of Theodotion, but after ch. 12 in the OG.

matters of style and wording, and it is generally accepted that Θ was an early attempt to revise the OG to make it more in line with the wording of the MT.<sup>4</sup> Although the approximate dates of the earliest known manuscripts for OG and Θ are 150 BCE and 180 CE, respectively, readings from both are attested in the New Testament, and thus can be considered to be reflective of textual traditions that extended much further back.<sup>5</sup> Steussy seeks to isolate the respective locales in which two textual traditions of Bel were translated and transmitted. He states that OG Bel was translated in Alexandria, where its protagonist is successful in a foreign land, rising to a high administrative position (which would have been possible under the Ptolemy family, particularly between 180–140 BCE), and encounters priests that employ trickery not unlike that found in Alexandrian temples.<sup>6</sup> Conversely, he locates Θ in Ephesus or Antioch, where the lesser amount of political power Daniel exercised is consistent with what is known of Roman rule in the first century CE.<sup>7</sup>

The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Children appear after Dan. 3.23. Almost all manuscripts have Bel at the end of Daniel, the exception being Papyrus 967, which places Susanna at the very end of the book.

4. Newsom, *Daniel*, p. 4. For further details regarding the divergences between the two textual witnesses to Bel, see Lawrence M. Willis, *The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King* (HDR, 26; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), pp. 129-31. For a detailed study providing a precise analysis of linguistic differences between the two textual traditions, see Andreas Wysny, *Die Erzählungen von Bel und dem Drachen: Untersuchung zu Dan 14* (SBB, 33; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1996), pp. 33-91.

5. John E. Goldingay, *Daniel* (WBC, 30; Dallas: Word, 1989), pp. xxvi-xxvii; Collins, *Daniel*, p. 9. Although Goldingay does not provide examples of the two Greek versions of Daniel being cited in the New Testament, this has been amply documented elsewhere. I give two examples from the same New Testament book. The list of materials from which false idols are manufactured in Dan. 5.23 in the Theodotion text is found in Rev. 9.20 (note this phrase is completely absent in OG Dan. 5.23). However, Rev. 1.14a, in its description of the ‘Ancient of Days’ follows the OG Dan 7.9 reading of ἔριον λευκόν over against the ἔριον καθαρόν found in Theodotion. For a comprehensive listing of all possible quotations of both Greek versions of Daniel in the New Testament, see Collins, *Daniel*, p. 9. Collins also provides a helpful bibliography of further scholarly discussion of this subject.

6. Marti J. Steussy, *Gardens in Babylon: Narrative and Faith in the Greek Legends of Daniel* (SBLDS, 141; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), pp. 183-87.

7. Steussy, *Gardens*, pp. 187-91.

Regarding the date of the composition of Bel itself, Moore notes the importance of differentiating the times of the composition of the tale and its inclusion into the larger work of Daniel, although he does not settle on a firm date for either between the third and first centuries BCE.<sup>8</sup> Collins insightfully marshals persuasive criteria to pinpoint a date between 150 and 100 BCE,<sup>9</sup> a compositional location of Israel<sup>10</sup> and an overall peaceful situation.<sup>11</sup>

Fortunately, despite these areas of uncertainty, there is a strong consensus that the main point of the LXX additions to Daniel was a polemic against idolatry. A number of specific details that differ between MT Daniel and the stories of Bel (such as the disappearance of the court setting and the explicit conversion of the king) support this appraisal of its focus.<sup>12</sup> This can also be seen from a simple observation

8. Carey A. Moore, *Daniel, Esther and Jeremiah: The Additions* (AB, 44; New York: Doubleday, 1977), p. 128; Michael A. Knibb, 'The Book of Daniel in Its Context', in John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint (eds.), *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception Volume One* (VTSup, 83; Leiden: Brill, 2001), pp. 16-36 (30). Similarly, Knibb believes Bel was likely composed in Palestine in the third or second century BCE.

9. Collins, "'The King has Become a Jew": The Perspective on the Gentile World in Bel and the Snake', in J. Andrew Overman and Robert S. MacLennan (eds.), *Diaspora Jews and Judaism: Essays in Honor of, and in Dialogue with, A. Thomas Kraabel* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), pp. 335-46 (343). Collins derives these upper and lower limits from the Hebraisms of the Greek style—the fact that Daniel was made a priest (suggesting a time before MT Daniel was canonical), and the fact that the king became a Jew (a concept that first arose in the second century).

10. Collins, 'King', p. 344. Collins notes that the story makes little attempt to realistically portray the details of Babylonian religion.

11. Collins, 'King', pp. 344-45. He argues that the text does not reflect the realities of persecution (and thus was likely composed prior to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes). He also sees Bel as being reflective of a mindset that was optimistic regarding the possibility of the practice of a pure Judaism even under a Gentile king. However, compare Ulrike Mittmann-Richert, 'Why Has Daniel's Prophecy Not Been Fulfilled? The Question of Political Peace and Independence in the Additions to Daniel', in Kristin De Troyer and Armin Lange (eds.), *Reading the Present in the Qumran Library* (SBLSymS, 30; Atlanta: SBL, 2005), pp. 103-126 (115), who sees Daniel's survival in the lions' den as symbolic of Israel's survival under Antiochus Epiphanes and thus dates the story to that period.

12. G.W.E. Nickelsburg, 'Stories of Biblical and Early Post-Biblical Times', in Michael E. Stone (ed.), *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus* (Philadelphia:

of the content of the short stories in Bel: Daniel humiliates the priests of Bel and exposes their lie that their god eats the offerings left for him (vv. 1-22); Daniel cleverly kills a dragon that the Babylonians had worshipped (vv. 23-27); Daniel survives six nights in the den of lions, proving the power of his God (vv. 28-42). In the first two sections, Daniel acts to overturn false worship, and in the final section, the worship of the one true God is vindicated.

### *Analysis*

From the outset, it must be noted that the entire contents of Bel are based on the creative rewriting of previously existing texts. In particular, Bel's account of Daniel in the Lion's Den is clearly similar to Daniel 6. However, the extensive differences between the two accounts of Daniel being in the den, both in terms of details and larger literary purpose, suggest that both related to an earlier tradition, rather than any dependence between the two.<sup>13</sup>

### *Habakkuk in the Superscription of Bel*

Careful attention to the manuscript traditions of Bel reveals that Habakkuk appears long before the den scene. Bel 1 in the OG (a verse lacking parallel in Θ) reads ἐκ προφητείας Αμβακουμ υιοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐκ τῆς φυλῆς Λευι ('From a prophecy of Hambakoum the son of Iesous of the tribe of Leui' [NETS]). The name of Habakkuk alerts the reader to be aware of associations of significance with the canonical book bearing his name. Moore, who notes our uncertainty of the tribe or date of the canonical prophet and who additionally suggests the superscription indicates a composition not by, but about Habakkuk, disputes the

Fortress Press, 1984), pp. 33-88 (39-40); Collins, *Daniel*, pp. 418-19; and Knibb, 'Book of Daniel', p. 31. Given the lack of Hebrew manuscripts containing the apocryphal additions, it seems that these unique materials found in the Greek versions are a somewhat uneasy fit with the larger work of Daniel. These additions focus on Daniel's 'piety and shrewdness' (so Knibb) as opposed to his reputation as a 'mantic attached to the royal court' that is clearly in the foreground of MT Daniel. While the OG translators/redactors obviously had a reason for incorporating these materials into the body of tradition contained in MT Daniel, these insertions clearly have a different theological agenda than the rest of the work.

13. Collins, *Daniel*, pp. 263-64, 411-12.

confidence one can have in this association.<sup>14</sup> However, the ascription of Habakkuk to the tribe of Levi should probably not be examined here in light of historical possibilities, but instead as a signifier of Habakkuk being one who followed (and led others in) the worship of the true God, in a literary context mainly focused on decrying idolatry. More specifically, Mittman-Richert suggests a plausible means by which Habakkuk was made a descendant of Levi: in Habakkuk 3, Habakkuk has a psalm attributed to him. The book of Chronicles (1 Chron. 16.42; 2 Chron. 5.11; 7.6) describes Levites using Psalms in the temple liturgy, creating a connection between psalms and priestly work.<sup>15</sup> Thus, the fact that Habakkuk performed a psalm made him a prime candidate for the priesthood in the literary world of Bel.

The critical incident that lands Daniel in the den in Bel begins right after he kills the dragon. By this point, the king has seen Daniel expose the tricks of the priests of Bel and allowed Daniel to destroy Bel's temple in return (Bel 22). Immediately after Daniel kills the dragon, a group of Babylonians become angry and accuse the king of becoming Jewish, destroying Bel's temple and killing the dragon (although both actions were performed by Daniel). Under threat of death, the king chooses to throw Daniel into the lion's den, a den of seven lions that were used to a diet of two bodies a day (Bel 28-32). Habakkuk is introduced to the narrative in v. 33, where he is making food for field workers in Judea.

### *The 'Six Days' Motif in the Context of Provision in Times of Uncertainty*

The first phrase in the OG version of Bel 33 matches a phrase found in the manna story in the wilderness:

Bel 33 (OG and NETS)	Exod. 16.5 (compare vv. 22, 29) (OG and NETS)
καὶ ἐγένετο τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἕκτῃ καὶ ἦν Ἀμβακουμ ἔχων ἄρτους ἐντεθρυμμένους ἐν σκάφῃ ἐν ἐψήματι καὶ στάμνον οἴνου κεκερασμένου καὶ ἐπορεύετο εἰς τὸ πεδῖον	καὶ ἔσται τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἕκτῃ καὶ ἐτοιμάσουσιν ὃ ἐὰν εἰσενέγκωσιν καὶ ἔσται διπλοῦν ὃ ἐὰν συναγάγωσιν τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν εἰς ἡμέραν

14. Moore, *Daniel*, p. 132. There are a couple of problems here. First, one should note the parallel use of the genitive form of *προφητεία* in Tob. 2.6 to signify a prophecy of Amos. Additionally, stating that the book is primarily about Habakkuk is rather far-fetched unless one begins positing source-critical theories.

15. Mittmann-Richert, 'Additions', p. 117.

πρὸς τοὺς θεριστάς	
And it happened <i>on the sixth day</i> , and Hambakoum was having bread broken in a bowl of boiled soup and a jar of mixed wine and was on his way to the plain to the reapers.	And it shall be <i>on the sixth day</i> , and they shall prepare whatever they gather together daily for a day.

While the mere verbal correlation of an occurrence happening on the sixth day is of itself insufficient to posit a relationship, a confluence of other thematic factors bring these texts together. The wilderness and the lion's den were both places of hardships and trials, which God used to demonstrate his provision by sending food. Manna was rained from heaven for the Israelites in the wilderness, and likewise Habakkuk was flown in over the lion's den to deliver food for Daniel. The sixth day was a day of extra provision of manna for the Israelites to make possible the freedom of rest on the Sabbath,<sup>16</sup> and likewise Habakkuk brought food to Daniel after six days, just before his release. Naturally, Daniel's obedience stands in contrast with the ungratefulness of the Israelites. The major shared theme here is divine provision in a time of need. Extra provisions on the sixth day to enable Sabbath rest can be compared with the much more dramatic event of food being given in a time of far greater need, personally and nationally.

The connections made above are only strengthened by being placed in the context of the use of the 'six-day' motif in Second Temple literature. The pseudepigraphal work *Aristobulus* (which dates from the second century BCE)<sup>17</sup> contains substantial comparisons of Jewish thought with Hellenistic philosophy. The fifth fragment of *Aristobulus* is a discourse expounding the wisdom of the workweek and the sanctification of the seventh day, with citations liberally lifted from Greek thinkers to demonstrate that the best of Greek thought was following in the steps of Moses. While it does not contain the theme of provision, it does show just how serious the importance of the weekly cycle was for Jews in the Second Temple period.

16. Stephen A. Geller, 'Manna and Sabbath: A Literary-Theological Reading of Exodus 16', *Int* 59 (2005), pp. 5-16 (10, 14). Geller emphasizes the role manna played in testing the Israelites' *trust* in God that they would be provided for even though they abstained from working or gathering on the Sabbath. Additionally, he notes the role manna played in teaching the Israelites to emulate God's creational pattern of seventh-day rest.

17. *OTP* 2:831.

More vital for the present study is the *Life of Adam and Eve*, likely composed in the first century CE.<sup>18</sup> At the very end of the book, after the death of Eve, Michael the archangel appears and speaks to Seth, saying (*LAE* 51.2), ‘Man of God, do not prolong mourning your dead more than six days, because the seventh day is a sign of the resurrection, the rest of the coming age, and on the seventh day the LORD rested from all his works’.<sup>19</sup> The important pattern here is that of the weekly process of work followed by rest being thematically connected to the process of death followed by resurrection and redemption. Turning back to the situation of Daniel, it has been noted above that his rescue from dire circumstances took place near the end of the weekly cycle; his relief taking place just before the Sabbath. These parallels clarify how the thought world of Second Temple Judaism made connections between the weekdays (times of work/trouble) and the Sabbath (a time of rest, relief or even resurrection).

However, it is important to be aware of other potential associations related to the use of the ‘six days’ motif. In particular, Kottsieper isolates an extratextual referent that may illuminate the symbolism surrounding this feature of the text:

Aber auch die Angabe der sechs Tage ist mehr als eine zufällig gewählte Zeitspanne. Mit ihr will der Erzähler auf die sechs Jahrzehnte anspielen, die die erste Gola unter babylonischer Herrschaft lebte, bis sich 539 v.Chr...So steht Daniel hier für die Exulanten, die der Erzähler damit an ihr eigenes Geschick erinnert.<sup>20</sup>

For an author with the memory of the Babylonian exile freshly implanted in their mind, having Daniel symbolically overcome the exile could be a significant statement. However, at the same time, this level of meaning may distract from the primary purpose of *Bel*, which (as noted above) is a polemic against idolatry. Nevertheless, other scholars have detected other meanings in this phrase. For Mittman-Richert, this

18. *OTP* 2:249.

19. *OTP* 2:294.

20. Ingo Kottsieper, ‘Zusätze zu Daniel’, in Odil Hannes Steck *et al.* (eds.), *Das Buch Baruch, Der Brief des Jeremia, Zusätze zu Ester und Daniel* (ATD, 5; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), pp. 211-328 (268-69). In translation, ‘But also, the indication of six days is more than a random length of time. With it, the narrator wants to allude to the six decades that the first Gola lived under Babylonian rule until 539 BC... So Daniel stands for the exiles, which reminds the narrator of their own destiny.’



is a particularly potent ingredient in the evocation of the creational aspect of the eschatological edge she detects in Bel. She states:

The eschatological picture, however, evolves from the *combination* of creation motifs. It is certainly not by chance that Daniel has to dwell in the lions' den for seven days and is fed exactly on the sixth day, which, in the creation story, is the day on which man was created (Bel 32; cf. Gen 1:26-31). But the prophet is not only kept alive and thus saved by his Creator, he is also granted the everlasting peace of creation, which is represented by his dwelling with the lions without being hurt.<sup>21</sup>

Following Mittman-Richert, then, the combined themes of the weekly cycle and provision/deliverance can be considered to include the motifs of man's sustenance, renewal and rest coming from his creator.

Mittmann-Richert also points to Isa. 58.13-14 as having considerable conceptual parallels with Daniel's six-day (Bel 31-32) stay in the den.<sup>22</sup>

OG	NETS
<p>ἐὰν ἀποστρέψῃς τὸν πόδα σου ἀπὸ τῶν σαββάτων τοῦ μὴ ποιεῖν τὰ θελήματά σου ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἀγίᾳ καὶ καλέσεις τὰ σάββατα τρυφερά ἅγια τῷ θεῷ σου οὐκ ἀρείς τὸν πόδα σου ἐπ' ἔργῳ οὐδὲ λαλήσεις λόγον ἐν ὀργῇ ἐκ τοῦ στόματός σου</p> <p>καὶ ἔσῃ πεποιθὼς ἐπὶ κύριον καὶ ἀναβιβάσει σε ἐπὶ τὰ ἀγαθὰ τῆς γῆς καὶ ψωμιεῖ σε τὴν κληρονομίαν Ἰακωβ τοῦ πατρὸς σου τὸ γὰρ στόμα κυρίου ἐλάλησεν ταῦτα</p>	<p>If you turn your foot away from the Sabbaths, so as not to do the things you wish on the holy day, and you shall call the sabbaths delightful, holy to your God, you shall not lift your foot for work, nor speak a word in anger out of your mouth.</p> <p>Then you shall trust in the Lord, and he shall bring you up upon the good things of the earth and <i>feed you</i> with the heritage of your ancestor Iakob, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken these things.</p>

Not only is the concept of the seven-day cycle with the Sabbath in view, but Isa. 58.14 also contains an explicit promise of the provision of food. Childs analyzes Isaiah 58 as breaking down into 'an accusation against the people' (58.1-4), a 'definition of the true meaning of fasting' (58.5-9), and a conclusion in 58.9-14 with 'two sets of conditional sentences [which have] the stipulations of God, which will ensue in Israel's salvation and well-being'.<sup>23</sup> Isaiah is commanded to chastise

21. Mittmann-Richert, 'Additions', p. 115.

22. Mittmann-Richert, 'Additions', p. 115.

23. Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001), p. 476.

and rebuke the Israelites for fasting with unclean hearts (Isa. 58.1-5), as the mechanical repetition of an institution is meaningless without the correct attitude and spiritual orientation. Significantly, one of the primary activities that is said to be a necessary connection to the Israelites' incorrect mindset is the feeding of the hungry (Isa. 58.7, 10), with the result of this action being provision and restoration (Isa. 58.8, 9, 11). When brought into dialogue with Daniel in the lion's den in Bel, a considerable transformation of these symbols can be observed. The Sabbath is something that the Israelites are failing to keep, and thus they are missing out on God's blessings, but for Daniel, a period of waiting before rest is a time of the demonstration of God's care and protection. Food in the Isaiah passage was something that the Israelite denied themselves in a show of insincere piety, but they erred in not providing it for those who truly needed it. While Daniel was supposed to be food for the lions, he was denied food for six days, then had it delivered to him miraculously by Habakkuk. This emphasizes Daniel's piety, as he has food provided for him. This blend of imagery serves to invoke a creational background for Daniel's provision on the sixth day, and an association with those who look forward to the Sabbath by trusting God.

*Food: From Desolation to Delivery*

Of particular importance is the meaning that emerges from the blend of references to food in Bel 33 and Habakkuk. As is clear from Bel 33-39, the primary function of Habakkuk in the story is to deliver food to Daniel. However, the topic of food occurs only once in Habakkuk, where its scarcity is reported in 3.17.

Hab. 3.17 (OG and NETS)	Bel 33 (OG and NETS)
διότι συκῆ οὐ καρποφορήσει καὶ οὐκ ἔσται γενήματα ἐν ταῖς ἀμπέλοις ψεύσεται ἔργον ἐλαίας καὶ τὰ πεδία οὐ ποιήσει βρῶσιν ἐξέλιπον ἀπὸ βρώσεως πρόβατα καὶ οὐχ ὑπάρχουσιν βόες ἐπὶ φάτναις	καὶ ἐγένετο τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἕκτῃ καὶ ἦν Ἀμβακουμ ἔχων ἄρτους ἐντεθρυμμένους ἐν σκάφῃ ἐν ἐψήματι καὶ στάμνον οἴνου κεκερασμένου καὶ ἐπορεύετο εἰς τὸ πεδῖον πρὸς τοὺς θεριστάς
For a fig tree shall bear no fruit, and no produce shall be on the vines; the work of the olive will deceive, and the plains will yield no food; sheep have run out of food, and cows are not at the mangers.	And it happened on the sixth day, and Hambakoum was having bread broken in a bowl of boiled soup and a jar of mixed wine and was on his way to the plain to the reapers.

Much of Habakkuk 3 concerns the greatness of God and the fear that this greatness inspires in mankind and the rest of the natural world.<sup>24</sup> But then, after 3.17, which describes a scenario of the severe deprivation of physical resources,<sup>25</sup> Habakkuk finishes by proclaiming his trust in God, who will enable him to stand firm even in times of trials. By way of contrast, in Bel 33, Habakkuk is described as making food and taking it to those who are working in the fields, a situation of apparent provision and sufficiency. While these two scenarios may seem hopelessly disconnected, a common thread may be found in the theological point that God provides for those in need. While it may be excessively speculative to adopt the view of Mittmann-Richert that this textual juxtaposition is pointing to an impending political deliverance,<sup>26</sup> this clear parallel of trust and provision is evident.

This use of Habakkuk to provide food for Daniel can thus be understood as having similarity with the circumstances of Habakkuk's

24. Francis I. Andersen, *Habakkuk* (AB, 25; New York: Doubleday, 2001), pp. 259-62. For discussion of background and critical issues relating to the place of the 'hymn' of Habakkuk 3 as it sits in the larger work of Habakkuk, Andersen is helpful. More significantly for the present study, Andersen argues that the hymn has a four-part structure (with an opening, a 'mighty deliverance' in vv. 3-7, 'apostrophe in the second person' in vv. 8-11 and emphasis that 'God is involved in history' in vv. 12-15), but that Hab. 3.16-19 is in fact Habakkuk's personal response to the composition, and not part of the poem itself.

25. Andersen, *Habakkuk*, p. 345. Regarding Hab. 3.17, Andersen states, 'It is interesting that all of the problems listed in v 17 are due to a failure of nature (or of Yahweh as the God of farm and flock), not to the degradations of a conqueror. Even when these most familiar and reliable tokens of God's goodness are withdrawn, God himself will be more than enough for fullness of joy.' This reading is supported by J.J.M. Roberts, *Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1991), p. 157.

26. See Mittmann-Richert, 'Additions', p. 114. She states, 'Since the earth bears fruit again, Habakkuk, who had desperately mourned over Israel's fields and vineyards lying waste, is now able to provide Daniel with bread and wine. Again, the point cannot be missed: the bringing of bread and wine signifies, against the historical backdrop of the book of Daniel, a situation totally changed. It is the sign of the reversal of history and denotes the end of the Babylonian peril, which of course means the end of the persecution and religious oppression under Seleucid rule.'

psalm; provision comes before total deliverance.<sup>27</sup> Thus the concept of food creates a symbolic connection between the Habakkuk of Bel and the book bearing his name in the Hebrew Bible. While Habakkuk patiently waits for provision in the midst of want in the Hebrew Bible, his inclusion in Bel has him being part of the Lord's giving of this provision.

### *Provision of Food*

Another Old Testament text is relevant for understanding the reference to Habakkuk's provision of food in Bel 33:<sup>28</sup>

2 Kgdms 4.38 (OG and NETS)
καὶ Ελισαιε ἐπέστρεψεν εἰς Γαλαλα καὶ ὁ λιμὸς ἐν τῇ γῆ καὶ οἱ υἱοὶ τῶν προφητῶν ἐκάθηντο ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ καὶ εἶπεν Ελισαιε τῷ παιδαρίῳ αὐτοῦ ἐπίστησον τὸν λέβητα τὸν μέγαν καὶ ἔψε ἔψημα τοῖς υἱοῖς τῶν προφητῶν
And Elisaie returned to Galgala, and the famine was in the land, and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him. And Elisaie said to his lad, 'Put the large cauldron on, and <i>boil boiled stuff</i> for the sons of the prophets'.

In 2 Kgdms 4.38-41, Elisha is meeting with a group of prophets during a famine, and makes palatable a pot of stew that contained poisonous ingredients. The context of 2 Kingdoms 4 as a whole is one of Elisha helping out individuals, and specifically his use of miracles to assist people who were in need.<sup>29</sup> The noun ἔψημα/ἔψημα, which Liddell–Scott glosses as 'anything boiled', also occurs in Bel 33 as the substance of the food Habakkuk is making.<sup>30</sup> The important connection here is that a prophet is providing food for people during a hard time; Habakkuk is acting in a way reminiscent of Elisha.

27. Steussy, by contrast, emphasizes the differences between the two texts. He states, 'On the other hand, the scene envisioned in Bel and the Dragon may be in deliberate *contrast* to that in the book: the psalm presents a time of difficulty and mourning, while the story alludes to a later time of restoration.' Steussy, *Gardens*, p. 159.

28. Moore, *Daniel*, p. 145.

29. T.R. Hobbs, *2 Kings* (WBC, 13; Waco, TX: Word, 1985), pp. 54-55.

30. LSJ 341. This root does not occur in BAGD or Louw–Nida. The root occurs elsewhere in Gen. 25.29, 30, 34; 2 Kgs 4.38, 39, 40; Hag. 2.12; Bel 33. Claudia D. Bergmann, 'The Ability/Inability to Eat: Determining Life and Death in Bel et Draco', *JSJ* 35 (2004), pp. 262-283 (275) states, regarding Gen. 25.29 and 2 Kgs 4.38, 'Both of these stews determine the destiny of the ones who eat them'.

*The Angelic Transportation Motif*

One textual allusion that is frequently noted in *Bel* is related to the resonance evoked by the mention of the angel<sup>31</sup> miraculously lifting Habakkuk by the hair of his head,<sup>32</sup> as similar incidents did occur in the Old Testament, such as in Ezek. 8.3.

Bel 36 (OG and NETS)	Ezek. 8.3a (OG and NETS)
καὶ ἐπιλαβόμενος αὐτοῦ ὁ ἄγγελος κυρίου τοῦ Ἀμβακουμ τῆς κόμης αὐτοῦ τῆς κεφαλῆς ἔθηκεν αὐτὸν ἐπάνω τοῦ λάκκου τοῦ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι.	καὶ ἐξέτεινεν ὁμοίωμα χειρὸς καὶ ἀνέλαβέν με τῆς κορυφῆς μου καὶ ἀνέλαβέν με πνεῦμα ἀνὰ μέσον τῆς γῆς καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἤγαγέν με εἰς Ἱερουσαλημ ἐν ὁράσει θεοῦ
And when the angel of the Lord had taken Hambakoum by the hair of his head, he set him down above the pit that was in Babylon.	And a likeness of a hand extended and lifted me up by the top of my head, and a spirit took me up between earth and between sky and brought me to Ierosalem in a divine vision

After the message of doom for Israel in Ezekiel 7, the following chapter finds Ezekiel resting at home when he suddenly receives a divine visitation (8.2), and is caught up to Jerusalem (8.3), where he is

31. The fact that the character of the ‘angel of the LORD’ (AOTL) appears here naturally triggers a connection to the work of the AOTL in the Old Testament. While fully investigating this topic is beyond the scope of the present study, it is interesting to note the surprising dearth of references in the Old Testament to the AOTL functioning in a chiefly provisional role. Many of the 58 occurrences have to do with the functions of delivering messages, punishments and promises. Two interesting exceptions to this trend are 1 Kgs 19.7, where the AOTL provides food for Elijah as he is in the wilderness on the brink of death, and Ps. 34.8 [English 34.7], which states the AOTL delivers those who fear God. Investigation of the AOTL in Second Temple literature is slightly disappointing, as many of the references occur in Old Testament stories being retold. Elsewhere, the revelatory function is prominent, as in 3 Bar. 1.3; 3.1; 10.7, where the AOTL reveals mysteries to Baruch. Most relevant for the present study is probably Prayer of Azariah 1.26, in which the young men are praising God in the fiery furnace, and the AOTL shows up and delivers them. In the larger composition of LXX Daniel as a whole, this provides a reference point for the previous saving work of the AOTL: The AOTL saves the three young men from the fiery furnace, then at the end of the book flies in Habakkuk to save Daniel in the den of lions. The AOTL is notably absent from MT Daniel.

32. David A. deSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha: Message, Context, and Significance* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), p. 241.

transported around and observes various disobedient acts performed by his countrymen (8.5-18). The very simple parallel here is of the similarity of divine transport being employed for the prophet on his mission.<sup>33</sup> Fenz also observes that the transportation of Ezekiel seems to be spiritual, not physical as in the case of Habakkuk.<sup>34</sup>

A similar kind of divine transportation is found in 1 Kgdms 18.12 and 2 Kgdms 2.16.<sup>35</sup>

1 Kgdms 18.12 (OG and NETS)	2 Kgdms 2.16 (OG and NETS)
καὶ ἔσται ἐὰν ἐγὼ ἀπέλθω ἀπὸ σοῦ καὶ πνεῦμα κυρίου ἀρεῖ σε εἰς γῆν ἣν οὐκ οἶδα καὶ εἰσελεύσομαι ἀπαγγεῖλαι τῷ Αἰααβ καὶ ἀποκτενεῖ με καὶ ὁ δοῦλός σου ἔστιν φοβούμενος τὸν κύριον ἐκ νεότητος αὐτοῦ	καὶ εἶπον πρὸς αὐτόν ἰδοὺ δὴ μετὰ τῶν παίδων σου πεντήκοντα ἄνδρες υἱοὶ δυνάμεως πορευθέντες δὴ ζητησάτωσαν τὸν κύριόν σου μήποτε ἦρεν αὐτόν πνεῦμα κυρίου καὶ ἔρριψεν αὐτόν ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ ἢ ἐφ' ἐν τῶν ὀρέων ἢ ἐφ' ἓνα τῶν βουνῶν καὶ εἶπεν Ἐλισαῖε οὐκ ἀποστελεῖτε
And it will be if I depart from you, that a spirit of the Lord will carry you into a land that I know not, and I will go in to tell Achaab, and he will kill me, and your slave is one who reveres the Lord from his youth.	And they said to him, 'See now, with your servants there are fifty men, sons of power; as they go, do let them seek your master; it may be that a spirit of the Lord picked him up and threw him in the Jordan or on one of the mountains or on one of the hills'. And Elisaie said, 'You shall not send'.

In 1 Kgdms 18.1-15, the land of Israel is suffering from severe famine and drought. Obadiah, Ahab's palace administrator, had hidden prophets in caves and supplied them with food (1 Kgdms 18.4, 13) and had been tasked by Ahab to find grass for the livestock (1 Kgdms 18.5),<sup>36</sup> when Elijah found him and demanded he informs Ahab that

33. Mittmann-Richert, 'Additions', p. 114; Collins, *Daniel*, p. 416; Wysny, *Die Erzählungen*, p. 161; Moore, *Daniel*, p. 145. Moore states, 'This rather hair-raising means of travel is patterned evidently after that in Ezekiel (Ezek 8.3, 3.12, 14)'.

34. Augustinus Kurt Fenz, 'Ein Drache in Babel: Exegetische Skizze über Daniel 14, 23-42', *SEA* 35 (1970), pp. 5-16 (13-14). Similar observations are found in Steussy, *Gardens*, p. 163.

35. Collins, *Daniel*, p. 416; Fenz, 'Ein Drach', p. 14; Wysny, *Die Erzählungen*, p. 161. Commenting on Bel 36, Collins states, 'Such ecstatic transportation is attributed to Elijah (1 Kgs 18.12; 2 Kgs 2.16-18) and Elisha (2 Kgs 5.26) and is widely attested of shamans and holy men in various cultures'.

36. Steussy, *Gardens*, p. 163. While this line of reasoning will not be developed in the present study, it is worth noting that Steussy develops the presence of food as

Elijah was about. Obadiah's statement occurs in the context of being afraid to carry out Elijah's order, as Ahab would undoubtedly kill Obadiah if he did not find Elijah. The context of 2 Kgdms 2.1-18 is the ascension of Elijah. After Elijah has been taken up into heaven, the company of the prophets speculates to Elisha that Elijah may have been dropped off elsewhere, but Elisha forbids them to look. Habakkuk's miraculous transport thus fits into the larger context of the divine transportation of prophets in the Hebrew Bible.

Additionally, there may potentially be a reference within the Old Testament book of Habakkuk itself that made the character of Habakkuk a prime candidate for aerial delivery of food.

Hab. 3.19 OG	NETS
κύριος ὁ θεὸς δύναμις μου καὶ τάξει τοὺς πόδας μου εἰς συντέλειαν ἐπὶ τὰ ὑψηλά ἐπιβιβᾷ με τοῦ νικῆσαι ἐν τῇ ᾠδῇ αὐτοῦ	The Lord God is my power, and he shall establish my feet unto the end. <i>He causes me to mount the heights</i> , to be victorious in his song.

This final verse of Habakkuk proclaims how God will work his strength for the psalmist. It comes immediately after a declaration of praise of God (Hab. 3.18) in the face of desperate circumstances (Hab. 3.17). The story of Bel may be utilizing this connection to creatively emphasize the fulfillment of Habakkuk's original prophecy.<sup>37</sup> Reflecting on this exclamation in Hab. 3.19, Steussy states, '[T]his may have provided a kernel for traditions about Habakkuk's aerial travel'.<sup>38</sup> A conceptual parallel can then be found in Bel 36, which also employs the miraculous transportation of a prophet in the context of the fulfillment of prophecy of God's overturning the situation of need.

a motif in 1 Kgs 18. Commenting on this complex of shared themes, Steussy states, '...[T]he exotic transport reminds one of Elijah's departure in the whirlwind (2 Kgs/4 Kgdms 2.11). The Elijah stories likewise present us with the motif of the prophet fed by divine intervention (1 Kgs/3 Kgdms 17.4-6, 16; 19.5-8). It may well be that the transport and feeding motifs have been derived from the Ezekiel and Elijah stories via a general tradition about signs of prophetic power.'

37. Mittmann-Richert, 'Additions', p. 114.

38. Steussy, *Gardens*, p. 159.

*Significance for the Community*

Of what value was this kind of textual interplay? Nickelsburg bluntly states, ‘The incident about Habakkuk is an unnecessary intrusion’.<sup>39</sup> However, the analysis above demonstrates that his presence is far from superficial for the story. Introducing a reference to the contents of the book of Habakkuk provides a tool for raising a wealth of intertextual associations from the Old Testament. Judeans living in the Hellenistic period faced the tensions of subsisting under the shadow of a powerful foreign empire. The present study found that the primary theme raised through the various Old Testament allusions and echoes was provision in a time of trouble.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, Enns emphasizes the importance of Jews sensing continuity in God’s work throughout time.<sup>41</sup>

Regarding the broader significance of the story of Habakkuk’s feeding of Daniel and similar rewritings of biblical tradition, it can be observed that the pseudepigraphal work *Lives of the Prophets* reiterates the story of Habakkuk’s transport to Babylon with some new details.<sup>42</sup>

39. Nickelsburg, ‘Stories’, p. 40.

40. This stands in contrast to the more sweeping findings of Mittmann-Richert. For her, Bel served to suggest that the prophecies of MT Habakkuk and Daniel were fulfilled: foreign powers were overthrown, there was no longer starvation in the land, God was bringing Israel (represented by Daniel) out of the lions’ den of Seleucid oppression, and the priesthood of Daniel (in Bel) points to his role in preserving correct worship of God. Mittmann-Richert, ‘Additions’, pp. 114-17. She further suggests that the rededication of the temple by Judas Maccabeus (1 Maccabees 4; 2 Maccabees 10) was an ‘eschatological event’ understood as the fulfillment of Habakkuk’s prophecy.

41. Peter Enns, ‘Expansions of Scripture’, in D.A. Carson *et al.* (eds.), *Justification and Variegated Nomism I* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), pp. 73-98 (83). Enns states, ‘The reference to Habakkuk forces the reader to ponder why such a chronological tension would have been created in the first place. The reason as I see it is to demonstrate that the same God of the past is present in the Diaspora.’

42. Craig A. Evans. ‘Scripture-Based Stories in the Pseudepigrapha’, in Carson *et al.* (eds.), *Justification*, pp. 57-72 (70-71). Evans notes that *Lives of the Prophets* generally focuses on the miraculous and predictive work of the prophets, as well as accounts of martyrdom. *OTP* 2:384 also notes its interest in the deaths and burials of the prophets. Anna Maria Schwemer, ‘Vitae Prophetarum und Neues Testament’, in Friedrich V. Reiterer *et al.* (eds.), *Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2009), pp. 199-230 (199), also notes *Lives of the Prophets* contains a number of additional eschatological prophecies attributed to the Old Testament prophets.



Although the work has a lengthy textual history and was considerably expanded with later Christian recensions, its original core can be confidently placed in the Judaism of the first century CE.<sup>43</sup> *Liv. Proph.* 12.1 inexplicably places Habakkuk in the tribe of Simeon (contra Bel 1 OG, which makes him a Levite), but then proceeds to assume the reader's knowledge of Bel 33-39:

*Liv. Proph.* 12.4-7

When the Chaldeans turned back, and the remnant that was in Jerusalem (went) to Egypt, he was living in his own district and ministering to those who were harvesting his field. *When he took the food*, he prophesied to his own family, saying, 'I am going to a far country, and I will come quickly. But if I delay, take (food) to the harvesters'. And when he had gone to Babylon and given the meal to Daniel, he approached the harvesters as they were eating and told no one what had happened; he understood that the people would soon return from Babylon.

Satran insightfully unpacks the difference in the characterization of Habakkuk in Bel and *Lives of the Prophets*. While in Bel he is 'little more than a reluctant instrument, an empty vessel, for the implementation of a divine scheme',<sup>44</sup> in *Lives of the Prophets* he takes this on a more exalted status. Satran states, 'Here we observe Habakkuk fully aware of his condition, completely in control of his actions, and self-consciously dissociated from those about him'.<sup>45</sup> Most relevantly for the present study, this later development of the Habakkuk tradition clearly emphasizes his role in providing food in a time of need, in connection with anticipation of deliverance on the horizon.

### Conclusion

To summarize, the present study has undertaken a reading of the various Old Testament allusions and echoes that are combined to give depth and clarity to Bel 33-39. Primarily, echoes are found in Old

43. Torleif Elgvin, 'Jewish Christian Editing of the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha', in Oskar Skarsaune and Reidar Hvalvik (eds.), *Jewish Believers in Jesus* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), pp. 278-304 (281-286); *OTP* 2:380. However, the minority position of Satran that *Lives of the Prophets* was a wholesale Christian composition of the fourth or fifth centuries CE deserves mentioning here. See David Satran, *Biblical Prophets in Byzantine Palestine: Reassessing the Lives of the Prophets* (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

44. Satran, *Biblical Prophets*, p. 101.

45. Satran, *Biblical Prophets*, pp. 101-102.

Testament texts that express God's provision for Israel and its prophets in times of need and texts that describe miraculous transport. The weekday cycle is significant, as the time of rest (or deliverance) of the Sabbath is at times anticipated by special provision on the sixth day. In the larger context of Bel, the Habakkuk episode serves as a reminder to the Jewish community of Greco-Roman Palestine that the God who worked miracles in the Old Testament is the same God they worship, and that the time of the fulfillment of prophecies of the restoration of Israel is near.