Daniel - Introduction & Background

Title

The Book of Daniel is named after its central character and author. This pattern is not unique to the Book of Daniel since the biblical books Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel were named for the same reason. The Hebrew title of the book is *Daniye'l* or *Dani'el*, which means, "God is my judge," "God is judging," or "God will judge." The Greek title as used in the LXX is the basis for both the Latin and English titles.

Date

The internal chronological markers found within the book leave little ambiguity concerning when it was written. The book opens in 605 BC (1:1) and concludes in 536 BC (10:1). Given the importance of the message of the book for benefit of the deportees, it is likely that the book was composed not later than 530 BC. However, "J. D. Michaelis revived Porphyry's theory in 1771, and it took root in the rationalist intellectual soil of Enlightenment. Since then many scholars who disbelieve in predictive prophecy have insisted that this book must have been the product of the Maccabean revolt (168–165 BC). Liberal critics still consider the dating of Daniel to be one of most assured results of modern scholarship." However, the arguments used to date the book late are answerable.

First, late date advocates believe that because the book is included in the *Kethubiim* section of the Jewish canon rather than the *Naviim*, it must have been written in the post exilic period after the era of the prophets transpired. However, there are logical reasons concerning why the book should appear in the writings section of the Jewish canon that have nothing to do with a late date. For example, while the other prophets focus on oracles, Daniel emphasizes predictions and narrative material. Moreover, unlike the other OT prophets, Daniel does not contain proclamations to God's people, does not emphasize calls to repentance, and does not call attention to his ordination as a prophet. Rather than functioning in the typical role as a prophet, Daniel seems to function as a statesman or a government official. Moreover, inclusion in the *Kethubiim* really has nothing to do with recency since other early works also appear in this section of Scripture. Among them are Job, Ruth, the Davidic Psalms, and the Solomonic writings.

Second, late date advocates contend that the book must have been written long after the time of Daniel since the work abounds in historical inaccuracies that a writer would not have made had he written at the time of the book's events. However, most of these alleged historical inaccuracies have been resolved. For example, while Daniel 1:1 indicates that Nebuchadnezzar's siege took place in the third year of Jehoiakim, Jer 25:1; 46:2 indicate that it took place in the fourth year of Jehoiakim. However, this apparent contradiction can

be explained in terms of Daniel following "the Babylonian practice of considering the first year of a king's reign as the accession year and the next year as his first official year." Furthermore, while the Book of Daniel repeatedly calls Belshazzar a king, ancient king lists reveal Nabonidus to be Nebuchadnezzar's successor without mentioning Belshazzar. However, the 1854 discovery of the Nabonidus Chronicle revealed not only that Belshazzar was the oldest son of Nabonidus, but it also demonstrated that Nabonidus and Belshazzar were involved in a co-regency form of rulership (5:16, 29).[8] Such a discovery buttresses the early date position. "The record of Belshazzar's co-regency had been lost by the time of Herodotus (around 450 BC) and was not discovered until recently. Thus Daniel must have been composed *before* 450 B.C., while knowledge of this fact was still available." Moreover, some have objected that Daniel mistakenly referred to Belshazzaras Nebuchadnezzar's son as indicated in Dan 5:2,11,13,18,22. Yet, Pentecost notes that, "it has been demonstrated that the royal successor to the throne was called a 'son' (5:22) even if he had no blood relationship to an earlier king."

In addition, the Book of Daniel mentions Darius the Mede (5:31; 6:1; 9:1) despite the fact that evidence of such a person has never been discovered in extra-biblical sources and the extra-biblical material indicates that Cyrus was the successor of Nabonidus and Belshazzar. However, some believe that the writer purposely confused Darius Hystaspes with Cyrus the Great. However, this solution is unlikely since a reader could easily check the chronology of these kings (Ezra 4:5-7). Others equate Darius the Mede with Cyrus. This solution forces Dan 6:28 to take on the following appositional translation. "So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius, namely the reign of Cyrus the Persian." However, while Daniel 9:1 indicates that Darius was the son of Ahasuerus, extra-biblical sources indicate that Cyrus was the son of Cambyses.[11] It seems best to equate Darius with the Babylonian governor Gubaru. Apparently, Gubaru received the royal title Darius when Cyrus appointed him.[12]

Third, late date proponents contend that the Jewish inter-testamental material does not cite the Book of Daniel until 180 BC. Harrison's rebuttal to the contention is sufficient:

> The shallowness and erroneous nature of such a position had been amply demonstrated by the Qumran discoveries, which make it impossible to deny the popularity of Daniel at that period, if the numbers of copies and fragments of the composition may be taken as furnishing any indication at all of the situation.
> A proper assessment of the evidence provided by Ecclesiasticus should include recognition of the possibility that Ben Sira deliberately excluded Daniel from his list of notables for unknown reasons, as he did also with Job and all the Judges except Samuel, as well as Kings Asa and Jehoshaphat, Mordecai, and even Ezra himself. Ecclesiasticus is clearly limited in its usefulness as a ground of appeal for establishing the historicity of certain well-known Hebrew personages, if, indeed, it should ever be

employed at all in this manner. It can be remarked, however, that there are illusions to Daniel and his book in Maccabees (1 Macc 2:59ff.) Baruch (1:15–3:3), and the *Sibylline Oracles* (III, 397ff.), all of which are at least 2nd century BC compositions, and these works attest to the familiarity of the Daniel tradition at that time.

Fourth, late date proponents claim that there is no clear statement in Daniel indicating Danielic authorship of the book. However, Dan 2–7 repeatedly makes reference to "Daniel." The fact that Dan 1–6 refers to Daniel in the third person in no way disqualifies him from authoring that section of the book since writers often referred to themselves in the third person in the ancient Near East. Not only does the Code of Hammurabi follow this practice but so does the Decalogue itself (Ex 20:2,7).

Fifth, late date advocates maintain that the book must have been written in the second century rather than the sixth century since an early date would amount to the writer knowing history in advance. This line of thinking views the prophecies in the book as *vaticinium ex eventu* material. In other words, they represent prophecies after the fact or history disguised as prophecy for the purpose of strengthening the Jewish remnant during the Maccabean revolt. While this practice can be found in twelfth century Akkadian material as well as Jewish Apocalyptic literature written in between the 2nd century BC and the 2nd century AD, it is doubtful that the Book of Daniel follows this practice. Attributing such a practice to the Book of Daniel would devalue inspired material to the level of other fraudulent works. Also, this view emanates from nothing more than an anti-supernatural bias against predictive prophecy (2:28; 10:14).

Sixth, the existence of Greek loan words in Daniel causes late date advocates to maintain that the book was written after Alexander the Great spread the Greek language throughout the known world in 330 AD. However, these words are musical instruments (3:5), which are notorious for crossing international boundaries. Also, it is not surprising that Greek loan words would show up in Daniel since Greeks were enslaved in both Babylon and Persia as early as the seventh century. Interestingly, these Greek words were obsolete thus causing the LXX translators to give the man inaccurate translation. At any rate, if Daniel were written after 330 AD, one would expect to find far more Greek words in the book than the scant amount that actually appear.

Seventh, late date advocates hold that the Aramaic in Daniel is late. However, a comparison of Daniel's Aramaic with later Aramaic found in the Dead Sea Scrolls as well as Aramaic found in earlier sources indicates that Daniel was written early rather than late. *Eighth*, some late date advocates seek to build their case upon Persian words found in the book. However, this argument represents no argument since Daniel lived and wrote during the Persian era under Cyrus (10:1).

The arguments used to date Daniel late are outweighed by early date arguments. *First*, because the sixth century prophet Ezekiel mentions Daniel (Ezek 14:14,20; 28:3), Daniel

must have been one of his contemporaries. Attempts to associate Ezekiel's mention of Daniel with a pagan deity are to no avail since Ezekiel emphasizes Daniel's virtuous and exemplary life. It is doubtful that Ezekiel would have connected these notions with a pagan deity.

Second, Daniel evidences a sixth century understanding of history when he locates Shushan in the province of Elam during the time of the Babylonian empire (8:2). Such historical specificity is significant since "from the Greek and Roman historians we learn that in the Persian period Shushan, or Susa, was assigned to a new province which was named after it, Susiana, and the formerly more extensive province of Elam was restricted to the territory west of the Eulaeus River [Cf. Strabo, 15:3,12; 16:1,17; Pliny, Natural History, 6. 27]." Thus, Pentecost correctly observes, "Daniel's familiarity with the individuals spoken of in the book and with the historical events and customs mentioned in the book necessitates a sixth-century date for the book."23

Third, the late date is untenable since "The four-year time span (168–164) is far too short for a book of that time to be written, copied, circulated, and adopted as truth and then preserved as canon despite the apparent failure of its predictions." *Fourth*, the late date still cannot avoid the implications of futuristic prophecy since Daniel contains prophecies of Rome's rise to power and Rome came into existence after the Maccabean era. Attempts to enumerate the four beasts of Dan 7 as Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece in order to escape the implications of a futuristic Rome are to no avail since Media and Persia are presented in the book a single empire (5:28).

Authorship

The view that one takes regarding authorship of the book is related to his view concerning when the book was written. If the late date is adhered to, then Daniel could not have been the author since the book was composed long after his era. Rather, a Maccabean *pseudepigraph*, or someone using the pseudonym Daniel in order to attach credibility to his work, wrote the book. Thus, viewing Daniel as the actual author is only tenable if one holds to an early date for the book's composition. However, because of the legitimacy of the arguments for the early date of the book as discussed above, viewing Daniel as the book's author is feasible.

Although Nebuchadnezzar may have written some of the book (Dan 4), Daniel's constant use of the first person shows him to be a likely candidate for the book's author (7:2; 8:1; 9:2; 10:2; 12:5). In fact, Dan 12:4 seems to imply that Daniel was the book's author. The fact that Dan 1–6 refers to Daniel in the third person in no way disqualifies him from authoring that sectionof the book since writers often referred to themselves in the third person in the ancient Near East. Not only does the Code of Hammurabi follow this practice but so does the Decalogue itself (Ex 20:2,7).

Christ also attributed authorship of the book to Daniel (Matt 24:15). Contending that Christ was simply accommodating the first century consensus that the book was written by a Maccabean *pseudepigraph* is unlikely given Christ's pattern of going against the status quo by correcting inaccurate yet popular interpretations (Matt 5:33-34,38-39; 15:11-20; 19:9; John 8:24,44). Jewish tradition (*Baba Bathra* 15b) also attributes authorship of the book to Daniel. Although some have challenged the unity of the book, this contention seems unlikely since the dominant themes of God's covenant, sovereignty, eternal kingdom (2:44; 4:3,34; 6:26; 7:14,8,27), and status as the most high (3:26; 4:2,17,24-25,32,34; 5:18,21; 7:18,22,25,27) are reiterated throughout the book's major sections.

Audience(s)

It seems that Daniel addressed two audiences. A mixed audience is apparent due to the fact that the book was written in two different languages. The Hebrew sections of the book (1, 8–12) indicate that it was addressed to the Jewish captives in order to encourage them by reminding them of God's sovereignty during the "times of the Gentiles." The Aramaic sections of the book (2–7) indicate that it was also addressed to the Babylonians and the Medo-Persians, which were the two Gentile empires of Daniel's time. Aramaic was the *lingua franca* of these empires as well as the language of diplomacy since the 8th century. This section of the book was designed to communicate to these Gentiles that God was sovereign over them in spite of the fact that they held Israel in temporary subjugation.

Scope

The first recorded date in the book (1:1) is 605 BC and the last recorded date of the book is the third year of Cyrus (10:1), which took place in 536 BC. Thus, the scope of the book involves the 69-year time period between these two dates. Therefore, the book covers two separate Gentile kingdoms and four separate Gentile administrations. The two Gentile kingdoms are the Babylonian and Media-Persian Empires. The four separate administrations are the Babylonian administrations of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar and the Media-Persian administrations of Darius and Cyrus. The specific dates that took place during the scope of the book are summarized on the following chart:

Chapter and verse in Daniel	Chronological date	Biblical date
1:1	605	3rd year of Jehoiakim
2:1	603	2nd year of Nebuchadnezzar
5	Sat. night 10/12/539 (Hoehner)	
7:1	553	1st year of Belshazzar
8:1	551	3rd year of Belshazzar
9:1	538	1st year of Darius
10:1	536	3rd year of Cyrus

Historical Background

There are five pieces of historical information that the reader must grasp in order to fully appreciate the message of the Book of Daniel. *First*, it is necessary to understand Israel's

covenant structure. The unconditional land, seed, and blessing promises as given in the Abrahamic Covenant are later amplified in the land, Davidic, and New Covenants. However, the conditional Mosaic Covenant spells out the blessings (Deut 28:1-14) or curses (Deut 28:15-68) that any Jewish generation will experience based upon their compliance or lack of compliance with the terms of the Mosaic Covenant. While disobedience will invoke the curses of the Mosaic Covenant upon any generation, disobedience cannot cancel God's covenant program for the next generation or for the nation asa whole due to the unconditional promises found in the Abrahamic Covenant. This covenant structure explains why the book opens with Israel in captivity (Deut 28:49) and why God, throughout the book, promises to preserve the nation.

Second, Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Babylon took place in three stages with Daniel's captivity representing the first of these three stages. Nebuchadnezzar probably took Daniel and the princes first in order to indoctrinate the best and the brightest Jewish exiles so that they in turn could influence the rest of the nation to adopt the Babylonian way of life.

Nebuchadnezzar's 3 sieges of Judah

	1	2	3
Year	605	597	586
Scripture	2 Kings 24:1; Dan.1:1	2 Kings 24:10-16; Ezek. 1:1-2	2 Kings 25:1-2 , Ezek 33:21
Judah's king	Jehoiakim	Jehoiachin	Zedekiah
Those taken	Daniel & some princes	Ezekiel & majority 10k	Remnant captured, Jerusalem & Temple destroyed

Third, the Book of Daniel inaugurates the "times of the Gentiles." This era represents the period of time between the inauguration of the Jewish captivity and the Second Advent

when Israel has no reigning Davidic king (Dan 2; 7; Luke 21:24; Rev 11:2).

Fourth, Daniel's contemporaries were Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Jeremiah prophesied about the coming exile. Ezekiel, who was taken in the second deportation, ministered to those who were taken along with him near the Chebar River outside of Babylon. *Fifth*, Daniel had a keen interest in the destiny of Israel since he was both of royal (1:3) lineage and noble birth (1:6).

Genre

The Book of Daniel employs two primary literary genres. Some of the book is composed in straightforward narrative (1; 3–6). However, other sections of the book are composed in biblical apocalyptic (2; 7; 8–12). Pentecost offers the following characteristics of biblical apocalyptic material:

> Apocalyptic literature in the Bible has several characteristics: (1) In apocalyptic literature a person who received God's truths in visions recorded what he saw. (2) Apocalyptic literature makes extensive use of symbols or signs. (3) Such literature normally gives revelation concerning God's program for the future of His people Israel. (4) Prose was usually employed in apocalyptic literature, rather than poetic style which was normal in most prophetic literature.

> In addition to Daniel and Revelation, apocalyptic literature is found in Ezekiel 37–48 and Zechariah 1:7–7:8. In interpreting visions, symbols, and signs in apocalyptic literature, one is seldom left to his own ingenuity to discover the truth. In most instances an examination of the context or comparison with the parallel biblical passages provides the Scriptures' own interpretation of the visions or the symbols employed. Apocalyptic literature then demands a careful comparison of Scripture with Scripture to arrive at a correct understanding of the revelation being given.[32]

Theological Themes

Several theological themes recur throughout the book of Daniel. *First*, the book communicates God's sovereignty over the Gentile empires during the "times of the Gentiles" (2:21; 4:35; 5:21). Thus, God is more powerful than the Gentile kingdoms subjugating Israel and these kingdoms are accountable to Him. *Second*, the book emphasizes consecrated living. *Third*, the book explains both the outworking of the Mosaic and Abrahamic Covenants. The nation will be forced to endure further curses pronounced in the Mosaic Covenant as a consequence of continual disobedience. However, in the end, God will preserve a Jewish remnant and establish the kingdom through Israel in honor of what has been promisedto the nation in the Abrahamic Covenant.

Unique Characteristics

The Book of Daniel boasts several outstanding characteristics. *First*, the book heavily involves dreams and visions since nine out of its twelve chapters involve a dream/vision and its interpretation. *Second*, Daniel represents one of the few select Bible characters

about whom nothing negative is said. *Third*, Daniel, along with the Book of Ezra, is the only biblical book to be composed in two different languages. *Fourth*, Daniel is the only biblical book that explains how God fulfilled His covenant program during the so call "four hundred years of silence" in the inter-testamental period. *Fifth*, Daniel is foundational toward understanding subsequent eschatological aspects of Scripture. The Book ofRevelation builds upon an eschatological foundation previously erected by Daniel.

Christ in Daniel

Christ is apparent in Daniel in several ways. *First*, Christ is represented in the smiting stone that is cut without human hands that destroys the preceding Gentile powers (2:34-35,49). In other words, Christ will return and establish the kingdom through Israel at the end of the "times of the Gentles." *Second*, the reference to the Son of Man figure (7:13-14) is an obvious reference to Christ (Mark 14:61-62). *Third*, Christ is also evident in Daniel's prediction of His messianic entrance exactly 483 years after Artaxerxes' decree to rebuild and restore Jerusalem (Dan 9:25-26; Luke 19:42). *Fourth*, Christ may also be evident in the appearance of the angelic visitor (10:5-9) since he is described similarly to how Christ is later depicted by John (Rev 1:12-16).

Structure

Several structural clues make it easier for readers to digest the contents of Daniel. *First*, both major sections of the book involving piety (1–7) and prophecy (8–12) contribute to the major theme of encouraging the exiles by demonstrating God's sovereignty. Thus, these sections should not be bifurcated but rather viewed as a cohesive whole. *Second*, because the book does not necessarily proceed in chronological order, the following chart helps the reader keep track of what empire and king is in power in any given chapter in the Book of Daniel.

Chapter(s) in Daniel	Empire	King
1-4	Babylon	Nebuchadnezzar
5	Babylon	Belshazzar
6	Media-Persia	Darius
7-8	Babylon	Belshazzar
9	Media-Persia	Darius
10-12	Media-Persia	Cyrus

Third, Daniel was a different age in different chapters in the book. The following chart helps the reader keep track of Daniel's age from one chapter to the next.

Fourth, noting the book's two major divisions is helpful: Historic (Dan 1-7) and Prophetic (Dan 8-12). The first section is mostly written in Aramaic while the second section is written in Hebrew. Furthermore, the first section can be chiastically arranged. In the first section, Daniel interprets most of the visions and speaks of himself in the third person. This section is mostly addressed to the Gentile nations subjugating Israel during the times ofthe Gentiles. In the second major section, an angel interprets the visions and Daniel speaks of

himself in the first person. This section exclusively addresses the future of national Israel and therefore is addressed only to that nation. *Fifth*, an interrelationship exists between the visions of chapters 2, 7, and 8. This interrelationship is captured on the following chart:

Daniel 2	Daniel 7	Daniel 8	Kingdoms represented	Years in power
Head of gold	Lion with eagle's wings		Babylon	605-539 B.C.
Chest and arms of silver	Bear raised up on one side with three ribs in its mouth	Ram with two horns	Media-Persia	538-331 B.C
Belly and thighs of bronze	Leopard with four wings and four heads	Male goat with one great horn, four horns, and one little horn	Greece	331-146 B.C
Legs of iron and feet of iron and clay	Incomparable beast with ten horns and a little horn		Rome	146 B.C. to A.D. 476
Stone that becomes a great mountain	Messiah and saints receive the kingdom		Kingdom of God	

Message

Daniel encourages the exiles during the "times of the Gentiles" by reminding them of God's sovereignty over the Gentile empires that are oppressing them, by reminding them of God's covenant faithfulness through His intention of persevering the nation, and by reminding them of God's intention to ultimately restore the kingdom to Israel. Just as the Mosaic Law taught the nation how they are to live inside the land, Daniel instructs the exiles regarding how they are to live outside the land by exhorting them to consecrate themselves to God. Thus, the deportees are to leave the results of their lives and their circumstances in God's hands. They are to trust in Him and His sovereignty as they live from crisis to crisis.

Purposes

Daniel seems to have had several purposes in mind when he wrote his book. *First*, Daniel wrote in order to provide a historical record of the exiles that lived during the captivity. *Second*, he wrote to give Godly examples for the purpose of showing the exiles how they are to live now that they had been exported from the land. *Third*, he wrote to explain how God remained sovereign over the Gentile nations that had taken the nation captive. *Fourth*, Daniel wrote to explain that God would honor the Abrahamic Covenant by protecting the nation even as Israel sojourned in Gentile territory during a time of national discipline. *Fifth*, Daniel wrote in order to provide an outline of the "times of the Gentiles" (Dan 2; 7). This era represents the period of time in between the captivity and the Second

Advent. During this time Israel will have no reigning Davidic king, will be under divine discipline, and will be trampled upon by Gentile powers (Luke 21:24; Rev 11:2). *Sixth*, Daniel wrote in order to provide an outline of God's prophetic program for Israel spanning from the time of the captivity and to the establishment of the kingdom when the nation's covenants will be fulfilled (Dan 8–12). Specifically, Daniel wrote in order to explain the circumstances by which the wayward nation would continue to undergo discipline throughout the times of the Gentiles and yet repent during the tribulation period thereby ushering in the realization of her covenant promises and the establishment of the kingdom. *Seventh*, Daniel wrote to encourage the exiles by reminding them of God's covenant faithfulness and sovereignty over their adverse circumstances.

Outline

I. Historical section (Dan 1:1—7:28)

    (1) Introductory material (1:1-21)

        (A) Captivity (1:1-2)

            (a) Nebuchadnezzar's conquest (1:1)

            (b) Nebuchadnezzar's treasure (1:2)

        (B) Selection of the three Hebrew youths (1:3-7)

            (a) Basis of the selection (1:3-4a)

                (i) Physical

                (ii) Intelligence

                (iii) Relational

            (b) Education in Chaldean literature (1:4b)

            (c) Provision (1:5a)

            (d) Three-year course of study (1:5b)

            (e) Name change (1:6-7)

                (i) From Hebrew names (1:6)

                (ii) To Babylonian names (1:7)

        (C) Daniel's resolve (1:8-16)

            (a) First round (1:8-10)

                (i) Daniel's request (1:8)

                (ii) Commander's response (1:9-10)

            (b) Second round (1:11-16)

                (i) Daniel's request (1:11-13)

                (ii) Commander's response (1:14)

                (iii) Results (1:15-16)

        (D) God's blessing upon Hebrew youths (1:17-21)

            (a) Divine knowledge (1:17)

            (b) Their successful interview before Nebuchadnezzar (1:18-20)

(2) Prophecy of the 70 weeks (9:1-27)

    (A) Setting (9:1-2)

        (a) Historic setting (9:1)

        (b) Prophetic sending (9:2)

    (B) Daniel's prayer (9:3-19)

        (a) Confession of past sin (9:3-10)

        (b) Acknowledgment of present judgment (9:11-14)

        (c) Request for future mercy (9:15-19)

    (C) Arrival of Gabriel (9:20-23)

    (D) Prophecy of the 70 sevens (9:24-27)

        (a) The scope (9:24)

        (b) The 69 weeks (9:25)

        (c) The interval (9:26)

        (d) The 70th week (9:27)

(3) Final panoramic vision (Dan 10:1—12:13)

    (A) Setting (10:1-3)

        (a) From a historical perspective (10:1)

        (b) From Daniel's personal perspective (10:2-3)

    (B) Angelic conflict (10:4—11:1)

        (a) Angel's arrival (10:4-9)

            (i) Angel's description (10:4-6)

            (ii) Reactions (10:7-9)

                (a) Daniel's companions (10:7)

                (b) Daniel (10:8-9)

        (b) Angel's explanation (10:10—11:1)

            (i) For his three-week delay (10:10-13)

            (ii) The coming vision (10:14-19)

            (iii) For his combative exit (10:20—11:1)

    (C) The vision (Dan 11:2—12:13)

        (a) Persia (11:2)

        (b) Greece (11:3-4)

        (c) Ptolemies (South, Egypt) and Seleucids (North, Syria, and Mesopotamia) before the time of Antiochus (11:5-20)

            (i) First era (11:5-6)

            (ii) Second era (11:7-9)

            (iii) Third era (11:10-19)

            (iv) Fourth era (11:20)

        (d) Antiochus Epiphanes (a preview of the Antichrist) (11:21-35)

(i) His rise to power (11:21)

(ii) His initial and general military successes (11:22-24)

(iii) His 1st military activities concerning Egypt and Israel (11:25-28)

(iv) His desecration of the Jewish Temple (11:29-31)

(v) The reaction of Israel to the Temple's desecration (11:32-35)

(e) Antichrist (11:36-45)

(i) Self deification (11:36-37)

(ii) Military supremacy (11:38-39)

(iii) Military activity (11:40-45)

(f) Tribulation and millennium (12:1-13)

(i) Michael's protection (12:1a)

(ii) Great tribulation (12:1b)

(iii) Resurrection (12:2)

(iv) Reward (12:3)

(v) Preservation of the prophetic word (12:4)

(vi) Questions and answers (12:5-13)

(a) First-round (12:5-7)

(1) Question regarding length of persecution (12:5-6)

(2) Answer: 3 1/2 years until the completion of the shattering of Israel (12:7)

(b) Second round (12:8-13)

(1) Question regarding outcome of these events (12:8)

(2) Answer (12:9-13)

a. Vision to be fulfilled in the future (12:9)

b. Righteous will have understanding (12:10)

c. Survivors of the sheep and goat judgment will enter millennial kingdom (12:11-12)

d. Daniel to be resurrected (12:13)

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Introduction & Background

The book of Daniel contains a great deal of emphasis upon the concept of mystery or secrets. To understand the significance of mystery in Daniel, it is good to learn about the context in which God reveals mysteries to Daniel. Daniel is the first book in the Hebrew canon that provides wisdom for how a devout Jew should live *outside* the land. The previous books relate to living *in* the land. Daniel is unique among the prophets in that it is a mixture of wisdom stories and prophecy.

Battle of Carchemesh (606 BC)

In 605 BC, Prince Nebuchadnezzar led the Babylonian army of his father Nabopolassar against the allied forces of Assyria and Egypt (Pharaoh Necho). He defeated them at Carchemish near the top of the Fertile Crescent (on the west bank of the Euphrates, Jer 46:1-6). This victory gave Babylon supremacy in the ancient Near East and began the Babylonian Empire. With Babylon's victory, Egypt's vassals, including Judah, passed under Babylonian control. Shortly thereafter that same year Nabopolassar died, and Nebuchadnezzar succeeded him as king.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S 3 SIEGES OF JUDAH			
	1	**2**	**3**
Year	**605 BC**	**597 BC**	**586 BC**
Scripture	**2 Kings 24:1; Dan 1:1**	**2 Kings 24:10-16; Ezek 1:1-2**	**2 Kings 25:1-2; Ezek 33:21**
Judah's king	**Jehoiakim**	**Jehoiachin**	**Zedekiah**
Those taken	**Daniel & some princes**	**Ezekiel & majority (~10k)**	**Remnant captured, Jerusalem & Temple destroyed**

1st Siege of Jerusalem

On the way home from the Battle of Carchemish, Nebuchadnezzar took a short detour to invade Judah and plunder Jerusalem (605 BC). He took some royal and noble captives to Babylon (Dan 1:1-3), including Daniel, plus some of the vessels from Solomon's temple (2 Chr 36:7). This was the first of Judah's three deportations in which the Babylonians took groups of Jews to Babylon. The king of Judah at that time was Jehoiakim (2 Kings 24:1-4). This first invasion begins the 70-year "Servitude of the Nation" period (it ends with Cyrus' decree to free the Hebrew exiles).

2nd Siege of Jerusalem

Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah again in 597 BC. Jehoiachin was the vassal king. His false prophets urged him to rebel against Nebuchadnezzar, but two prophets urge him not to rebel (Ezekiel and Jeremiah). In turn, they are treated as traitors for preaching an unpopular message; Jeremiah is thrown into prison. Jehoiachin ignores Ezekiel's and Jeremiah's counsel, rebels in a five-year battle, and dies (Jer 22:17-19). At the turn of the year (597 BC), Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin to Babylon, along with most of Judah's remaining leaders, including young Ezekiel, and the rest of the national treasures (2 Kings 24:10-17; 2 Chr 36:10).

3rd Siege of Jerusalem

A third and final deportation took place approximately 11 years later, in 586 BC. This begins the 70-year "Desolations of Jerusalem" period; it ends with the decree to rebuild the temple (the start of Daniel's 70 Weeks prophecy). Jehoiakim's younger brother Mattaniah, whose name Nebuchadnezzar had changed to Zedekiah, was Judah's puppet king. He rebelled against Babylon's sovereignty by secretly making a treaty with Pharaoh Hophra under pressure from Jewish nationalists (Jer 37-38). After an 18-month siege, Jerusalem fell. Nebuchadnezzar returned to Jerusalem, burned the temple, broke down the city walls, and took all but the poorest of the Jews captive to Babylon. He also took Zedekiah prisoner to Babylon, after he executed his sons, and put out the king's eyes at Riblah in Aram (modern Syria; 2 Kings 24:18—25:24).

> Ezek 12:13: My net also will I spread upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare: and I will bring him to Babylon to the land of the Chaldeans; yet shall **he not see it**, though he shall die there.
>
> Jer 39:6-7: Then the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah in Riblah before his eyes: also the king of Babylon slew all the nobles of Judah. Moreover he **put out Zedekiah's eyes**, and bound him with chains, to carry him to Babylon.

The 3rd siege results in the destruction of the Temple and the city and begins 70-year "Desolations of Jerusalem" (2 Kings 24:17-20; 25:1-21).

Date of Writing

The dating of this book is one of the most controversial subjects in the field of OT Introduction. The controversy is not due to the obscurity of evidence but to the presuppositions of critics.

It is quite easy to determine when Daniel lived and ministered because of the many historical references in this book. His fellow prophet Ezekiel also referred to him (Cf. Ezek 14:14,20; 28:3). However, because the book contains prophecies that Antiochus Epiphanies fulfilled in the second century BC, many rationalistic critics who deny that the Bible contains predictive prophecy have said that Daniel could not have written it. They contend that it must have been written after Antiochus, namely, about 165 BC. However,

there are many evidences within the book itself that point to its origin in the sixth century BC.

Purpose

Daniel is one of the most fantastic books of the Bible. It stands as pillar in Scripture in both apologetics and prophecy. Sir Robert Anderson in his book The Coming Prince (1894) made discoveries that impact our understanding of this book and its prophecies, especially his calculation of the 70 Weeks prophecy. Anderson's work has since been updated by Harold W. Hoehner in his work *The Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*, which, due to recent archaeological discoveries in the 20th century, has updated the dates for Daniel's 70 Week prophecy.

The book of Daniel reveals *Gentile* history, in advance. The language shifts from Hebrew to Aramaic (the Gentile language of the day) from 2:4—7:28. It is the most authenticated book in Scripture, both archaeologically and textually.

Message

The Book of Daniel contains many unique and significant emphases:

Theologically, Daniel stresses the sovereignty of God. Specifically, it shows that God is wise enough and powerful enough to create and control history. In the ancient Near East, people typically credited great wisdom to some of their gods and great power to others, but not normally to the same gods.

Philosophically, Daniel reveals the course and the culmination of good and evil throughout human history.

Hermeneutically, we observe that God teaches His people what will happen in the future by helping them appreciate what has happened in the past. In other words, we learn to understand the future by studying the past. The future builds on the past and is an extension of the past. The literal fulfillment of prophecy encourages us to interpret the unfulfilled prophecies literally.

Pedagogically, we observe that God teaches us by going from the simple to the complex, from the known to the unknown. This applies as we look back on history, and it applies as we look forward in prophecy. For example, God gave Daniel simple visions first, and then more complex ones later that built on the earlier ones. The first vision in Daniel is the most simple to interpret, and the last one is the most difficult to interpret.

Temporally, the book proceeds from what happened in the past to what will happen in the future. Some students of the book divide it into two parts: history (Dan 1-6), and prophecy (Dan 7-12). This illustrates generally how the content of this book moves from past events to future events.

Anthropologically, Daniel deals with two groups of people that occupy planet earth in time: Israel and the Gentiles. Some students of the book, including myself, prefer to divide it into three parts. We believe that the languages that Daniel chose to write in reflected his

emphases on revelation, stressing particularly Gentiles or Jews in the various sections of the book.

Daniel in the Critic's Den

- 332 BC: During Alexander's conquest of Jerusalem, Priest Jaddua showed him references to himself in Daniel, and the city was spared (Josephus)
- R. Kodeway, 1899-1917: excavations of Nebuchadnezzar's palace, Banquet Hall found, measuring 173′ x 56′; rebuilt by Saddam Hussein
- See extended detailed on Daniel's authenticated authorship at Daniel 01_Introduction (Deut 28:49-50)

Ultimate Authentication

- Jesus quotes Daniel 3x: "Daniel the Prophet" (Matt 24:15; Mark 13:14)
- Daniel quoted 3x in Ezekiel (14:14,20; 28:3)
  - Ezekiel classes Daniel with Noah, Job, et al
  - Daniel is set as a standard by which to measure wisdom
- One of two people in Scripture (other than Christ) of which no evil is spoken of (other is Joseph)
  - Both were professional executives, at a national level, in enemy lands

Organization

Dan 1-6 — Historical

Dan 7-12 — Visions

Dan 1 - Deported as a teenager

Dan 2* - Nebuchadnezzar's Dream (2:4–7:28 in Aramaic)

Dan 3* - Bow or Burn: The Fiery Furnace

Dan 4* - Nebuchadnezzar's Pride (written by Nebuchadnezzar himself)

Dan 5* - The Fall of Babylon

Dan 6* - Daniel in the Lion's Den

Dan 7* - Daniel's Vision - Four Beasts

Dan 8 - The Ram and the He-Goat

Dan 9 - The Seventy Weeks

Dan 10 - A Glimpse of the Dark Side

Dan 11 - The "Silent Years" (in advance)

Dan 12 - The Consummation of All Things

*Written in Aramaic (2:4 - Chapter 7)

Chronological Order

*Daniel is not necessarily in chronological order:

Dan 1- Babylonian Captivity (606 BC)

Dan 2- Nebuchadnezzar's Dream (602 BC)

Dan 3- Nebuchadnezzar's Image

Dan 4- Nebuchadnezzar's Pride

Dan 7- The Vision of the 4 Beasts (556 BC)

Dan 8- The Ram and HeGoat vision (554 BC)

Dan 5- Babylon falls to Persians (539 BC)

Dan 9- Vision of 70 Weeks (538 BC)

Dan 6- Lion's Den

Dan 10-12- Closing Visions

Daniel 1

- Introductory information
  - Dan 1 opens as the first time since David that the Jews did not have a king reigning on David's throne
  - At this point, there is no revelation from God about His program during the Times of the Gentiles; this is why God raised up Daniel
- Stage setting for displaying God's sovereignty
  - The Jews were ripped out of their homeland they'd been in for 800 years; they were dejected and needed encouragement.
  - God, while fully in control, put the Jews into a position that felt completely out of His control
  - God puts us into these circumstances so that we have nowhere to turn except to depend on Him
  - He wants to show us that our lives can be turbulent and crazy, yet He is still in control. And He can't do that unless He puts us into those circumstances.
- How God will preserve a remnant (Jer 31:35-37)
  - God has a plan for the nation of Israel and a plan for the tribe of Judah
  - We see God's plan for preserving Israel as He blesses the obedience of Daniel and his friends as they choose to live for God during turbulent times