

## When Was The Book Of Daniel Written?

The case given for the second century date. There are several objections given against the sixth century date. We will look at three which are good samples of the whole and examine their validity.

- Some say Daniel is incorrect in dating certain events by the year of a certain king. Such references are frequent in Daniel as he gives the time when something happened by the year of a specified king. Some say he sometimes uses the wrong year. The fact is that different countries count differently the reigns of their kings. Some count starting with "zero" as the first year and some start with "one" as the first year. This difference accounts for the fact that Daniel may seem off a year by one method of counting but be accurate by another method which he would be using.
- A second objection is that Daniel refers to the first attack of the Babylonians being led by "king" Nebuchadnezzar. The fact is that Nebuchadnezzar was not the king when the attack began. During the time of this attack, his father died and he returned to Babylon to become the new king. The answer to this objection lies in the way we typically use language. If I were to say that President Bush was born in Connecticut, would you think I was incorrect? He was born in Connecticut but was he president when he was born? We often, then, use the title a person later acquires when speaking that person's earlier life. So this objection is turned away as very weak.
- Some have said that certain Greek words appear in Daniel when those words would not have been used so early by a Babylonian or Persian Court. But the words often cited are the names of musical instruments and it is surely not unusual for such words to be carried from one language to another as people travel from land to land. Our word "zither," for example, has its roots in Latin and before that in Greek. That words for musical instruments could have been incorporated into a different language is not at all unusual. These objections are not very substantial, as one can easily see.

Here are some facts that help us recognize that Daniel was written by the person of that name who lived in the sixth century before Christ.

- Read Matthew 24:15 and Luke 21:20. What do we learn from this reference Jesus makes to Daniel? Jesus speaks of him as a real person. Jesus says he is a prophet. Jesus says his prediction about the fall of Jerusalem (the abomination which makes desolate) has not happened yet. Thus, moving the date of writing to the second century BC does not remove the accurate predictive element from Daniel. Jesus says Daniel predicted the fall of Jerusalem and it came true in 70 AD.
- Read Ezekiel 14:14, 20; 28:3. What do we learn about Daniel from these passages in Ezekiel? There was a real person named Daniel. That he was highly respected by Ezekiel as a man of great wisdom. That the word of the Lord places him in the company of Moses and Job—a very high compliment for a person who was still alive at the time Ezekiel wrote. Ezekiel and Daniel lived at the same time in Babylon.
- Josephus, in his Antiquities, says that the Old Testament canon was closed in the time of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Malachi, and that more books were not added after that time. He also reports that the Jewish leaders showed the book of Daniel to Alexander the Great when he came to Jerusalem in about 330 BC and was told he was fulfilling one of Daniel's prophecies.
- The book of Daniel is included in the Septuagint, a translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew to Greek. This translation was begun about 200 BC and finished over several years. It is highly unlikely that a book not written until around 166 BC would have found its way into the Jewish canon so quickly.
- Among the Dead Sea Scrolls, at least 17 fragments of the book of Daniel have been found. These are dated to about 165 BC but a book only just written would not have been kept by the Essenes among their treasured scriptures.
- The book of Daniel contains many references to the times of the sixth century BC that would not have been known by a second century author. Daniel is accurate on details about punishments, dress, banquets, customs and laws. Knowledge of Belshazzar, mentioned by Daniel as the king who ruled in Babylon at the time of the Persian conquest, was not in any available record from around 500 BC until documents were discovered many centuries later.

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