

## Introduction to Daniel

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**The book of Daniel is key to understanding prophecies of the end times and it emphasizes God's sovereignty over the kingdoms of the earth even in evil days.**

### I. Author and Date:

- A. Traditional Conservative Scholars: Daniel, a Hebrew who became a statesman/prophet after being taken captive in 605 BC. He was living in Babylon and writing historic and prophetic fact near the end of his life around 536-530 BC.
  - 1. For 2400 years the conservative position was accepted by Jews and Christians alike with the sole exception of anti-Christian philosopher Porphyry in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.
- B. Liberal/Critical Scholars: An unnamed “pious” Hebrew(s) in Palestine writing a “historical fiction” during the intertestamental period of the Maccabees (c. 165 BC).
  - 1. Position in the Canon of Hebrew Scripture: the Writings not the Prophets
  - 2. No mention by Ben Sira (ca 180 BC)
  - 3. Supposed historical inaccuracies
  - 4. Language used: Persian and Greek “loan” words, Aramaic is supposedly the wrong dialect
  - 5. Theology is “too advanced,” Messiah, angels, resurrection, judgement
  - 6. Antiochus IV: Purpose comfort under oppression
  - 7. Liberals deny the possibility of the supernatural (miracles/predictive prophecy)

### II. Purpose and Theme:

- A. Giving hope to the people of God during the times of the Gentiles.
- B. Kings (183x) and kingdoms (55x)
- C. God is sovereign over His universe

At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever.

His dominion is an eternal dominion;  
his kingdom endures from generation to generation. (Daniel 4:34)

### III. Structure:

- A. Content: Narrative History (ch. 1-6) and Apocalyptic/Prophecy (ch. 7-12)
- B. Language: Hebrew (1:1-2:3, 8:1-12:13) and Aramaic (2:4-7:28)
- C. Hybrid/Overlapping: Chiastic structure (ch. 2-7); 7 is key overlapping; four visions (ch. 7-12)

ABCCBA Chiastic Structure:

Ch. 2 (A): Dream: Four-Part Image (Empires)

Ch. 3 (B): Refusal to Worship Image (Deliverances)

Ch. 4 (C): Humbling of King Nebo (Judgement)

Ch. 5 (C'): Humbling of King Bel (Judgement)

Ch. 6 (B'): Refusal to Stop Praying (Deliverances)

Ch. 7 (A'): Four Beasts (Empires)

- D. Additional material in Greek LXX (The Prayer of Azaria and the Song of the Three Young Men, Susanna, and Bell and the Dragon)

### IV. Reasons to Reject Liberal Theories

- A. Arguments against traditional date “don't hold water”
- B. Vivid “local color” and customs of ancient Babylon and Medo-Persia not Maccabean Palestine
- C. Claims made by the author

In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream, and visions passed through his mind as he was lying in bed. He wrote down the substance of his dream. (Daniel 7:1)

Then I, Daniel, looked, and there before me stood two others, one on this bank of the river and one on the opposite bank. (Daniel 12:5)

D. The LXX (not later than 130 BC - Egypt) contains Daniel

E. Ezekiel (c. 590-570 BC) mentions Daniel

The word of the LORD came to me: “Son of man, if a country sins against me by being unfaithful and I stretch out my hand against it to cut off its food supply and send famine upon it

and kill its people and their animals, even if these three men—Noah, Daniel and Job—were in it, they could save only themselves by their righteousness, declares the Sovereign LORD. (Ezekiel 14:12-14 and again in 20)

The word of the LORD came to me: “Son of man, say to the ruler of Tyre, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says:

“In the pride of your heart  
you say, “I am a god;  
I sit on the throne of a god  
in the heart of the seas.”

But you are a mere mortal and not a god,  
though you think you are as wise as a god.

Are you wiser than Daniel?

Is no secret hidden from you? (Ezekiel 28:1-3)

F. Qumran manuscript evidence

G. Scriptural acknowledgement

...who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames... (Hebrews 11:33-34a)

H. Jesus’ acknowledgement

“So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel... (Matthew 24:15)

And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.” (Daniel 9:27b)

“Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.” (Matthew 24:30)

“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. (Daniel 7:13-14)

## V. **Background and History:**

A. God made unconditional covenant promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

- B. He warned Moses of blessings for obedience to the Law and curses for forsaking it and Him.
- C. After Solomon's death, Israel became a divided kingdom (10 tribes of Israel in the north, 2 Tribes of Judah in the south.)
- D. Israel had no good kings and God sent Assyria to judge and take Israel captive in 721 BC.
- E. For the sake of 6 (or 8) good kings, Judah was given 116 additional years before God first sent the Babylonians as judgment in 605 BC (597 – 10,000 more captives taken; 586 destroyed Jerusalem and exiled Judah to Babylon).

After you have had children and grandchildren and have lived in the land a long time—if you then become corrupt and make any kind of idol, doing evil in the eyes of the LORD your God and arousing his anger, I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you this day that you will quickly perish from the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess. You will not live there long but will certainly be destroyed. The LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and only a few of you will survive among the nations to which the LORD will drive you. There you will worship man-made gods of wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or eat or smell. But if from there you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul. When you are in distress and all these things have happened to you, then in later days you will return to the LORD your God and obey him. For the LORD your God is a merciful God; he will not abandon or destroy you or forget the covenant with your ancestors, which he confirmed to them by oath. (Deuteronomy 4:25-31)