

NAME

The book gets its name from the central character in the book and its author. The name Daniel means "God is my judge" or "Who in the name of God does justice."

AUTHOR

Since the third century A.D., the date and authorship of Daniel have been a battleground between conservative Bible scholars who accept the Bible's claim to be a supernatural revelation from God and critical scholars whose naturalistic pre-suppositions do not accept the Bible's claim for itself.

Every Jew and Christian of early antiquity accepted this book as having been written by a prophet of God named Daniel in the Babylonian and Persian periods of the sixth century B.C. However, sad to say this is largely denied even in most theological seminaries today. At the heart of the issue is the question of supernatural prediction. If the possibility of genuine prediction in prophecy is allowed, the book can be taken as it stands. Only if it is denied, is one bound to conclude that the book could not have been written earlier than Maccabean period (second century B.C.). (adapted from Mitchell)

Halley (page 395): *"The critics, in the name of modern scholarship, assume it to be a settled fact that the book was written by an unknown author who lived 400 years after Daniel, who assumed Daniel's name and palmed off his own writing as the genuine work of a hero long dead. But how can we think that God could be a party to the deception?"*

The book presents and assumes Daniel as its author (7:1,28; 8:2; 9:2; 10:1,2; 12:4,5). Jesus taught that Daniel was the author (Matthew 24:15).

Excerpts from the NASB Introduction to Daniel (page 1,226)

Objective evidence excludes this [the late date] hypothesis on several counts:

1. To avoid fulfillment of long-range predictive prophecy in the book, the adherents of the late-date view usually maintain that the four empires of chapters 2 and 7 are Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece. But in the mind of the author, "the Medes and Persians" (5:28) together constituted the second in the series of four kingdoms (2:36-43). Thus it becomes clear that the four empires are the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, and Roman.
2. The language itself argues for a date earlier than the second century. Linguistic evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls (which furnish authentic samples of Hebrew and Aramaic writing from the second century B.C.) demonstrates that the Hebrew and Aramaic chapters of Daniel must have been composed centuries earlier. Furthermore, as recently demonstrated, the Persian and Greek words in Daniel do not require a late date. Some of the technical terms appearing in chapter 3 were already so obsolete by the second century B.C. that translators of the Septuagint translated them incorrectly.
3. Several of the fulfillments of prophecies in Daniel could not have taken place by the second century anyway, so the prophetic element cannot be dismissed. The symbolism connected with the fourth kingdom makes it unmistakably predictive of the Roman Empire (2:33; 7:7,19), which did not take control of Syro-Palestine until 63 B.C. Also, the prophecy concerning the coming of "the Messiah, the Prince," 483 years after "the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem" (9:25), works out to the time of Jesus' ministry.

Excerpts from “All The Men of the Bible” (Daniel):

Daniel is the fourth of the Major Prophets. Nothing is known of the ancestry and early life of this celebrated Jewish prophet who exercised tremendous influence in the Babylonian court. Daniel was not a priest like Jeremiah or Ezekiel but like Isaiah he was descended from the time of Judah and was probably of royal blood (Daniel 1:3-6). A comparison of 2 Kings 20:17,18 with Isaiah 29:6,7 seems to indicate that Daniel was descended from King Hezekiah.

As a youth of the age of fifteen or thereabouts, Daniel was carried captive to Babylon (Daniel 1:1-4) in the third year of Jehoiakim. From then on his whole life was spent in exile. What Daniel was like we are not expressly told but the details given in the first chapter of his book suggest he must have been a handsome youth. As we study his character we cannot but be impressed with his refinement, his reserve, and the high sculpture of his life.

Daniel comes before us as an interpreter of dreams and of signs, a conspicuous seer, an official of kings. He lived a long and active life in the courts and councils of some of the greatest monarchs the world has known, like Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, and Darius. Close intimacy with heaven made Daniel the courtier, statesman, man of business, and prophet he was.

DATE

The third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, assuming his first full year of kingdoms began on New Year's Day after his ascension in 608 B.C., would be 605 B.C. Daniel lived to 530 B.C. Assuming a conservative approach to authorship (see above), the book of Daniel would have roughly covered those years. The book was probably completed around 530 B.C., shortly after the capture of Babylon by Cyrus in 539 B.C. The first deportation (605 B.C.) included Daniel. The second deportation (597 B.C.) included Ezekiel. The third deportation took place in 586 B.C.

Explicit Dates

- 1:1 605 B.C. - 3rd year of Jehoakim
- 1:21 539 B.C. - 1st year of Cyrus
- 2:1 604 B.C. - 2nd year of Nebuchadnezzar
- 5:1 539 B.C. - Belshazzar's downfall
- 5:31 539 B.C. - Darius receives kingdom
- 7:1 553 B.C. - 1st year of Belshazzar
- 8:1 551 B.C. - 3rd year of Belshazzar
- 9:1 539 B.C. - Darius the Mead / 70 years of captivity
- 10:1 537 B.C. - 2nd year of Cyrus

THEME

Type of Literature: Prophecy / Major Prophet

Halley (page 43): *“The Prophet At Babylon”*

Roland: *“The sovereignty and power of God over human affairs.”*

NASB: The theological theme of the book is God's sovereignty: *“The Most High God is ruler over the realm of mankind”* (5:21).

Certain chapters are simple historical narrative (chapters 1,3,5,6,10) while others are clearly predictive prophecy (chapters 2,4,7,8,9,11,12). As such, there are two distinct purposes for this book:

1. Prophetic: The purpose of the prophetic portions is to set forth the commencement, character, course, and consummation of the "Times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24). The times of the Gentiles refers to the sweep of Gentile history beginning with Nebuchadnezzar and ending with the Anti-Christ. During that period Jerusalem will be largely under the heel of Gentile domination. Gentile domination over Jerusalem will never be really relieved until Messiah descends from heaven and destroys the Anti-Christ and his armies, and establishes the kingdom of God upon the earth. (Mitchell)

"The Times of the Gentiles is that long period beginning with the Babylonian captivity of Judah, under Nebuchadnezzar, and to be brought to an end by the destruction of Gentile world power by the "stone cut out without hands" (Daniel 2:34,35,44), i.e. the coming of the Lord in glory (Revelation 19:11,21), until which time Jerusalem is politically subject to Gentile rule (Luke 21:24)" (C.I. Scofield, Reference Bible, page 1345)

With this understanding, the retaking of the Old City and Temple Mount by Israel in 1967 is interesting prophetically but does not indicate the "phasing out," "drawing to a close," or "ending of" the Times of the Gentiles. Even with Israeli control of Jerusalem the Gentiles still exert control over the land as evidenced by the great hesitation to rebuild the Temple. Politically, the Gentiles still exercise control over Jerusalem. Jerusalem will be "trampled" under foot of the Gentile and "trampled" under the foot of the Anti-christ until the return of her Messiah.

The Times of the Gentiles in Luke 21:24 should not be confused with *"the fullness of the Gentiles"* revealed in Romans 11:25. The "fullness of the Gentiles" has to do with Gentiles being graciously grafted into the olive tree (the "blessings of Abraham" through faith) during the Church age. The fullness of the Gentiles is completed when God's present task of winning Gentile (and Jew) to Christ is completed. Here the present fullness of the Gentiles is contrasted with the future fullness of Israel.

2. Historic: The purpose for the historical chapters is to teach us practical lessons on Biblical separation. These chapters teach God's people how to live, act, and react in a hostile environment. Needless to say, this has relevance to God's people attempting to live meaningfully in an increasingly antagonistic society. (Mitchell)

Peculiarities (Mitchell):

1. Virtually all of the Old Testament was written exclusively in Hebrew. Part of Daniel is written in Hebrew (1:1-2:3, and 8-12). However, the central portion (2:4-7:28) is in Aramaic. We cannot be certain as to why God directed to do this. Possibly it is because those portions in Hebrew are of special interest to the Jewish people, while those portions in Aramaic are of special relevance to the Gentile peoples (Aramaic was the language of Babylon). Perhaps this has something to do with Daniel's prophetic revelations concerning the Gentiles (see next point below) in much the same way that the New Testament was written in Greek and not Hebrew (Greek being the lingua franca of the time).
2. A second peculiarity in Daniel is that the burden of his predictive statements concern the Gentiles. The other prophets concern themselves primarily with the Jews, and the Gentiles are mentioned incidentally as it relates to God's future program for Israel. It is the very opposite in Daniel. He presents the broad sweep of Gentile world domination and lets us know how Israel will fit into it.

Key Word (Nelson's): God's Program for Israel - Daniel was written to encourage the exiled Jews by revealing God's sovereign program for Israel during and after the period of gentile domination. The "Times of the Gentiles" began with the Babylonian captivity, and Israel would suffer under gentile

powers for many years. But this period is not permanent, and a time will come when God will establish the messianic kingdom which will last forever.

Key Verses (Nelson's):

"Daniel answered and said: 'Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to Whom belong wisdom and might. He changes times and seasons; He removes kings and sets up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; He reveals deep and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells in Him.'" (Daniel 2:20-22)

"Therefore Daniel went in to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon. He went and said thus to him: 'Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon; bring me in before the king, and I will show the king the interpretation.'" (Daniel 2:44)

Key Chapter (Nelson's): 9 - Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks (9:24-27) provides the chronological frame for messianic prediction from the time of Daniel to the establishment of the kingdom on earth.

Outline:

- I. History 1-6
 - A. The Reign of Nebuchadnezzar 1-4
 - B. The Reign of Belshazzar 5
 - C. The Reign of Darius 6
- II. Prophecy 7-12
 - A. Vision of Four Beasts 7
 - B. Vision of Two Beasts 8
 - C. Vision of Seventy Weeks 9
 - D. Final Communications 10-12

RECIPIENTS

God's people - specifically those in exile... and us.

The Book of Daniel was written during a time when the Jews were suffering greatly under the persecution and oppression of a pagan king. Using stories and accounts of visions, the writer encourages the people of his time with hope that God will bring the tyrant down and restore sovereignty to God's people. (GNB - introduction to Daniel)

CONTRIBUTION TO CANON

The significant meaning of Daniel's name fits the character and themes of the Book of Daniel. The Book of Daniel gives us:

1. A statement of God's judgment on history
2. The purpose of God until the final consummation
3. The vindication of righteousness

Daniel sets forth the closest thing we have in the Old Testament to a chronological sequence of future history. Virtually all the Old Testament prophets do nothing in terms of chronological sequence. Their

chronology is all mixed up. Daniel is a key in unlocking the timing of their prophecies. One cannot understand the Book of Revelation without Daniel.

RESOURCES

Gromacki, Robert C. *New Testament Survey*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker Book House, 1978

Halley, Henry H. *Halley's Bible Handbook*, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Zondervan Publishing House

Horton, David, General Editor. *The Portable Seminary*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Bethany House Publishers, 2006

Nelson's Quick Reference - Bible Maps And Charts, Nashville, Tennessee; Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1994

As general resources I've relied on my class notes from various professors at Biola University (especially those of Dr. Curtis Mitchell), Western Conservative Baptist Seminary (WCBS), and Talbot Seminary as well as notes shared with me by Annie Kartoizian.

Additional reference material has come from the study Bibles of the English Standard Version, New American Standard Version, and The New Living Translation.

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