

The Book of Daniel

The Title, Author, and Date of Daniel

1. Title: Daniel
 - a. Hebrew — דָּנִיֵּאל = Daniel
 - b. Greek — danihl = Daniel
2. Author: Daniel
 - a. 8.15, 27; 9.2; 10.2, 7; 12.4-5
 - b. Name means: “God is my judge”
3. Date: c. 530 B.C.

The Background and Setting of Daniel.

1. The person – 2 Ki 23-25; Eze 1-4; Da 7.2, 15, 28; 8.1, 15, 27; 9.2, 22; 10.2, 7, 11, 12; 12.4, 5
 - a. Born c. 620-615 B.C. and died sometime after 530 B.C. (lives 85-90 years)
 - b. A Jew, from a royal family, taken captive to Babylon in 605 B.C. He was blessed greatly by God there, rising to a position of power as a statesman and political leader, influencing lives and kingdoms (chs. 1-6).
 - c. He lived in Babylon from 605-530 B.C., perhaps longer, living to see the end of the captivity.
 - d. Lived during the reign of the final three kings of Judah: Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah – as well as during the reigns of six kings of Babylon: Nebuchadnezzar, Evil-merodach, Labashi-Marduk, Nabonidus, and Belshazzar – and also three kings of Medo-Persia: Cyaxares, Astyages and Cyrus.
 - e. Note: No sin is ever recorded concerning Daniel. He openly and faithfully served and trusted God. And he began doing this *as a teenager, in the midst of the most ungodly pagan world power at the time!*
2. His ministry.
 - a. Daniel was a statesman by office, but a prophet by ministry.
 - b. He was contemporary with Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Habakkuk and Zephaniah.
3. Babylon
 - a. A blatantly pagan and ungodly nation.
 - b. The world power at the time.
 - c. Invaded and destroyed Judah and Jerusalem (605, 597, 586)

The Purpose and Message of Daniel

1. The **message** of the book of Daniel is: “**God is Sovereign.**”
 - a. **God’s sovereign authority over heaven and earth is demonstrated by God to His people—as an encouragement to stand fast in times of trouble—through His dealings with both His people Israel — as seen in Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (chs. 1-6) — and the Gentiles — as seen in Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius (1-6) as well as in the judgment of future generations of Gentiles (chs. 7-12) — as God shows His sovereign might and will.**
 - b. **God’s sovereignty and grace is show in His dealings with both Jews and Gentiles, as an encouragement to remain steadfast in troubled times.**
2. The **purpose** of the book of Daniel is to **bear testimony to God’s faithfulness.**
 - a. Daniel demonstrates the fact that, although the Jews were allowed by God to go into captivity, and the temple was destroyed, God was *still* in control, and *still* has a plan for them.
 - b. Those who will trust God will be blessed.
 - c. God accomplishes His purpose through Daniel
 - 1) By Daniel’s active involvement in God’s historical dealings with both Jew and Gentile (chs.1-6)
 - 2) Also through Daniel’s visions revealing God’s sovereignty and purpose, that God will deal with both Jew and Gentile (individual and nation alike) in **Grace, Judgment, and Restoration** (chs. 7-12)
3. The book is a comprehensive view of God’s plan from Babylon to the Second Advent of Christ. Note: The prophecies of Daniel were possibly not well-known among the Jews of the Captivity, since the book was written toward the *end* of the Captivity. It would have encouraged the Jews who returned to build the temple, however, as well as the Jews in the Maccabean (and ultimately the Tribulation) period.

4. Key Verses: *4.17b, 25b, 32b; 5.21b; 7.27; 10.14a; 12.10a*

The Structure of Daniel

1. Content Outline
 - a. 1.1-6.28 Narratives of God's sovereignty and faithfulness in Daniel's life. (contemporary events)
 - b. 7.1-12.13 Prophecies of God's future sovereignty and faithfulness given to Daniel. (future events)
2. Prophetic Outline
 - a. 1.1-22 Historical Introduction
 - b. 2.1-7.28 Prophecy primarily concerning Gentiles.
 - c. 8.1-12.13 Prophecy primarily concerning Israel.
3. Chronological Outline, by Kings Daniel Served Under
 - a. chapters 1-4 Nebuchadnezzar 605-562 B. C.
 - b. chapters 7, 8, 5 Nabonidus (556-539 B. C.) and Belshazzar (553-539 B. C.)
 - c. chapters 9, 6, 10-12 Darius (539-538 B. C.) and Cyrus (538-530 B. C.)

The Themes of Daniel

1. The primary theme of the book is **the Sovereignty of God**.
 - a. God reveals Himself as the One who is sovereign over history and kingdoms of the world, showing Himself to be an omnipotent God who is not only present but active. – *4.17, 25-26, 32-37; 5.21; 7.27*
 - b. God's purpose in history, therefore, is to show that, as the Sovereign God, He is therefore in control at all times. – *11.27, 29, 35*
 - c. Therefore, because God is Sovereign, two things are true:
 - 1) The Jews must recognize God's sovereignty and remain faithful in the midst of tribulation (especially in the end times), because ***God will restore Israel as promised*** – *9.24-27; 11.35; 12.1-13.*
 - 2) The Gentiles must also recognize God's sovereignty (*2; 4.24-37; 5.18-23*), that God ***will deal with them, and establish His eternal kingdom, as promised*** (*2.44-45; 7.9-27; 12.1-13*).
2. God's Deliverance – *2.46-49; 3.25-30; 6.22-23; 7.22; 11.35; 12.1-3, 13*
3. Grace: Restoration and Future Kingdom – *2.31-45; 4.10-17, 20-26; 7.9-27; 9.16-25; 11.35; 12. 1-2, 10-12*

Interpretive Issues

1. This book does not follow a chronological structure. It jumps around in the chronological flow. Context must be followed carefully in each section.
2. Daniel's authorship (esp. 7-12) began to come under heavy attack by liberal critics in the 17th century.
 - a. Critics date the book at 175-163 B.C.
 - 1) Their main reason is that they don't believe in prophecy. The prophecies of Daniel are far too accurate, in their minds, to have been written before the fact!
 - 2) They declared the book was written during the Maccabean period (175-163 B.C.), by unknown author(s) under the name of Daniel.
 - b. Reasons to believe a historical Daniel wrote the book.
 - 1) The LXX was written c. 300-250 B.C.
 - a) Antiochus Epiphanes (c.175-163 B.C.) is symbolized in Daniel.
 - b) If Daniel was written c.175-163 (as the liberals say), how could it appear in the LXX, written some 75-125 years earlier?! Daniel had to be written before the Maccabean period. Comparison of its writing style with the Maccabean period shows it to be written at an earlier date.
 - 2) Josephus writes that in 332 B.C., when Alexander the Great came to Jerusalem, he was shown the prophecies about himself in Daniel. Therefore, it had to be written before 332!
 - 3) *Eze 14.14, 20; 28.3* – Contemporaries of Daniel (Ezekiel, Jeremiah) name him as a real person.
 - 4) The Jewish Talmud attributes the book to Daniel.
 - 5) *Mt 24.15; Mk 13.14* - Jesus refers to Daniel *9.27; 11.31; 12.11*, as being written by Daniel. Jesus calls him Daniel "the prophet," not Daniel "the statesman."