

DEDICATED TO

GALAND AND JYNNE KINNARD

father and mother of

GALE

my wife

and

sources of encouragement

help and wisdom

to

me

DANIEL

DANIEL

Daniel was a godly man  
    And thankful through his days . . .  
He never failed to pray to God  
    And give Him all the praise.

His trials were so many,  
    And he was tempted sore . . .  
But he was saved by righteousness,  
    'And the godly cloak he wore.

Interpreting the royal dreams  
    Through wisdom from on high . . .  
He ever gave the praise to God,  
    As his life did verify.

In the fiery furnace  
    And in the lions' den . . .  
The flames were stayed, the jaws were set  
    Before oppressing men.

But he emerged triumphant,  
    For God was ever near . . .  
He guards His children from all harm  
    When danger does appear.

Through our temptations and our trials,  
    On life's tempestous ways . . .  
I thank Thee, God, for Daniel,  
    And for his life of praise.

Upon my knees, I pray that God,  
    Will make me thankful too . . .  
And worthy of His love and care . . .  
    I know He'll see me through!

*Author Unknown*

# DANIEL

## INTRODUCTION

*Author:* Daniel, a Hebrew statesman. His name in Hebrew, *Daniyyel*, means "God is Judge" or "God is my Judge" or "judge who pronounces judgment in the name of God." We know very little of the person Daniel. He was probably of royal lineage (1:3). He was taken to Babylonia as a young man (just how old he was when this happened we do not know—probably 20 years of age or younger). He died probably soon after receiving and recording the closing series of his prophecies (chap. 10-12), which he himself places in the third year of the reign of Cyrus. But when, and under what circumstances, his death occurred is unknown. He apparently did not return to Palestine with his people but spent his last days in Babylon. If he was taken to Babylon "in the third year of Jehoiakim" (606 B.C.) and lived past the return of the Jews to Palestine (536 B.C.) it would mean he lived more than 70 years in Babylonia alone! Thus his death would come at the ripe old age of 80-90, depending upon his age when he was taken to Babylon.

Daniel was truly a man of God. He was a man of faith, courage and conviction. He was ready at all times to declare without fear or favor what he believed and to stand for his convictions regardless of the circumstances and consequences. There are marks of true nobility, gentleness, compassion and unapproachable integrity borne out in his dealings with his contemporaries. His personal integrity was so great that he could be heard and trusted even by those monarchs who did not believe in his God. As a consequence of his veracity and erudition, he was made ruler over the province of Babylon and chief of the governors over its wise men under two Babylonian emperors and under Darius the Mede he was one of the three presidents of the satraps.

Dean Farrar was impressed with the absence of Daniel's name from all ancient documents outside the Scriptures as a strong reason to question the actual, historic personage of Daniel. Robert Dick Wilson deals with this "argument from silence" in a very lucid way in his book *Studies in The Book of Daniel*, published by Putnam. Dr. Wilson points out

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that it is hardly fair, in the first place, to use silence to argue against Daniel's existence. Secondly, all the ancient Babylonian documents are silent about the numerous governors, judges, generals, priests, wise men, writers, sculptors, architects and all kinds of famous men who must have lived during that long period. But does the silence concerning such as these mean the emperor had not such judges, priests, etc.?

Edward J. Young in *The Prophecy of Daniel*, published by Eerdmans, gives five lines of evidence proving the Daniel of whom the book testifies is the author of the book:

1. In the second half of the book Daniel names himself (speaking in first person) as the one receiving the revelations, and he is ordered to preserve the book in which these words are found (12:4).
2. It should be obvious to any honest reader that the book is the work of one person throughout. The first part prepares for the second; all sections are mutually related to one another; the historical narratives are interdependent; the character of Daniel is always the same.
3. Jesus Christ validates its authorship by Daniel (Mt. 24:15). One should also compare Mt. 10:23; 16:27 ff; 19:28; 24:30; 25:31; 26:64.
4. The Septuagint and the books of Maccabees show definite influence by the book of Daniel. Jewish tradition attributes its authorship to this Daniel.
5. The book is saturated with historical nuances of Babylonian and Persian background. It had to be written by a person contemporary with the events.

*Date:* H. C. Leupold dates the writing of this book between 538-528 B.C. Merrill C. Tenney gives "shortly after his last vision, in 536 B.C." as the date. Keil and Delitzsch say it was written "during the exile" by Daniel. Edward J. Young agrees with the above statements. Practically all conservative scholars date the book somewhere near 536 B.C.. Porphyry, a neo-Platonic philosopher of the third century A.D. was probably the first significant unbelieving

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critic of the book of Daniel. He alleged it was written by someone who lived in Judea during the times of the Antiochus Epiphanes (175-163 B.C.). According to Prophecy predictive prophecy is impossible therefore the book could not have been written before the events so an imposter wrote the book and lied for the sake of reviving the hope of the Jews during the terrible times of Antiochus Epiphanes. The modern critical view, fathered by Leonhard Bertholdt (1806-08) is that the book was written by an unknown Jew in Palestine at the time of the Maccabees in the second century B.C. Our personal observation, after studying the arguments of the critics many years now, is that all those who insist the book was written after the events recorded therein, do so because of the same prejudgment and presupposition as Porphyry—that predictive prophecy is impossible.

The destructive critics argue for a late date on the basis of three alleged evidences: historical, linguistic and theological. It is not the purpose of this commentary to offer a technical study of all the critical problems of the book of Daniel. However, we feel we must deal with these problems as concisely as possible because their resolution has direct bearing on true and honest exposition of the text.

1. *Historical*: It is alleged that Daniel is of late date because it is placed in the *Kethubhim* or *Hagiographa* (writings) instead of the Prophets. However, some of the other documents of the *Hagiographa* are of great antiquity (Psalms, Job, Proverbs). Position in the *Hagiographa* is no proof of a late date of composition. It is further alleged that there are historical inaccuracies which make it likely that the author lived at a late date. In Daniel 1:1 it is stated that Nebuchadnezzar invaded Palestine in the third year of Jehoiakim, whereas Jeremiah 46:2 says that the first year of Nebuchadnezzar was the fourth year of Jehoiakim. Recent investigations show that the Jews reckoned their regnal year from the first month preceding the year of accession thus 605 B.C. would have been the fourth year of Jehoiakim who came to the throne in 608. The Babylonians, however, reckoned the first regnal year from

the next succeeding new year's day. Therefore, the year 605 would be only Jehoiakim's third year according to the Chaldean reckoning. Nebuchadnezzar's first regnal year began in April, 604, even though he had been crowned in September, 605. Daniel has written from the Chaldean viewpoint and Jeremiah from the Jewish. Both are correct, and the critics are wrong. Another historical discrepancy is alleged in that Daniel represents Belshazzar as the last king of Babylonia and as being slain when Babylon was taken by the Medes. Profane history seemed to indicate that Nabonidus was the last king of Babylon, and further that he was killed in the capture. Archaeologists have discovered clay tablets bearing inscriptions which prove that Belshazzar was Nabonidus' son and co-ruler with him, and that he was active as the ruler during any absence of Nabonidus. Why would Belshazzar promise to the interpreter of the inscription on the wall (chap. 5) promotion to the status of third ruler in the kingdom? Why not promise him promotion to second ruler? Obviously because Belshazzar himself was only the second ruler, inasmuch as Nabonidus his father was still alive. (cf. *Archaeology and Bible History*, by Joseph P. Free)

2. *Linguistic*: There are some Persian words in the text of the book. We admit that Daniel wrote the book (or at least a portion of the book) as late as the Persian dominion. He lived in it and it is not strange that some of the few political terms would be used. There are some Greek words (basically only three such words are used and they are of musical instruments) in the text. But Greek commercial and cultural activity and influence was already widespread before 600 B.C. As early as the reign of Sargon (722-705 B.C.) there were, according to the Assyrian records, Greek captives being sold into slavery from Cyprus, Ionia, Lydia and Cilicia. In the Neo-Babylonian ration tablets published by E. F. Weidner, Ionian carpenters and

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shipbuilders are mentioned among the recipients of rations from Nebuchadnezzar's commissary—along with musicians from Ashkelon and elsewhere. Portions of Daniel written in Aramaic have several words spelled with a *d* which critics argued were spelled with a *z* in Daniel's time, the *d* being used much later. However, certain texts among the *Ras Shamra* (Ugaritic) *Texts*, which are dated as early as 1500-1400 B.C. prove that the words in Aramaic were spelled both ways even centuries before Daniel! As to the question of why half the book was written in Aramaic (first half) and half in Hebrew (last half), the reason for the choice is fairly obvious. Those portions of Daniel's prophecy which deal generally with Gentile affairs were put into a linguistic medium which all the public could appreciate whether Jew or Gentile. But those portions which were of particularly Jewish interest were put into Hebrew in order that they might be understood by the Jews alone.

3. *Theological*: Basically, the theological arguments for a late date for Daniel revolve around the unbelieving critic's presuppositions against the supernatural in miracle and prophecy. The critics lay customary emphasis upon the supposed evolutionary development of the Jewish religion. They point to motifs and emphases in Daniel which they insist evolved only during the intertestamental period. These emphases include prominence of angels, the stress upon the last judgment, the resurrection from the dead, the Messianic kingdom. Any reader of the Old Testament may quickly verify the fact that many prophets, long before Daniel's time, spoke of angels, judgment, the Messianic kingdom, and a few concerning the resurrection. On the other hand, works which are admittedly of the second century B.C., such as I Maccabees and the Greek additions to Daniel, Baruch and Judith, show none of the four elements (angelology, resurrection, last judgment, Messiah!)

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*Purpose:* Leupold writes: “. . . a book of comfort, designed for evil days as well as for good days. By the help of it Israel could discern that its oppressions were, indeed going to be heavy, but, on the other hand, that they were foreknown by God and were therefore not to be dreaded too much. For if an all-knowing God had seen what would transpire He must at the same time be an omnipotent God who would be able to deliver His own, as well as a faithful God who would not suffer them to be tempted above what they were able.”

Gleason Archer writes: “. . . the overruling sovereignty of the one true God, who condemns and destroys the rebellious world power and faithfully delivers His covenant people according to their steadfast faith in Him.”

G. Campbell Morgan writes: “If I were to summarize the Book of Daniel I could do it in two sentences: first of all, the messages of Daniel, whether those delivered to pagan kings or those recorded that have been for the people of God, emphasize first the government of God over all kings and all nations; and secondly, they emphasize the fact of the continuity of that government until the consummation in which God’s will shall be done, His throne recognized, and the victory be with Him.” Dr. Morgan’s paeon of Daniel is well stated: “I am so glad in these days that I have my Old Testament still, and I am watching the goodness of God in human history over all the machinations of men.”

The great lessons of Daniel are the general principles of other Old Testament prophets particularized! (cf. our commentary on Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah and Jonah). God presides over the history of the world; the Gentile nations as well as the Jews have always been under His control; the succession of human empires is ordained by Him; He permits the pride and fury of oppressors for a time, but humbles them in the end, and saves His own; His kingdom will come in due time, and will endure forever; faithfulness and constancy to Him lead to a life beyond death, and to an eternal reward of glory.

*Style:* The revelations concerning the future given in Daniel are in the form of dreams and visions, highly sym-



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bolic and figurative. There is a reason for this. This book was written about and during a period of the deepest national misery of the people of God. In fact the period of the *Indignation* (8:19) had begun. There were undoubtedly many questions in the hearts of the pious Jews of the captivity such as: What does the future hold in store for God's people? Will He leave us here, dispersed, or will He send His redeemer? If the latter, how is this to be accomplished, and, when? What can be done by anyone about these great, powerful, absolute pagan emperors?

In the style of prophecy they were accustomed to, the "covenant people" usually occupied the center of the stage. The world-powers by which they were harassed or threatened usually were noticed only incidentally and then as symposical representatives of the spirit of world-power that opposes God. *Daniel has a new point of reference!* He is in the very center of that world-power which had overthrown and subjugated all the nations of the East, including the covenant people. From this frame of reference he predicts the rise of a *succession* of world-kingdoms, which shall destroy one another until an eternal kingdom of truth and righteousness shall be established on their ruins by the direct interference in history, at a particular point, by the God of heaven. In all of this Daniel relies almost exclusively upon symbolic, apocalyptic language. It is contrary to the nature and genius of prophecy, especially to prophecy of such a broad eschatological scope as this, to reveal the future in prosaic forms. In all prophecy there is an element of obscurity and God decreed it to be so for He said He would not speak to other prophets face to face as He had to Moses (Num. 12:1-8), but to those following Moses He promised He would speak in dreams and visions. It is to be expected therefore that in revelations given in visions and dreams we would have a great deal of imagery and symbolism. When one considers the standpoint of Daniel such is to be expected. His circumstances were unique as were those of John, the author of the New Testament Apocalypse. Both were commissioned to relate unpalatable predictions of doom upon the pagan societies in which they lived. The style or form of Daniel is due to its subject matter. No other prophetic

book of the Old Testament speaks of the heathen nations and their relation to the people of God with the same fullness and definiteness as does Daniel.

The word apocalyptic comes from the Greek word *apokalypsis* which means "revelation" or "unveiling," and is applied to those writings which contain revelations of the secret purposes of God expressed by a high degree of symbolism. The development of world-power over a span of 600 years or more, the succession of judgments of God visited in history upon the enemies of God's people, closing with the establishment of God's kingdom on earth and the accomplishment of redemption through a Redeemer are the "secrets" of God Daniel is commissioned to "unveil." If the book is to retain any semblance of mystery at all (which by the very nature of the mysterious would excite people to read and long for fulfillment), it must make use of imagery and symbolism. Within the Old Testament, this form of prophetic writing is approached by the closing chapters of Ezekiel (40-48) and is directly represented in the first half of Zechariah (1:8). In the New Testament symbolico-apocalyptic writing is found only in the Revelation of John which is a *continuation and NT application of the prophetic principles of Daniel*.

*Background:* One must go back to the time of Hezekiah to appreciate the background of Daniel's experiences in Babylon. Hezekiah's glorious reform (II Chron. 29-31) was short lived. Manasseh, Hezekiah's son, set up idolatrous images all over the land of Judah (even in the Temple) (II Chron. 33:7). He slew those few devout Jews who refused to follow his wicked example of idolatry. His apostasy was the main cause for captivity (cf. Jer. 15:4).

Manasseh eventually repented but his change of heart was too late to undo the evil which had become a way of life for the nation and to avert the judgment of God. Manasseh's son Amon came to the throne but he was so wicked his servants assassinated him, and the people placed his God-fearing son, Josiah, on the throne (II Chron. 33:21-25). While workmen were restoring the Temple, the book of the law of Jehovah was found. Josiah attempted a reform but he met an untimely death in the battle of Megiddo (II

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Chron. 35:20-37). His son, Jehoahaz, the people's choice, was quickly removed by Pharaoh-Necho, and replaced by the deposed king's brother, Jehoiakim.

In the battle of Carchemish (605 B.C.) (cf. II Chron. 35:20; Jer. 46:2) Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon defeated Pharaoh-Necho, and the 70 years of Babylonian captivity began (Jer. 25:1-12; Dan. 9:1-2). It was at this time that Daniel and his friends were carried away to Babylon. Habakkuk prophesied during the reign of the wicked Jehoiakim as well as Jeremiah (ministry during 626-586 B.C.). Jeremiah predicted Babylonian domination of Judah as a judgment of God to which the people were to submit but Jehoiakim, sitting in his winter palace and listening to the reading of Jeremiah's prophecies, burned the scroll on which they were recorded. These prophecies were immediately re-written by Jeremiah with the addition of a terrible judgment of God upon Jehoiakim. His son, Jehoiachin, reigned only three months and was deported to Babylon with a number of other important people of Judah (including Ezekiel).

Zedekiah, a third son of Josiah, was Judah's last king. Zedekiah's tragic end is vividly described in II Kings 25:4-7. The people, except the poorest, were carried away to Babylon (II Kings 25:11). The basic reason for the Babylonian captivity is given in II Chron. 36:14ff.

William Hendriksen characterizes the attitudes of the people in captivity very well. The first years were *years of false hopefulness*. The early exiles were confident that conditions would soon change and they would return to their land. Was not Jehovah's temple in Jerusalem still standing? Jeremiah writes and attempts to deter them from putting trust in their false prophets (Jer. 29; Ezek. 17:11-24). Secondly, there were *years of hopelessness*. When the temple was destroyed in 586 B.C. it seemed to many as if Jehovah had completely forsaken His people. Despair entered the hearts of the people and is expressed in one of the Captivity Psalms (Psa. 137). Ezekiel is God's chosen vessel in Babylon to comfort the exiles. Thirdly, there came a *season of revived hopefulness*. For those who availed themselves of the opportunity to return to their country (and those who did

so in spirit but because of position or age were not able to [e.g. Daniel]), hope stirred anew in their hearts that God was faithful and had yet greater things in store for His people. For others the *time of indifference and assimilation* set in. Babylonia to the south, Media and Mesopotamia to the north had become "home" to them. They intermarried with the people of the land and adopted their religion (Ezek. 20:31-32 and cf. also Esther).

The Jews in Exile were permitted to form colonies in which their communal life could continue. For the most part they were permitted to gather in the homes of their elders and worship their God and read their holy scriptures. Life during the exile was highly diversified. Most Jews were probably agriculturists and earned their living by farming. Some ultimately entered business. Many became rich and influential. Other Jews became trusted men in government. An abundance of archaeological data now available describes in detail the types of houses, utensils, etc., used during the neo-Babylonian and Persian eras.

The captivity served a three-fold purpose. First it was God's method of punishment for their sins (II Chron. 36:15-17). Second, it was a means of purification and preparation of the remnant for God's Messianic purposes (Ezek. 36:22-31). Third, God used it to bless the Gentile nations in preparing them to be called into the Messianic kingdom (cf. Micah 5:7).

*Outline:* Some divide the book into two general divisions: (1) Daniel revealing God's purposes for the Gentile nations; (2) Daniel revealing God's plans for the covenant people. Hendriksen divides the book (1) God's Sovereignty in History; (2) God's Sovereignty in Prophecy.

We choose to divide the book into three parts thusly:

I Daniel's Faith (chap. 1)	Dedication
II Daniel's Fortitude (chap. 2-6)	Determination
III Daniel's Foreknowledge (chap. 7-12)	Divination

We shall elaborate upon the above outline with more detail as we proceed in exegesis through the book.