

The Book of Daniel and Prophecy

Part 1, Dating the Book of Daniel

The Bible claims to be the Word of God. In the Bible we are constantly confronted by words that indicate certain text is “the word of the Lord”, or the claim that “God said” something. One of the purposes of prophecy is so that we become confronted with the reality of God. In Scripture we are often told of something that will take place at some future time; then the prophecy is followed by “you will know that I am the LORD.” It is not unreasonable to wonder; “How do we know God really said this?” The sure fulfillment of the prophecy is given to us as one of the means in which we should test a prophet to see if he is indeed speaking God's words.

Deuteronomy 18:21-22: "And you may say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?' **When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken.** The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him."

Another test of a prophet: if someone tells us to follow other gods, he is a false prophet (Deuteronomy 13:1-4.)

Fulfilled prophecy not only confronts us with the reality of God, but it also gives us confirmation that the Bible really is the Word of God, as it claims to be. I, for one, am glad that Christianity is not a "blind faith". Although we do use faith, there are also sound reasons to accept the Bible as the written word of God.

LATE DATING THE BOOK OF DANIEL

When it comes to prophecy many people try to claim that a fulfilled prophecy was written after the actual event. This is called “late dating”. They do this simply because they do not believe in a God that can forecast the future. The Book of Daniel is well-known for its prophecy, which accurately foretold events that later took place in history and goes on to tell us of events that will still take place in our future and tie in directly with the Book of Revelation concerning end times and the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, some scholars put inaccurate information which is based only on their biased opinion into reference works.

According to Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics late dating the Book of Daniel did not start due to some archaeological discovery or historical fact, but rather it was late dated because certain scholars did not believe in miracles.

Daniel foretold the future accurately, which is miraculous; therefore, they assumed a later date.

While reading, remember that on historical timeline, numbers or dates get larger the farther back you go: BC 600, 500, 400, 300, 200, 100, 1, 100, 200, 300 AD.

The following is an example in which the **Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia** has a problem with the dates.

“Daniel, a book in the Old Testament of the BIBLE, is listed with the Major Prophets by Christians and with the Writings (Ketuvim) by the Jews. It comprises six stories of the trials of Daniel and his companions while they served at the court of Babylon, as well as four visions of the end of the world. The book takes its name, not from the author, who is unknown, but from its hero, a 6th-century

Jew. Internal evidence indicates that the book was written during the Maccabean wars (167-164 BC).”

Please remember the "Internal evidence" that most people use to support late-dating the Book of Daniel is that Daniel wrote about things in the future that he could not possibly know — but God can foretell the future.

As we will see next in the **Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia** excerpt, it is not possible for the book of Daniel to have been written during the Maccabean wars (167-164 BC).

“**The Septuagint**, commonly designated LXX, is the oldest Greek version of the Old Testament of the BIBLE, the title "seventy" referring to the tradition that it was the work of 70 translators (or 72 in some traditions). The translation was made from the Hebrew Bible by Hellenistic Jews during the period 275-100 BC at Alexandria.”

The problem with this theory is that in the latter of the two dates there is a 108-year gap ($275 \text{ BC} - 167 \text{ BC} = 108 \text{ years}$). This would result in the Book of Daniel being translated from Hebrew to Greek before the book was written. Even if we say that Daniel was not written until 167-164 BC, as Grolier's earlier excerpt suggests, we will still have a problem. The Septuagint is only a translation of older Hebrew manuscripts. This means that the book of Daniel has to pre-date the Septuagint, thus making the dating as found for the Book of Daniel in Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia inaccurate. At best one would have to argue that Daniel was written in 167 BC and then translated into the Septuagint in 100 BC, only sixty-seven years later. It is very unlikely that the Jews were fooled into accepting the Book of Daniel as authoritative, with Daniel as the author, if the book had not even existed sixty-eight years earlier — and why would they bother translating the book from Hebrew to Greek if it was not accepted as an authoritative work?

Flavius Josephus was a Jewish historian who lived AD 37–100. In Chapter 10 of The Works of Josephus we read the following:

But now Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, took some of the most noble of the Jews that were children, and the kinsmen of Zedekiah their king, such as were remarkable for their beauty of their bodies and comeliness of their countenances, and delivered them into the hands of tutors, and to the improvement to be made by them. He also made some of them to be eunuchs; (187) which course he took also with those of other nations whom he had taken in the flower of their age and afforded them their diet from his own table, and had them instructed in the institutes of the country, and taught the learning of the Chaldeans; and they had now exercised themselves sufficiently in that wisdom which he had ordered they should apply themselves to. (188) Now among these there were four of the family of Zedekiah, of most excellent dispositions, the one of whom was called **Daniel**, another was called Ananias, another Misael, and the fourth Azarias: and the king of Babylon changed their names, and commanded that they should make use of other names. (189) Daniel he called Baltasar; Ananias, Shadrach; Misael, Meshach; and Azarias, Abednego.”

(See Daniel 1:1-7.) (PDF pg. 400)

Notice that this early historian placed Daniel in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. Furthermore, he gives an account of Daniel and his friends having their names changed by the king. This account is the same as the one we find in the Book of Daniel, indicating that the Biblical account is historically accurate. The reign of Nebuchadnezzar was not 167-164 BC when we are told that the book of Daniel was written. The reign of Nebuchadnezzar was approximately 561 BC - 605 BC. Are we to really believe that less than a hundred years after the Maccabean wars this Jewish historian inaccurately placed Daniel in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar?

Does Josephus have any credibility as a historian? Grolier's seems to think so:

Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia

“Flavius Josephus, b. AD 37, d. after 93, was a Jewish historian whose works are invaluable sources for the history of the Jews under Roman domination. A Pharisee, originally named Joseph ben Matthias, he reluctantly joined the revolt against Rome in AD 66 and served as commander in Galilee until captured by the Romans in 67. Through the patronage of Vespasian, he later became a Roman citizen. Josephus's The Jewish War (75-79), a description of the tragic events of the revolt, is based to a large extent on his firsthand knowledge. His Jewish Antiquities (93), although covering the history of the Jews from the Creation on, gives a particularly full account of the Maccabees and the dynasty of Herod. Josephus has been criticized for his subservience to the Romans, but he was a passionate defender of Jewish religion and culture, as shown in his apologia entitled Against Apion as well as in his historical works.”

Josephus also refers to the Book of Daniel in another account from The Works of Josephus, The Antiquities of the Jews (Book 11, Chapter 8, #4-5):

“4. (321) But Sanballat thought he had now gotten a proper opportunity to make his attempt, so he renounced Darius, and taking with him seven thousand of his own subjects, he came to Alexander; and finding him beginning the siege of Tyre, he said to him, that he delivered up to him these men who came out of places under his dominion, and did gladly accept of him for their lord instead of Darius.” (PDF pg. 438)

In this context we can see that this is Alexander the Great. Then following the context down, we read the following:

“And when the book of Daniel was showed him, wherein Daniel declared that one of the Greeks should destroy the empire of the Persians, he supposed that himself was the person intended;”
(PDF pg. 439)

Considering that Josephus was a Jewish Historian it is very unlikely that he would have been fooled into believing that the Book of Daniel existed at the time of Alexander the Great; if in fact it was only written a hundred years or so earlier. It seems even more unlikely that he would be foolish enough to try to tell his readers about this account if he knew the book of Daniel did not exist at the time of Alexander the Great. This puts the Book of Daniel as already being completed and accepted about 200 years earlier than the date when it was supposed to have been written according to Grolier's. Alexander the Great was born around 356 BC and Grolier's dated the Book of Daniel as 167-164 BC.

Grolier's Multimedia Encyclopedia

“Alexander the Great, King of Macedonia. Alexander III, king of Macedonia, the first king to be called “the Great”, conquered the Persian empire and annexed it to Macedonia.

The son of PHILLIP II and OLYMPIAS, he was born in 356 BC and brought up as crown prince.”

We know that the Book of Daniel was not written during the Maccabean wars (167-164 BC) as the Grolier's Multimedia Encyclopedia declares. We know this because the Hebrew manuscripts containing the Book of Daniel are proven older than that date by the dating of the Septuagint. Furthermore, the early historian Josephus, who is considered an accurate source of information on the Jews and their religion, dates Daniel in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. **The reign of Nebuchadnezzar was approximately 561 BC - 605 BC.**

“**Nebuchadnezzar II** (b. c. 630 – d. c. 561 BC), the second and greatest king of the Chaldean dynasty of Babylonia (**reigned c. 605-c. – 561 BC**). He was known for his military might, the splendour of his capital, Babylon, and his important part in Jewish history.”

Daniel is also mentioned in the Book of Ezekiel:

Ezekiel 14:12-16: “Then the word of the LORD came to me saying, ‘Son of man, if a country sins against Me by committing unfaithfulness, and I stretch out My hand against it, destroy its supply of bread, send famine against it, and cut off from it both man and beast, even though these three men, Noah, **Daniel**, and Job were in its midst, by their own righteousness they could only deliver themselves,’ declares the Lord GOD. ‘If I were to cause wild beasts to pass through the land, and they depopulated it, and it became desolate so that no one would pass through it because of the beasts, though these three men were in its midst, as I live,’ declares the Lord GOD, ‘they could not deliver either their sons or their daughters. They alone would be delivered, but the country would be desolate.’”

Since Daniel is mentioned in the Book of Ezekiel in a non-prophetic context it is reasonable to believe that Daniel must have been around before or during Ezekiel's lifetime. And when did Ezekiel live?

Encyclopaedia Britannica, Copyright 1994-1998

“**Ezekiel** also spelled EZECHIEL, Hebrew YEHEZQEL (fl. **early 6th century BC**), prophet-priest of ancient Israel and the subject and in part the author of an Old Testament book that bears his name.”

The Christian who accepts the Bible as the Word of God need only to look to the words of Jesus for confirmation. Jesus not only referred to Daniel as a prophet but also referred to what is found in the Book of Daniel. If Jesus accepts Daniel as a prophet and the Book of Daniel as prophecy, then the Christian has no reason to reject it.

Matthew 24:15-16: "Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of **through Daniel the prophet**, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

Daniel 9:27: "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

Daniel 12:11: "And from the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days."

The Apostle Paul also makes reference to this.

II Thessalonians 2:3-4: "Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God."

There are, of course, reference works that do date the book of Daniel correctly. Unfortunately, among the many reference works, such references seem to be in the minority.

Webster's Family Encyclopedia, 1989 edition, vol.3, pg. 717:

“Daniel (6th century BC). An Old Testament prophet and Jewish exile in Babylon. The Book of Daniel is credited to him although some believe it to have been written in the 2nd century BC. The first six chapters tell of various mainly supernatural episodes involving Daniel and his companions under King Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. The remaining six chapters are mostly apocalyptic visions concerning the future of the Jews.”

Note that Webster's Family Encyclopedia acknowledges that some believe Daniel was written in the 2nd century BC but still dates Daniel in the 6th century BC.

Easton's Bible Dictionary:

“Daniel, Book of is ranked by the Jews in that division of their Bible called the Hagiographa (Heb. Khethubim). (See BIBLE.) It consists of two distinct parts. The first part, consisting of the first six chapters, is chiefly historical; and the second part, consisting of the remaining six chapters, is chiefly prophetic.

“The historical part of the book treats of the period of the Captivity. Daniel is the historian of the Captivity, the writer who alone furnishes any series of events for that dark and dismal period during which the harp of Israel hung on the trees that grew by the Euphrates. His narrative may be said in general to intervene between Kings and Chronicles on the one hand and Ezra on the other, or (more strictly) to fill out the sketch which the author of the Chronicles gives in a single verse in his last chapter: 'And them that had escaped from the sword carried he [i.e., Nebuchadnezzar] away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia (2 Chronicles 36:20).

“The prophetic part consists of three visions and one lengthened prophetic communication.

“The genuineness of this book has been much disputed, but the arguments in its favour fully establish its claims. (1.) We have the testimony of Christ (Matthew. 24:15; 25:31; 26:64) and his apostles (1 Corinthians 6:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:3) for its authority; and (2) the important testimony of Ezekiel (14:14, 20; 28:3). (3.) The character and records of the book are also entirely in harmony with the times and circumstances in which the author lived. (4.) The linguistic character of the book is, moreover, just such as might be expected. Certain portions (Daniel 2:4; 7) are written in the Chaldee language; and the portions written in Hebrew are in a style and form having a close affinity with the later books of the Old Testament, especially with that of Ezra. The writer is familiar both with the Hebrew and the Chaldee, passing from the one to the other just as his subject required. This is in strict accordance with the position of the author and of the people for whom his book was written. That Daniel is the writer of this book is also testified to in the book itself (7:1, 28; 8:2; 9:2; 10:1, 2; 12:4, 5).” (end quote)

I would like to further emphasize the importance of Daniel claiming to be the author. We find references where Daniel speaks as though he is the author:

Daniel 8:15: “And it came about when I, Daniel, had seen the vision, that I sought to understand it; and behold, standing before me was one who looked like a man.”

Daniel 8:27: “Then I, Daniel, was exhausted and sick for days. Then I got up again and carried on the king's business; but I was astounded at the vision, and there was none to explain it.”

Daniel 9:2: "...in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years."

Daniel 10:2: "In those days I, Daniel, had been mourning for three entire weeks."

Daniel 10:7: "Now I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, while the men who were with me did not see the vision; nevertheless, a great dread fell on them, and they ran away to hide themselves."

Daniel 12:5: "Then I, Daniel, looked and behold, two others were standing, one on this bank of the river, and the other on that bank of the river."

The author says "I Daniel" this informs us that the author is Daniel himself, and not someone else. Furthermore, the author dates himself in certain passages. The following is one such example: Daniel 7:1-2 and 28: "(1) In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel saw a dream and visions in his mind as he lay on his bed; then he wrote the dream down and related the following summary of it. (2) Daniel said, 'I was looking in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea.'" (following the context down we read)"(28) At this point the revelation ended. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts were greatly alarming me and my face grew pale, but I kept the matter to myself."

Notice the author claims that Daniel had a dream or vision in the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon. Then the author speaks as Daniel himself. My point is that the author gives us every indication that he is Daniel and writing during the time of which he is speaking. Belshazzar is dated around 539 BC.

“Belshazzar — Belshazzar (550?-539? BC), in the Old Testament, Babylonian prince mentioned in Daniel 5 as the last Chaldean king of Babylon.” G4

Enclopaedia Britanica, Multimedia CD 98:

“Belshazzar, Neo Babylonian BEL-SHAR-USAR, Greek BALTASAR, or BALTHASAR (d. c. 539 BC), coregent of Babylon who was killed at the capture of the city by the Persians. Belshazzar had been known only from the biblical Book of Daniel (chapters 5, 7-8) and from Xenophon’s Cycropaedia until 1854, when references to him were found in Babylonian cunieform inscriptions.”

If Daniel did not write the Book of Daniel during the time indicated, then it is a deception on the part of the author. The author would be a fraud who deceived Josephus the Jewish historian, as well as Jesus himself. Remember Jesus reminded the disciples what was spoken of by Daniel the prophet. (Matthew 24:15-16). If the writer lived during the 2nd century BC and wrote as if he was Daniel, who lived during the reign of Belshazzar, then he would not be a prophet, but rather he would be a liar and a fraud. Jesus refers to Daniel as a prophet. Josephus also would not be much of a historian to fail to recognize this fraud.

SUMMARY

The following reasoning has been discussed showing that the Book of Daniel was not written during the Maccabean wars (167-164 BC), but during the 6th century BC.

The Septuagint, which is a Greek Translation of the older Hebrew manuscripts, was translated 275-100 BC. (a) The Book of Daniel could not have been translated from one language to another until it was written. (b) This is not enough time for the Jews to accept a recent fraud as an ancient authoritative work.

Josephus was an early historian who is said to have credibility, and his works are invaluable sources for the history of the Jews.

Josephus places the person Daniel in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar (605 -561 BC). In this reference Josephus gives an account of Daniel and his friends having their names changed by the king. This reference from Josephus correlates with what we find in the Book of Daniel.

Josephus also refers to the Book of Daniel as being complete and already accepted during the time period of Alexander the Great who was born in 356 BC.

Daniel is mentioned in the Book of Ezekiel, which is dated the 6th century BC.

Jesus called Daniel a prophet and made a reference to what is written in the Book of Daniel. The Apostle Paul also makes a reference to what is revealed in the Book of Daniel.

There are reference works that accept the dating of Daniel as 6th century BC as well as the genuineness of the book itself. Two references were given: (a) Webster's Family Encyclopedia (b) Easton's Bible Dictionary.

The linguistic character of the book is as might be expected. Certain portions (Daniel 2:4; 7) are written in the Chaldee language; and the portions written in Hebrew are in a style and form having a close affinity with the later books of the Old Testament, especially with that of Ezra.

That Daniel is the writer of this book is also testified to in the book itself (Daniel 7:1-2, 28; 8:2; 15; 27, 9:2; 10:1, 2; 12:4, 5).

Daniel did indeed live in the 6th century BC. His predictions concerning the Medes and the Persians taking over Babylon followed by the Greeks conquering the Medes and the Persians are remarkable. These predictions only scratch the surface of the predictions in the Book of Daniel. Nostradamus and Jean Dixon together could not match the detail or accuracy as found in the Book of Daniel. How is this possible? It is because as Daniel says, "there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries" (Daniel 2:28).

Some of Daniel's prophecy is covered in "Daniel Part 2"

INTERESTING QUOTATIONS

Isaiah 40:8: "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever."

Isaiah 46:10: "Declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, 'My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure...'"

Time Magazine (Dec. 30, 1974): "After more than two centuries of facing the heaviest scientific guns that could be brought to bear, the bible has survived and perhaps better for the siege even on the critics own terms. Historical fact, the scriptures seem more acceptable now than they did when the rationalist began the attack"

Sir Isaac Newton: "...to reject Daniel is to reject the Christian religion"