

# Book of Daniel

Old Testament Workshop  
Morrison Heights Baptist Church  
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# Historical Context

Death of Nebuchadnezzar

Fall of Babylon

562

539

Death of Cyrus

530

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Babylonian Empire

Persian Empire

Reign of Darius: 522-486

600

500

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Daniel

Jeremiah

Ezekiel

Obadiah

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Zechariah

587

Babylonian Exile

538

515

Fall of Jerusalem

Edict of Cyrus

Temple Rebuilt

# Biographical Data

? Family of Orientation

? Family of Procreation

*“Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his **chief eunuch**, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the **royal family** and of the **nobility**, youths without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to stand in the king’s palace, and to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans. . . . Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah of the tribe of Judah. And the **chief of the eunuchs** gave them names: Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego.” (1:3-4, 6-7)*

According to Josephus, Daniel became a eunuch in Babylon. He was a member of King Zedekiah’s family (*Antiquities of the Jews*, 10.10.1).

# Daniel's Ministry

	YEAR	RULER	ETHNICITY	DANIEL'S LIFE
1:1	606 BC	Nebuchadnezzar	Babylonian	taken to Babylon
2:1	603 BC	Nebuchadnezzar	Babylonian	interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream
7:1	553 BC	Belshazzar	Babylonian	receives a vision
8:1	550 BC	Belshazzar	Babylonian	receives a vision
5:1-30	539 BC	Belshazzar	Babylonian	interprets handwriting on the wall
5:31	539 BC	<b>Darius</b>	<b>Mede</b>	
9:1	539 BC	<b>Darius</b>	<b>Mede</b>	prays for his people
11:1	539 BC	<b>Darius</b>	<b>Mede</b>	discloses future conflicts
10:1	536 BC	Cyrus	Persian	receives a vision



**Darius the Mede** is an interpretive dilemma. NO known historical record mentions a king named Darius who was a Mede. Three kings named Darius were Persians.

# Overview of the Book

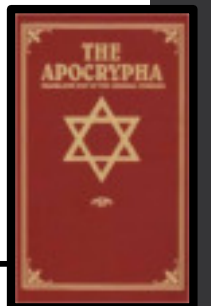
## Hebrew Bible

Daniel is not one of the Prophets (21). It is a Writing (13), the third division of the Old Testament canon, inserted between **Esther** and **Ezra**.

## Septuagint

Daniel is one of the prophetic books, inserted between two apocryphal works, **Susanna** and **Bel and the Dragon**, both of which are additions to Daniel.

Chapters 1-12	Daniel
Chapter 13	Susanna
Chapter 14	Bel and the Dragon



# Overview of the Book

## Prophet?

The Hebrew noun נְבִיא, translated “prophecy,” occurs once in the Book of Daniel (9:24).

Jesus referred to Daniel as a prophet (Mt. 24:15).

Unlike the prophets, however, Daniel had NO hearers. We the readers are his audience.

The Hebrew noun אָמַר, translated “oracle” (i.e. “prophetic message”), occurs in every prophetic book except Jonah and Habakkuk. It NEVER occurs in the Book of Daniel.

Like the Apostle John (Revelation), Daniel received and interpreted visions.



# Overview of the Book

Chapters 1-6

Chapters 7-12

NARRATIVE

VISIONS

Point of View: 3rd Person

Point of View: 1st Person

Chapters 7-12 is **apocalyptic literature**, therefore compares to the Book of Revelation.

- *Elaborate Symbolism*
  - (a) numbers, (b) colors, and (c) animals
- *Two Ages*
  - (a) “this age” and (b) “age to come”
- *Expectation of an Imminent End of History*



# Scholarly Debate

## Tradition

Daniel, a Jewish exile in Babylon (6<sup>th</sup> century BC), wrote the book.

SEE **7:1** and **12:4**.

SEE Early Church Fathers (e.g. Jerome).

According to the Talmud, the Men of the Great Assembly wrote the book.

*Baba Bathra 15a*

## Modern Scholarship

An unknown Jew (2<sup>nd</sup> century BC), assuming the identity of Daniel (pseudonym), wrote the book.

The book encourages its readers, but it predicts nothing, being written **AFTER** the fact.

Chapters 1-6 are much older than chapters 7-12.

Porphyry, a 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD pagan philosopher, was the first person to question Daniel's authorship.

*Against the Christians*



# Contents of the Book

## First Half: Six Stories

### Chapter 1

Daniel's Moral Stance in a Pagan Land

### Chapter 2

Daniel interprets Nebuchadnezzar's forgotten dream.

😂 \* READ verses 1-12.

“striking” historical portrayal of God's Kingdom

### Chapter 3

Daniel's friends do NOT bow to Nebuchadnezzar's idol.

**Where was Daniel?**

### Chapter 4

Daniel interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

The king loses his sanity for “seven periods of time.”

After which, he glorifies God. \* READ verses 34-36.

### Chapter 5

Daniel interprets the handwriting on the wall.

### Chapter 6

Daniel in the Lion's Den



# Contents of the Book

## Second Half: Four Visions

### Chapter 7

**VISION: Four Beasts (553 BC)**

Notice “Ancient of Days” (**vv. 9, 13, 22**) and “Son of Man” (**vv. 13-14**). Jesus’ favorite self-designation was Son of Man, NOT Messiah/Christ.

### Chapter 8

**VISION: Ram, He-Goat, and Little Horn (550 BC)**

### Chapter 9

**VISION: Seventy Weeks (539 BC)**

This vision (**vv. 20-27**) follows a lengthy prayer of confession by Daniel on behalf of Israel.

**Interpretive Challenges: 1. Seventy Weeks and 2. Prince who is to Come**

Compare to  
Nehemiah 1:5-11.

### Chapters 10-12

**VISION: Last Days (539 BC and 536 BC)**

references to the archangel Michael (**10:13, 21; 12:1**)