

Discovering Daniel – Introduction

Daniel 1:1-21

The man, Daniel, was a real person. We point this out because some have tried to assert that the man was only a legend – like Paul Bunyan. Daniel is referred to as a real person in several other places in Scripture (Ezekiel 14:14; 28:3; Matthew 24:15; Hebrews 11:33). The book of Daniel has been styled as a story that was written, much later in history, depicting past events as part of God’s plan to re-establish the nation Israel. It is supposed that the book was written in the second century before Christ, when the Jewish people were struggling in wars with the Greeks. The idea of the book of Daniel being written in the second century B.C. is supposed to negate the idea of super-natural predictive prophecy. This attempt to undermine the supernatural is futile, because there are so many other prophecies in Daniel that go beyond the second century B.C.

According to historical events that happened, the book of Daniel was written in the 6th century before Christ. The Babylonians rebelled against the Assyrians in 626 B.C. and overthrew the capital city of Nineveh in 612 B.C. The Babylonians defeated Egypt in 605 B.C. and that same year subdued Jerusalem, taking a portion of Israelites captive (This begins “the times of the Gentiles ~ Luke 21:24 ~ That period ends with the destruction of The Antichrist’s kingdom). Daniel and his three friends (Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah) were teenagers who were included in the first wave of captives to be brought to Babylon. They were of high-ranking status in their society. Nebuchadnezzar’s plan was to train up these young men to help future Israelite captives to assimilate into Babylon’s culture. Instead, these faithful young men served in a secular government, yet never wavered in their loyalty to God and His Word. They even impacted the society of Babylon for good.

Daniel lived and served over sixty years, serving Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius and Cyrus. He worked in the kingdoms of Babylon, Media and Persia. The time period covered in the book of Daniel goes from 605 to 536 B.C.

Three simple ways to divide the book of Daniel:

- History of Daniel – Chapter 1
- Prophetic Plan for the Gentiles – Chapters 2-7
- Prophetic Plan for Israel – Chapters 8-12

It is to be noted that Daniel 1:1 – 2:3 is written in Hebrew.

Daniel 2:4 – 7:28 is written in Aramaic (language used in Babylon).

Daniel 8:1 – 12:13 is written in Hebrew.

The key verse and theme is Daniel 4:35 ~ God is sovereign over all men and all kingdoms. Daniel and his three friends show us the blessing and power when we love God and are loyal to God in an ungodly world (Romans 12:1-2). “*Love your enemies*” (Matthew 5:44) is also exemplified in their lives.

