Book of Daniel

For other uses, see Book of Daniel (disambiguation).

Hebrew Bible
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Torah</th>
<th>Nevi'im</th>
<th>Ketuvim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Genesis</td>
<td>First Prophets</td>
<td>Poetic Books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Br'eišyt)</td>
<td>• Joshua</td>
<td>• Psalms (T'hillîm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Exodus</td>
<td>• Judges</td>
<td>• Proverbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Šemot)</td>
<td>• Samuel</td>
<td>• Job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Leviticus</td>
<td>• Kings</td>
<td>• Five Scrolls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Wayiqra)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Song of Songs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Numbers</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Lamentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Bəmidbar)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Ecclesiastes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Deuteronomy</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Esther</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Devarim)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Historical Books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Daniel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Ezra-Nehemiah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Chronicles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The **Book of Daniel** (Hebrew: הַדָּנֵי) is a book in the Hebrew Bible. The book tells of how Daniel, and his Judean companions, were inducted into Babylon during Jewish exile, and how their positions elevated in the court of Nebuchadnezzar. The court tales span events that occur during the reigns of Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius the Mede. The book concludes with four Divine prophetic visions.

The introduction of the *Book of Daniel* is written in Hebrew, the body is written in Biblical Aramaic, then the Masoretic text concludes the book with a return to Hebrew.\[^1\] The book consists of a series of six third-person narratives (chapters 1-6) followed by four apocalyptic visions in the first-person (chapters 7-12).

The Jewish Tanakh places the *Book of Daniel* with the Ketuvim writings, and Daniel in rabbinic literature is not counted in the list of Prophets of the Jewish canon. By contrast, Daniel is included amongst the major prophets in the Christian canon of the Old Testament.

The most widely accepted critical view posits that the author of the text was an anonymous writer living in the Maccabean period under Antiochus IV Epiphanes, during the 2nd century BCE;\[^2\] who compiled ancient legends with a pseudepigraph of "visions."\[^3\][^4] Other more conservative textual scholars, however, maintain with the historic Judeo-Christian tradition that Daniel, the protagonist of the narrative set in the 6th century BCE, is likely also the historical author of the text.\[^5\]
Authorship and dating

Maccabean author

The traditional theory that Daniel was the original author of the Book of Daniel is dismissed by critics who reject the book’s prophetic claims. Critics of Daniel view the Book of Daniel as a pseudepigraph dated around 165 BCE that concerns itself primarily with the Maccabean era and the reign of the Seleucid king Antiochus Epiphanes. Those who share this view typically adhere to the Maccabean thesis when analyzing the Book of Daniel. The stories of chapters 1-6 are considered to be a literary genre of legends that are older than the visions of chapters 7-12. The visions in the latter half of Daniel are theorized to be written by an anonymous author in the Maccabean era, who assembled the legends with the visions as one book, in the 2nd century BCE. According to this view, it is not considered to be read as a prophecy of western political history or of an eschatological future. Rather, the
critical focus is on the witness to the religiosity of the Maccabean time period.\[8\]

Anonymous writer

Norman W. Porteous was one of the first to postulate that an anonymous writer wrote the book during the persecution under Antiochus. According to this theory, the anonymous author attributed these events to Daniel, as prophecies that were witnessed by this writer in the 2nd century BCE.\[9\] Paul Roche observes that the author abounded in mistakes and anachronisms, using Daniel as a symbol for the faithful Jew serving Yahweh, and the use of various pagan kings as symbols of heathenism.\[11\] Critics do, however, acknowledge that the author of Daniel was familiar with the history of Near Eastern imperial power from the sixth to the second centuries.\[12\] But, because the writer had an incomplete and erroneous view of historical details in the second half of the sixth century, Daniel’s era, such imbalances support the theory of a late date of writing.\[12\]

Encouragement under oppression

Porteous and Roche agree that the Book of Daniel is composed of folktales that were used to fortify the Jewish faith during a time of great persecution and oppression by the Hellenized Seleucids some four centuries after Babylonian captivity.\[11,13\] James VanderKam and Peter W. Flint further explain that the stories of Daniel and his friends, set in Babylon during the Exile, encouraged readers to remain faithful to God and to refuse compromise in the face of their oppressors, and offered the prospect of triumph over wickedness and idolatry. These themes may have brought encouragement to the Qumran covenanters who were persecuted by other Jews and also threatened by Hellenism.\[14\] However, from a conservative approach, Joyce G. Baldwin argued that “old, authentic stories would have provided comfort to sufferers of later generations far more convincingly than a book of new parables.”\[15\]

Dating to Hellenistic period

The presence of three Greek loanwords that only occur in Daniel chapter 3, have supporters of a late date say that Daniel had to have been written after Alexander the Great’s conquest of the Orient, from 330 BCE. They claim that it would be impossible for Greek loanwords to appear two centuries before then.\[12\] These loanwords are three Greek musical terms. Frank Gaebelein argues that the non-existence of other Greek words does not support the theory of Daniel being written in the Hellenistic period. Gaebelein states that “it is inconceivable that Greek terms for government and administration would not have been adopted into Aramaic by the second century BC.”\[16\] Even John Goldingay, a proponent of the late date, concedes, “the Greek words hardly necessitate a very late date.”\[17\] The earliest known use of the Greek word symphonia, dates back to Pythagoras, born in the 6th century BCE, who has used the term. The adjectival use of symphonia meaning, “in unison”, is found in the Hymni Homericæ, ad Mercurium 51; both instances date from the 6th century BCE.\[18\]

Qumran 4QDan

Use of the Aramaic language was also popular in the 2nd Century BCE and was widely spoken amongst Jews in Palestine. With the discovery of the Dead Sea scroll, Qumran, dating 125 BCE, it does not reassure critics that Daniel was written in the 2nd century BCE. Even the critic G. R. Driver recognized that “the presence and popularity of the Daniel manuscripts at Qumran” conflicted “with the modern view which advocates the late dating of the Qumran Covenanters”.\[19\] This scroll contains the oldest reference to Daniel, only as an abbreviated text: a prayer of Daniel at (9:4b-19).

4QDan does not strictly qualify as a copy of the book itself.\[20\]

Support for earlier authorship

Kenneth Kitchen, Louis F. Hartman and Alexander Di Lella, for example, date the Aramaic portion more broadly within the Persian period (i.e., before the 330s BC), as based on Persian loanwords.\[21\] There are about 19 Persian loanwords that occur in the Aramaic portions of the Book of Daniel.

Textual sources

Greek versions of the Septuagint itself,\[22\]\[24\]\[25\] The Septuagint version appears to agree more with the Qumran fragments rather than the Hebrew/Aramaic/Masoretic text reflected in modern translations. Both the Greek versions contain apocryphal chapters that are not found in the Masoretic text, and the Theodotion version, c. 2nd century CE\[22,26\] are considered apocryphal by Protestant Christians and Jews, and deuterocanonical by Catholic and Orthodox Christians. These additions to Daniel are:
The Prayer of Azariah and Song of the Three Holy Children

The stories of Susannah and the Elders

Bel and the Dragon

Dead sea scrolls

do not reveal any major disagreements against the Masoretic Text, although James C. VanderKam observes that Hebrew, switches to Aramaic at 2:4b, then reverts back to Hebrew at 8:1.

Linguistic criticism

Daniel's twelve chapters may be divided into three notable sections as based on its linguistic structure.

Part I: Chapter 1-2:3 introduces Daniel and his companions and the circumstances they were in. (Hebrew).
Part II: Chapter 2:4-7 are the Court tales of Daniel and his companions living amongst the Babylonians. (Aramaic).
Part III: Chapters 8-12 are Daniel's prophetic visions of Israel's future (Hebrew).

Aramaic portion

Daniel's chapters 2 through 7 in Aramaic, the rest in Hebrew. (Aramaic)

The Hebrew portion is, for all intents and purposes, identical to that found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, meaning chapters 1 and 8-12 were in existence before the late 2nd century BC. The offices mentioned in Dan. 3-3, proves ignorance of words of the old past, already forgotten in the Hellenistic period, indicating that the Book of Daniel was written in the late 6th century BC. "he extant written form of the book, but does not demand a second-century date." He agrees with Collins that there are "clear differences" between Qumran Hebrew and the Hebrew of Daniel.

Greek loanwords

Sinai, born in the 6th century BCE, who has used the term. The adjectival use of αὐθορμία meaning, "in unison", is found in the Hymni Homerica, ad Mercurium 51; both instances date from the 6th century BCE.

Persian loanwords

During the Neo-Babylonian and early Persian periods (when Daniel is said to have lived), it referred only to an ethnicity. (Compare the later Chaldean Oracles).

Use of Chaldean anachronism, as during the Neo-Babylonian and early Persian periods (when Daniel is said to have lived), it referred only to an ethnicity. (Compare the later Chaldean Oracles).

Chiastic structures

See also: Prophecy of Seventy Weeks - literary structure

A future in regard to the fate of world kingdoms being replaced by His kingdom. Across the entire book, each chapter forms a coherent unit, with a concluding unit of three final chapters (10-12).

Aramaic chiastic form

In 1978, Joyce G. Baldwin, former principal of Trinity College, Bristol, proposed her view of the chiastic language structure for the Aramaic portion of Daniel chapters 2-7.

A. Four empires and God's coming kingdom, (ch.2)
B. Trial by fire and God's deliverance, (ch.3)
C. A king warned, chastised and delivered, (ch.4)
C'. A king warned, defiant and deposed, (ch.5)
B'. Trial in the lions' den and God's deliverance, (ch.6)
A'. Four empires and God's everlasting kingdom, (ch.7)

Double-chiasm theory

A. Four empires and God's coming kingdom, (ch.2)
B. Trial by fire and God's deliverance, (ch.3)
C. A king warned, chastised and delivered, (ch.4)
C'. A king warned, defiant and deposed, (ch.5)
B'. Trial in the lions' den and God's deliverance, (ch.6)
A'. Four empires and God's everlasting kingdom, (ch.7)
He supports that the chiastic structure is emphasized by the languages in which the book is written. The first chiasm is written in Aramaic and the second in Hebrew which explains why Aramaic continues to be used in chapter 7 rather than ending in chapter 6. Those who follow the chiastic language structure, view chapter 7 as the end of the first half of the book.

Parallel themes share common label and B’. Sections C, C’, C” and C”’ deal with prophecies about the actions of different kings. Finally the structure portrays the trial faced by the Anointed One as the focal point of the book (D).

Structure has precedence over chronology because they both deal with the persecution of Daniel and his friends i.e. "God's people." And chapter 5 (C’) should follow chapters 7 and 8 (A”). Instead, it is put in parallel with chapter 4 (C) where divine judgements are pronounced against the Babylonian kings.

Grouping emphasizes prophecies and diets were changed to reflect Babylonian culture in an attempt to take away their Jewish identities. However, Daniel was able to convince the King to allow for a vegetarian diet.

Historicists interpret all four prophecies as extending from Daniel's time, past the present to a future Kingdom of God.

Others like Walton have advocated a combination of both schemes, but in different parts of Daniel.

Content of Daniel

Introduction

Main article: Daniel#Induction into Babylon

In 605 BC. They were placed in special training as court servants to King Nebuchadnezzar. Their names and diets were changed to reflect Babylonian culture in an attempt to take away their Jewish identities. However, Daniel was able to convince the King to allow for a vegetarian diet.

Court tales

The Great Image

Main article: Daniel 2

has dreamed of an enormous idol made of four metals, with feet of mixed iron and clay. The image is completely destroyed by a rock that turns into a huge mountain, filling the whole earth. The idol’s composition of metals is interpreted as a series of successive kingdoms, starting with Nebuchadnezzar. Finally all of these dominions are crushed by God's kingdom, a kingdom that will "endure forever".

The fiery furnace

Main article: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego

oper's golden statue and are thrown into a furnace. As seen by Nebuchadnezzar, a fourth figure appears in the furnace with the three and God is credited for preserving them from the flames.

Madness of Nebuchadnezzar
ars, Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges that "heaven rules" and his kingdom and sanity are restored. The recurring image of a tree representing a kingdom appears at least three times in the Bible.

Belshazzar's feast
See also: The writing on the wall

Daniel in the lions' den
Main article: Daniel in the lions' den

Daniel's visions

in full detail, pertaining to events that surround the Maccabean revolt. For each of his dreams, Daniel is in need of an angelic interpreter and the force of each revelation impacts him severely.

Prophecy of the Seventy Septets
Main article: Prophecy of Seventy Weeks

Vision of the kings of north and south
Main article: Daniel 11

The visions of Daniel, with those of 1 Enoch, Isaiah, Jubilees, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, are the inspiration for much of the apocalyptic ideology and symbolism of the Qumran community's Dead Sea scrolls and the early literature of Christianity.

Historicity

Siege of Jerusalem (597 BC)
See also: Siege of Jerusalem (597 BC)

Daniel 1:1 - "In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it." (King James Version)

Before Wiseman's publication, Thiele had determined from the biblical texts that Nebuchadnezzar's initial capture of Jerusalem occurred in the spring of 597 BC, while other scholars, including Albright, more frequently dated the event to 598 BC.

Nebuchadnezzar or Nabonidus

There are also a number of differences between The Prayer of Nabonidus and the account of Nebuchadnezzar's madness:

Different kings are involved in the two accounts: Nebuchadnezzar's "affliction" was of the mind whereas Nabonidus' seems to have been a skin disease.
es to heaven" and "[acknowledges] that the Most High is sovereign". (An alternative reading with sound support, however, attributes the healing and forgiveness of Nabonidus' sins to God, because the text is fragmentary. [Archer, Gleason L. "Daniel", Vol. 7 (Zondervan, 1985): 15; he cites Harrison, R. K. Introduction to the Old Testament. (Tyndale, 1969): 1118-9])

It is also possible that a reference to the insanity of Nebuchadnezzar is to be found in the *cuneiform* text: BM 34113. [49]

Nebuchadnezzar's illness occurs in Babylon; Nabonidus is stricken in Tema. (The end result, though, is that both kings are absent from Babylon for the duration of their illnesses, since Nebuchadnezzar is "driven away from mankind." (4:33, NASB))

Some of the words and phrases of the prayer have to be inferred from the context because the text is fragmentary. [Archer, Gleason L. "Daniel", Vol. 7 (Zondervan, 1985): 15; he cites Harrison, R. K. Introduction to the Old Testament. (Tyndale, 1969): 1118-9]

Nebuchadnezzar's madness draws on the Mesopotamian *epic of Gilgamesh*. He argues that the author of Daniel uses elements from the description of the wild man Enkidu, who roams the steppe with the animals. [49]

In line with the statement that Nabonidus "entrusted the kingship" to Belshazzar in his absence, there is evidence that Belshazzar was able to pass edicts, lease farmlands, and receive the "royal privilege" to eat the food offered to the gods. [50]

In Judeo-Christian tradition

Daniel the prophet

Main article: Daniel

identify this ruler as Antiochus Epiphanes, the Greek ruler of Syria. In history, Antiochus persecuted the Jews unmercifully from 176-164 BC, which led to the Maccabean revolt of 167 BC. [54]

rewportion of Daniel chapters 8-12, Daniel speaks of this *abomination of desolation* in the last two chapters. However, this does not clarify who wrote the Aramaic portions of chapters 2-7. [54]

Christian eschatology of Daniel
The "Song of the Three Holy Youths" is part of the Matins service in Eastern Orthodoxy, and of Lauds on Sundays and feast days in Catholicism.

The various episodes in the first half of the book are used by Christians as moral stories, and are often believed to foreshadow events in the Gospels.

Later Jewish interpreters interpreted this figure as the Jewish Messiah. Such interpretation appears in the Similitudes of Enoch and 4 Ezra on to a final tribulation immediately preceding Judgement Day. Some consider the Prophecy of Seventy Weeks to be particularly compelling due to what they interpret to be prophetic accuracy. "One like a son of man" represents "the saints of the Most High" as interpreted in the vision later (Dan 7:16-18, 21-22, 25-27) and Jesus made the title "Son of Man" a distinguishing self reference.

According to Jesus' words, this event would involve the leveling of the temple, flight from Judea, and would happen in the year 70. Many Christians today re-apply this prediction to a final tribulation immediately preceding Judgement Day. Some consider the Prophecy of Seventy Weeks to be particularly compelling due to what they interpret to be prophetic accuracy.

Traditional tomb sites

There are six different locations all claimed to be the site of Daniel's Tomb: Babylon, Kirkuk and Muqdadiyah in Iraq, Susa and Malamir in Iran, and Samarkand in Uzbekistan.

See also

Additions to Daniel
Bel and the Dragon
Susanna (Book of Daniel)
Antiochus Epiphanes
Christian eschatology
List of apocalyptic literature
Book of Revelation

Daniel - Ugaritic hero identified with Daniel in Ezekiel (Ezek. 14:14-20; Ezek. 28:9)
Old English poem Daniel
Siege of Jerusalem (70)
Theodotion
Greek Apocalypse of Daniel

Footnotes

^ VanderKam & Flint 2002, pp. 137–8
^ Collins 1994, p. 2
^ a b Collins 1994, pp. 122–3
^ VanderKam 2002, p. 352
^ Collins 2002, p. 2
n other words, it is possible that Antiochus was considered prophetic in Daniel, with the implication that he was a forerunner of Antichrist, as Jerome in identifying Antiochus in chapter 8, while also allowing that "Antiochus Epiphanes was a type of Antichrist".

References


Eisenman (1997), p. 19f. "Daniel's clear association with the Maccabean Uprising and those against Rome are a possible... of the role of prophet, keeping in mind that at roughly this time the Hebrew canon was being evaluated and adopted.

Harvard University Press

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Vision and Persuasion: Rhetorical Dimensions of Apocalyptic Discourse


Daniel: an introduction and commentary

Daniel: a historical introduction and commentary

Daniel: The Prophet

Daniel: an introduction and commentary

The Daniel Tradition at Qumran

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in your Bible. Daniel is not technically a prophet in the Jewish sense, since he talked with angels not God, and since he talked to future generations not the current generation. The last half of