

Discovering Daniel:

Notes and Expository Outlines on the Prophecy of Daniel



Kevin S Lucas, Bible Teacher

BIOMA (**B**ible **I**nstitute **O**f the **M**acon **A**rea)

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All Scripture references are from the Authorized (King James) Version of the Bible.

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Outline One: Introduction-Daniel In the Critics' Den

Many people say that the prophecy of Daniel is difficult to understand and hard to defend from its critics, yet understand it we can and defend it we must. Men tend to hate and fear what they do not understand. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit", but we who know the Lord have nothing to fear from those so-called "higher critics" who would tear the prophecy of Daniel out of our Bibles. With all their knowledge and learning they have missed the one great lesson of God's Word: "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Thus, the scholarship of the critics is flawed and their foolish hearts are darkened. Lost men hate the book of Daniel because they refuse to accept the supernatural. They cannot understand the prophecy without admitting that God intervenes in the flow of human history in a supernatural way from time to time. This is a worldview problem and not a problem of the Bible itself.

Those of us who know the Lord Jesus and who love His Word can understand the prophecy of Daniel. We have at our disposal two remarkable resources to help us understand the prophecy of Daniel: the indwelling Holy Spirit of the living and true God and the infallible, inspired and inerrant Word of God. Through these resources we can clearly see the ever-changing, unfolding panorama of the events of human history. By the panorama of the

events of human history I am referring to that which has occurred in the past as accurately predicted by the prophet Daniel which gives us confidence that we shall see the things predicted in the book of Daniel that are yet to happen in the future. When we see how precisely the earlier prophecies have been fulfilled, we grow to have a greater and more profound confidence in those prophecies that remain yet to be fulfilled. Thus, we, as Christians, can and should dig into the book of Daniel. We should read it, study it, understand it, believe it and apply it. This is the intention of these study notes. They are designed to make it easier to understand the book of Daniel and to make application of those truths for the benefit of the people of God. These notes are not intended to be exhaustive, nor do they form a complete commentary on the book of Daniel. They are designed to be used in a classroom setting for the purpose of giving the student a proper orientation for the study of the book of Daniel. Nothing can replace the reading of the biblical text itself and it is clearly and heavily quoted and used in these notes. The object is to have the student read the text thoroughly. It is, therefore, shamelessly repeated again and again in the text of these outlines. May God richly bless you as you study His Imperishable Word.

BACKGROUND

I. Authenticity and historicity:

A. Daniel is the foundation stone for all Old Testament biblical prophecy and the entire New Testament biblical scheme of prophecy is built firmly upon the book of Daniel. If the prophecy of Daniel could be overthrown, then our entire view of biblical prophecy must be cast out!

B. Realizing the great fact above, the devil has been relentless in his attack on the book of Daniel. This was begun very early in church history with Porphyry, who in the third century A.D., declared that Daniel was written in 167 BC to oppose Antiochus Epiphanes. This theory became the basis for the higher critical argument against the book of Daniel and is still held as a primary theory among theologians of a liberal persuasion.

C. Of course, we know that the real reason that men deny the authenticity of the book of Daniel is the fact that it is so historically accurate with such incredible detail that it lends absolute credence to the doctrine of the inspiration, inerrancy, infallibility and authority of the Scripture. The critics have had to acknowledge that the history written by Daniel is so accurate that it is authentic. What they dispute the time in which it is written. They say that it was written **AFTER** the events took place because no one could have been so accurate in predicting

the future **BEFORE** it happened. In this they show the fact that they neither know the Scripture nor the power of God!

D. Historically speaking:

1. The book of Daniel was written in the 6th century BC (over a period of seventy years --- Daniel 1:1, Daniel 1:21 606 BC to about 536 BC)
2. The LXX (or Septuagint --- the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament) records the book of Daniel long before the time of Antiochus Epiphanes.
3. According to Josephus, Alexander the great was preparing to invade Jerusalem when the high priest, Jaddua, went out to him and read Daniel's references of the conquests of Alexander to him (see Daniel 8:5-8). This so impressed Alexander that the mighty general rode into the city not as a conqueror but as a worshipper. He spared the city of Jerusalem because of the prophecy of Daniel.
4. Our Lord Jesus Christ referred to Daniel as the prophet and accepted his writings as accurate. (Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14)

5. The writer of the book of Hebrews makes mention of Daniel as being historically real in Hebrews 11:33 and Ezekiel also refers to Daniel. (Ezekiel 14:14, 16, 18, 20; 28:3)

E. Liberal opinions: What they say about Daniel-

1. Their charges:

a. The Bible never asserts that Daniel was the author of the book which bears his name, although it is true that the first person is repeatedly used.

b. The book of Daniel is not alluded to until after A.D. 180.

c. The book of Daniel contains too much accurate historical detail to a been written before the fact.

2. Our reply:

a. The liberal rejects the book of Jonah because they say to be accurate and authoritative it should have been written in the first person instead of in the third person. But when they come to the book of Daniel, a book written in the first person, they reject it out of hand. This they do both in Daniel and Ecclesiastes, which are both in the first person. They justify this reasoning by saying:

1.) The book of Ecclesiastes is not inspired and it is in the first person.

2.) Daniel is in the first person.

3.) Therefore, Daniel is not inspired.

This is called circular reasoning and is neither logical nor acceptable to someone who is serious about the question for many reasons, but chiefly because it is based on the arrogant assumption that the book of Ecclesiastes is not inspired. We would hold that both the book of Ecclesiastes and Daniel are inspired, authoritative and accurate.

b. The theological liberal rejects the book of Daniel because they claim that there are no allusions to it until after A.D. 180, but an objective look at the truth dispels this argument.

1.) They ignore the testimony of Josephus in his references to the book.

2.) They reject the early date of Ezekiel who mentions the book, and they ignore the verity of the

testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ on the reality of Daniel.

3.) They ignore the Septuagint listing of the book and point out smugly that Daniel is not listed with the prophets of the Old Testament. In this they are willingly ignorant or perhaps simply disingenuous.

The Jews had three divisions to their Old Testament:

- a.) The Law
- b.) The Prophets
- c.) The Writings

Daniel is not referred to in the Inter-Testamental period because the only writing that was done in commentary was on the prophets. But Daniel was not placed in the category of the prophets by the Jews because Daniel was considered a statesman rather than a full-time prophet. Hence, no comment appears upon his writings which were listed under the category of the Writings.

c. The liberal contends that the book of Daniel contains too much detailed and verified history to have been written

before the fact. This is a sort of backhanded testimony to both the Scripture and a revelation of the way that liberal theologians think. The existence of prophecy cannot be admitted by someone who refuses to believe in the supernatural.

1.) The Old Testament prophet was given a threefold task:

a.) They were the moral and ethical preachers of the spiritual religion to the world around them. Hence, they challenged ritualism, formalism, and self-seeking among the people of God. (See Amos 5:21-24; Isaiah 1)

b.) They were those through whom God uttered predictions of future events concerning the nation Israel, the Gentile world powers, and the Messianic age.

c.) They were the watchmen standing on the walls of Zion to sound the trumpet against the ever-present danger of spiritual decline and apostasy. (Ezekiel 3:17; 33:7)

2.) Thus, the prophet was an instrument through which God's message flows.

a. The word "prophet" is the Hebrew word "nabbi" which means a person sent from God to speak a divinely inspired message.

b. The liberal theologian says that the prophet was a man of keen insight who was able through reason to guess the general direction of trends and events in the broad outlines of future occurrences. To them he was little more than an educated guesser like a political pundit or talking head. It is the belief of the liberal that Daniel could not have been written by Daniel simply because no man could guess the shape of the future so very accurately.

c.) The Bible believer would argue that the prophet was a man to whom God specifically revealed detailed information concerning future events. We would agree with the liberal that it is humanly impossible for a man to be so

accurate in predicting human history. However, we state categorically that a supernatural God could reveal the future to a natural man in such a way as to render the book of Daniel inspired, authoritative, and inerrant.

1.] The book of Daniel is inspired and the sense of being “God breathed” – i.e. Every word exactly as God intended and every portion of the Bible equally inspired. (Verbal plenary Inspiration)

2.] The book of Daniel is inerrant in that it is without error in doctrine, science, ethics, manners, or history.

3.] The book of Daniel is authoritative in that it is God’s only rule for faith and practice. It carries with it the authority of its Divine Author.

3. *The real difference between the liberal view and the view of the conservative Bible believer is not a difference of the facts, but a difference of*

faith. The liberal does not disbelieve the Bible because of so-called factual problems. They disbelieve the Bible because they refuse to acknowledge its authority over their lives. On the other hand, we, as Bible believing Christians, claim to believe the Bible and to recognize its authority over every aspect of our lives. We do not find it hard to believe that an all-seeing, all-knowing, all-wise, all powerful God could give glimpses of prehistory to his servants, the prophets.

“The Word of God is the prophetic testimony to what God has said and done, and what He will yet do in history. Prophetic thought, therefore, includes a philosophy of history which interprets its course and predicts its ultimate outcome... Prophecy and history are seen to be inseparably related.” Hobart Freeman

Speaking on the critics of Daniel, Pusey quipped: *“the rest which has been said is mostly mere insolent assumptions against the Scriptures grounded in unbelief.”*

And Sir Isaac Newton wrote: *“to reject Daniel is to reject the Christian religion.”*

CONTENT

II. The nature of the book of Daniel:

A. Daniel is written in two languages and has two basic audiences with two distinctive messages:

1. Daniel 1:1-2:4a and 8:1-12:13 is written in Hebrew and its basic message is consolation for the Jews.
2. Daniel 2:4b-7:28 is written in Aramaic and has a basic message of judgment for the Gentiles.

B. Daniel is written in two basic divisions and styles:

1. Personal history--- what happened to Daniel and his friends.
Daniel 1:1-6:28
2. Prophetic history---what will happen in the times of the Gentiles. Daniel 7:1-12:13

C. The author of the book of Daniel:

1. Name means "God is my judge"
2. Personal history---Will be discussed in this book
3. God's opinion of Daniel---Daniel 10:11
4. A contemporary of Daniel speaks highly of him---Ezekiel 14:14, 16, 18, 20; 28:3

5. Christ's testimony to Daniel---Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14

OUTLINE

III. An outline of the book of Daniel showing its basic structure and character as well as the topics included therein:

I. The Personal history of the prophet Daniel ---Daniel 1:1-6:28

A. Under Jehoakim in Judah ---Daniel 1:1 (Kingdom of Judah)

B. Under Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon---Daniel 1:2-4:37 (Neo-Babylonia)

C. Under Belshazzar in Babylon ---Daniel 5:1-39 (Neo-Babylonia)

D. Under Darius the Mede in Babylon---Daniel 5:31-6:28 (Medo Persian Empire)

E. Under Cyrus the Persian in Babylon---Daniel 6:28 (Medo Persian Empire)

II. The Prophetic History of the Times of the Gentiles---Daniel 7:1-12:13

A. In the first year of Belshazzar---Daniel 7:1-28

1. The vision of the Four Beasts---Daniel 7:1-8

2. The vision of the Son of Man---Daniel 7:9-14

3. The vision interpreted---Daniel 7:15-28

B. In the third year of Belshazzar --- Daniel 8:1-27

1. The vision of the Ram and the Goat---Daniel 8:1-14

2. The vision interpreted---Daniel 8:15-27

C. In the first year of Darius the Mede---Daniel 9:1-27

1. Conviction and Confession---Daniel 9:1-20

2. The Announcement of the Seventy Weeks---Daniel 9:21-27

D. In the third year of Cyrus the Persian ---Daniel 10:1-21

1. A Vision of God---Daniel 10:1-9

2. A Vision of the Angel---Daniel 10:10-21

E. In the first year of Darius the Mede ---Daniel 11:1-12:13

1. The Course of Kings and Nations: Darius to the Little Horn---

Daniel 11:1-12:3

2. The Instructions at the End 12:4-13