

ESTABLISHING THE  
PROPHETIC VALIDITY  
OF THE  
BOOK OF DANIEL





# ESTABLISHING THE PROPHETIC VALIDITY OF THE BOOK OF DANIEL

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

**M**any of the most incredible prophecies in the entire Bible are found in the Old Testament book written by Daniel the Prophet. Because of the importance of these prophecies, and because we examine a number of them in our companion studies, we believe it is essential to take a short excursion into an examination of the validity of Daniel as a prophetic source.

Due to the remarkable prophetic accuracy and specificity in this book, Daniel has come under attack by critics who deliberately seek to undermine its validity in order to avoid acknowledging its prophetic nature. But in recent years, there have been a number of discoveries – archeological, linguistic and others – that help provide important substantiation of the accuracy, early dating, and historicity of Daniel, confirming it as a valid prophetic source.

The Book of Daniel is an astonishingly significant book that is worth looking at in great depth. The historical backdrop of Daniel takes place around the time of the exile of the Jews into Babylonian captivity, beginning around 605 B.C. (Daniel 1:1).<sup>1 2</sup>

One of the most critical aspects of investigating the Book of Daniel involves its date of authorship. Because there is such a great deal of prophecy included in this book, it is critical to correctly assess the

date of authorship – thereby, either affirming or denying its prophetic validity. In other words, if Daniel was proven to have been written after the events it supposedly foretells, then its claims to the prophetic are easily dismissed. On the other hand, if there is evidence to prove it was written well prior to the events it foretells, then that would obviously validate its prophetic nature – which would have tremendous implications. If it is provably prophetic, then the claims that it comes from God would have to be taken seriously, as would the larger panorama of Scripture. It should be easy to see then, why so much controversy has taken place over the dating of the authorship of Daniel. Much lies at stake.

Traditional Conservative scholarship has always dated the book to the 6<sup>th</sup> Century B.C., the date that the book itself internally claims. H.C. Leupold dates the writing of this book between 538-528 B.C. Merrill C. Tenney dates it to shortly after Daniel's last vision, in 536 B.C. Keil and Delitzsch say it was written "during the exile" by Daniel. Edward J. Young agrees with the above statements. Practically all conservative scholars date the book somewhere near 536 B.C.<sup>3</sup>

While conservative scholars date the book to the 6<sup>th</sup> Century B.C., liberal critical scholars, of course, disagree. This is primarily due to the prophetic detailing of precise historical world events contained in the Book of Daniel. Many liberal scholars seeking to deny the reality of prophecy have been forced to take the position that Daniel was a much later 2<sup>nd</sup> Century B.C. work (written after the fact) rather than an authentic 6<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. work written by Daniel, as it claims.<sup>4</sup> By late-dating Daniel, they are able to sidestep admitting that the book contains genuine prophecy.

In other words, because Daniel so precisely details historical events taking place in the centuries leading up to the Roman era, these scholars take the position that the book must have been written after these events took place. However, even this logic is faulty, as Daniel's most incredible prophecy of all predicts events that took place much later, during the time of Christ (in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century A.D.) This prophecy involves a precise pinpointing of the timeline of the appearance of the Messiah – an event fulfilled exactly as Daniel

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predicted (to the exact year) in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century A.D. For more information on this, please see our companion study entitled, “The Daniel 9:25 Prophecy: An Exact Timeline For The Arrival Of The Messiah”. So, even if Daniel’s historical prophecies (such as the famous 11<sup>th</sup> Chapter) were ignored, the prophetic nature of this book is still firmly established elsewhere (much of Daniel also involves prophecies of the end-times, which of course hasn’t yet been fulfilled – and therefore is of no value to our present task of proving Daniel’s prophetic nature).

So, even if the late dating of Daniel to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century B.C. was correct, the book is still proven as authentic prophecy in that it includes detailed Messianic prophecies which were fulfilled centuries following this supposed 2<sup>nd</sup> Century B.C. time period! In other words, even if Daniel was written in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century B.C., as critics claim, it still is provably prophetic since it predates the 1<sup>st</sup> Century A.D. fulfillments.

But making this concession is not necessary. In fact, the direct opposite becomes obvious when you actually begin to look at the evidence. When we does so, there are a number of reasons that force us to conclude that Daniel was written well prior to the fulfillments of the prophetic events it details. We will begin by going through this line of evidence one chapter at a time – first, from a timeline perspective.

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1. -Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, rev. ed., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998, p. 254.
  2. -Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, new rev. ed., Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1994, pp. 183-185.
  3. -Paul T. Butler, *Daniel*, Joplin, MO: College Press, 1970, p. 4.
  4. -*Ibid.*, p. 5.

## CHAPTER 2

### DANIEL WAS WRITTEN BEFORE CHRIST (1ST CENTURY A.D.)

**F**irst, we should recognize that even the most liberal critics admit that at the latest, Daniel’s writings still pre-date the time of Christ by several hundred years (the Maccabean period).<sup>1</sup>

This B.C. dating is significant because the ending point (or culminating fulfillment) of one of the most important prophecies in the entire Bible – found in Daniel 9:25, as we mentioned – involves events taking place during the life of Christ in the year 33 A.D. and after.

So, even if the late dating estimation by the liberal critics was accurate, it would in no way impugn the prophetic validity of Daniel. Daniel still foretells events that would occur several hundred years later, between 33 and 70 A.D., with startling precision.

But that being said, there is further evidence that places it prior to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century B.C. We will begin to examine this evidence in the following chapter.

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1. -John J. Collins, “Current Issues in the Study of Daniel,” in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, Vol. I, ed. John J. Collins, Peter W. Flint, Boston: Brill, 2001, p. 2.

## CHAPTER 3

### DANIEL WAS WRITTEN BEFORE THE SEPTUAGINT (2ND – 3RD CENTURIES B.C.)

**T**he next point of evidence regarding the early date of Daniel's authorship comes from its inclusion in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament), which was completed two to three hundred years before Christ (200-300 B.C.). The Torah, or Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament), was translated near the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century B.C., and then the rest of the Old Testament (including Daniel) was translated no later than the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century B.C.<sup>1</sup>

So, we should recognize that Daniel was already translated into Greek (the Septuagint) by the time the liberal critics claim the autograph of Daniel (the original) was just being written! Since it was included in the Septuagint, we know that it was already universally venerated as Scripture within the Jewish community at large at that time. This type of veneration of Old Testament books did not happen overnight, indicating that the Book of Daniel must have been originally written quite some time earlier.

So, the fact that Daniel was included in the Septuagint is a point of evidence that pushes the date of its authorship back to before the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century B.C. But there is even more evidence that confirms this, which we will examine in the following chapter.

1. -The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, article “Septuagint,” May 12, 2020, in *Encyclopedia Britannica*. (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Septuagint> - Retrieved 8/9/18)

## CHAPTER 4

### DANIEL WAS WRITTEN BEFORE THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS (2ND CENTURY B.C.)

**T**he early dating of Daniel is further verified by manuscript fragments of Daniel found in the Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran in 1947. This find included fragments from all chapters in Daniel, except for Chapter 12.

The significance of the Daniel fragments of the Dead Sea Scrolls was first made known in 1958 when Frank M. Cross, a professor at Harvard University published *The Ancient Library of Qumran*, a complete review of the scrolls. In the second edition of the book (in 1961), Cross refers to the fragments of the Daniel scrolls as follows...

“One copy of Daniel is inscribed in the script of the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.”<sup>1</sup>

So, it has been long established that fragmentary copies of Daniel found in the Dead Sea Scrolls date to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century B.C. – again, very close to the same time the liberal critics date Daniel’s authorship! This simply does not make sense. In order for it to be included as sacred writing in the Septuagint, and then found copied in the Dead Sea Scrolls – both dating to around the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century B.C. – it would have had to have been already overwhelmingly venerated by the

Jewish community at large at that time. Again, this type of veneration does not happen overnight. Instead, this is an indicator that Daniel would have to have been originally composed well prior to this period. The evidence indicating a date of authorship far earlier than the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century is unavoidable. But let's examine what some scholars say...

In 1969, based on the evidence available at that time regarding the Dead Sea Scrolls texts from Daniel, Dr. Roland K. Harrison had already concluded that the liberal 2<sup>nd</sup> Century dating of the book of Daniel was...

“absolutely precluded by the evidence from Qumran...”<sup>2</sup>

So, we see that the evidence from the copies of Daniel found at Qumran makes a late date highly problematic. Dr. Harrison further stated the following...

“...the dating of Daniel can now be settled at least negatively as a result of MS [manuscript] discoveries from the Dead Sea caves from 1947 onwards. Fragments from 1Q, along with some complete scrolls of Daniel from other caves, have testified to the popularity of the work at Qumran. A florilegium (meaning a compilation of writings) recovered from 4Q spoke, like Mt. 24:15, of “Daniel the prophet,” furnishing eloquent second-century B.C. testimony to the way in which the book was revered and cited as Scripture. Since all the Qumran fragments and scrolls are copies, the autograph of Daniel and other OT canonical works must of necessity be advanced well before the Maccabean period if the proper minimum of time is allowed for the book to be circulated and accepted as Scripture... the autograph of Daniel also must be several centuries in advance of the Maccabean period... It is now clear from the Qumran MSS that no part of the OT canonical literature was composed later than the 4th cent. B.C. This means that Daniel must of necessity be assigned to some point in the Neo-Babylonian era (626–539 B.C.), or a somewhat later period. If, following Near Eastern annalistic practices, the events and visions were recorded shortly after

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their occurrence, the book may well have been written progressively over a lengthy period of time, being finally collated by Daniel in the closing phases of his life... There can no longer be any possible reason for considering the book as a Maccabean product.”<sup>3</sup>

But let’s also recognize the great significance of the Dead Sea Scroll evidence concerning the accuracy and reliability of our current copy of the Book of Daniel. In other words, even if we accept that Daniel was written prior to the events it foretells, how do we know that our Daniel text that we find in our Bibles today has been transmitted reliably over time? Can we be confident that the text has not been notably changed or altered over the centuries and millennia?

The Dead Sea Scrolls give us the answer. The Old Testaments (including Daniel) that we have in most of our English Bibles today are translated from a Hebrew/Aramaic source text called the Masoretic Text. The Masoretic Text is the official Hebrew/Aramaic text of what Christians would call the Old Testament, and it is based on the two oldest known ancient Masoretic codices – the Aleppo Codex (dated to 826 A.D.) and the Leningrad Codex (dated to 1008 A.D.). A codex is an ancient manuscript book.<sup>4 5</sup>

Why does this matter for us here? It matters because due to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, we are now, for the first time in history, able to compare our current Hebrew and Aramaic text of the Book of Daniel that is in our Bibles today (that comes from source texts from 826 and 1008 A.D.) with Dead Sea Scrolls manuscripts of Daniel that are about 1,000 years older.

In other words, before the Dead Sea Scrolls, our earliest Hebrew Bible was from around 1,000 A.D. But how could we be sure that it hadn’t dramatically changed since around the time of Christ and before? Before the Dead Sea Scrolls, we couldn’t be sure it hadn’t changed. But because we now have them, and they date to several centuries before Christ, we can compare them with our current Bibles to see if the text has changed. Put yet another way, we can now look at over 2,000 years of Hebrew text transmission and see for ourselves

how much – if at all – the Old Testament has changed from 200 B.C. up until today.

When we compare them, what do we find? Scholar Alfred Mertens tells us...

“the Daniel fragments from Caves 1 and 6 reveal, on the whole, that the later Masoretic text is preserved in a good, hardly changed form. They are thus a valuable witness to the great faithfulness with which the sacred text has been transmitted.”<sup>6</sup>

So, the Dead Sea Scrolls are textual witnesses that demonstrate that the Masoretic Text was faithfully preserved and confirm that the Hebrew and Aramaic text of Daniel translated in our modern Bibles is reliable!

And so, we can clearly conclude on the basis of strong evidence that Daniel’s prophecies were not only written well prior to the late-dating of the liberal critics, but that our current text of Daniel that we read in our Bibles today has been transmitted reliably. Both of these facts help us to confidently establish the validity of the book of Daniel 9.

But there are also historical records that necessitate an earlier dating of Daniel. We will examine them in the following chapter.

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1. -Frank M. Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1961, p. 43.
  2. -Roland K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1969, p. 1127.
  3. -Roland K. Harrison, article “Daniel, Book of,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Revised, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979-1988, pp. 861-862.
  4. -Ernst Würthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979, p. 35.
  5. -Jeff A. Benner, “A History of the Masoretic Hebrew Texts,” *Ancient Hebrew Research Center*. (<https://www.ancient-hebrew.org/biblical-history/a-history-of-the-masoretic-hebrew-texts.htm> - Retrieved 2/10/21)
  6. -Alfred Mertens, “Das Buch Daniel im Lichte der Texte vom Toten Meer,” in *Stuttgarter Biblische Monographien 12*, Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1971, p. 31.

## CHAPTER 5

### DANIEL WAS WRITTEN BEFORE THE CONQUEST OF JERUSALEM BY ALEXANDER THE GREAT (4TH CENTURY B.C.)

Pushing back the dating of Daniel's authorship even further, is an important historical attestation of the well-known Jewish historian of the ancient world, Flavius Josephus. This 1<sup>st</sup> Century historian (in his *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XI, Chapter 8.5) records that around 332 B.C., during Alexander the Great's conquest of Jerusalem, the Jewish High Priest, Jaddua, showed Alexander prophetic references to himself and his conquest of the Persian Empire found written in the Book of Daniel:

“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...”<sup>1</sup>

It goes on to say that Alexander was so impressed that he spared the city and allowed the Jews all they desired in keeping their traditions and laws as according to their forefathers.<sup>2</sup>

The Scripture showed to Alexander might have been Daniel 7:6, 8:3-8, 20-22, 11:3. Some or all of them are very clear predictions of the rise of the Greek Empire, and specifically, Alexander's conquests and successes.

But the point is, this whole concept of the book of Daniel being showed to Alexander in the early 330's B.C. – which Josephus records as history – obviously indicates that Daniel was completed well before the rise of the Greek Empire.

Absurdly, because the liberal scholars refuse to believe this clear historical record of the prophetic at work, they often go as far as to deny Alexander ever visited Jerusalem, claiming that Josephus' account was pure fiction!

In the following chapter, we will discuss some further evidences from Josephus and the Jewish Scriptural canon.

- 
1. -Flavius Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, in *Josephus, The Complete Works*, trans. William Whiston, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998, XI, 8.5, p. 368.
  2. -Ibid.

## CHAPTER 6

### FURTHER EVIDENCE FROM JOSEPHUS AND THE JEWISH SCRIPTURAL CANON

Scholars agree that the Jews had always accepted Daniel as a part of their inspired Scriptures (or canon). Albert Barnes tells us...

“The ancient Hebrews never called [Daniel’s] genuineness or authenticity in question,”<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, Roger Beckwith writes...

“the book was always taken by the Jews at its face value... [and] had an unchallenged place in the Jewish canon.”<sup>2</sup>

Josephus, the earliest Jewish historian in antiquity, believed without any question that Daniel authored the book bearing his name.<sup>3 4</sup> Josephus describes Daniel as...

“one of the greatest of the prophets... for he did not only prophecy of future events, as did the other prophets, but he also determined the time of their accomplishment[.]... He also wrote and left behind him what made manifest the accuracy and undeniable veracity of his predictions.”<sup>5</sup>

Later, in the same passage, Josephus attests to the well-known and accepted fact amongst the Jews, that Daniel had predicted these things long before their fulfillments...

“...according to Daniel’s vision, and what he wrote many years before they came to pass.”<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, according to the early testimony of Josephus in *Against Apion* 1.8, the ancient Jews believed that no books were added to the Old Testament after the time of the Persian ruler Artaxerxes (465-425 B.C.).<sup>7 8</sup> The reign of Artaxerxes is the same time of the writing of Malachi – the last book in the Old Testament.<sup>9</sup>

So, we have seen that Josephus viewed Daniel as a prophet who authored the book that bears his name, one of the books of the Jewish Scriptural canon – a canon which hasn’t changed – of which the last book to be added was done so in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. There is, then, no honest way to read Josephus without understanding that he viewed the date of Daniel’s authorship to have been prior to the 5<sup>th</sup> Century B.C., and speaking as a representative for the Jewish nation, he believed this view was the common one among his people.

Furthermore, other books which were written during the Maccabean period (the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century B.C., the time of the late-dating of the critics) were rejected by the Jews from their divine canon. Why not Daniel as well – if it also came from the same era?<sup>10</sup>

So, let’s recap, following this train of reasoning. As we have seen, the Jews had always accepted the Book of Daniel as a part of the Scriptures. We have also seen that the Jews always believed that no books were added to their Scriptures after Artaxerxes’ reign (in other words, nothing later than the 400’s B.C.). Hence, they did not believe in the later dating of Daniel as being composed in the time of Antiochus (2<sup>nd</sup> Century B.C.), during the Maccabean period (as the critics claim). So then, we may state that ancient Judaism, with a united voice, ascribes the authorship of Daniel to the 6<sup>th</sup> Century prophet Daniel (the time Daniel itself claims to have been written). No other conclusion can be drawn.

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In *The Coming Prince*, Sir Robert Anderson summarizes our conclusion well...

“It is idle to talk of it as being the work of some prophet of a later epoch. It dates from Babylon in the days of the Exile, or else it is a literary fraud, concocted after the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. But how then could it come to be quoted in the Maccabees – quoted, not incidentally, but in one of the most solemn and striking passages in the entire book, the dying words of old Mattathias? And how could it come to be included in the Canon? The critics make much of its position in the Canon: how do they account for its having a place in it at all?... The presence of the Book of Daniel in the Jewish Canon is a fact more weighty than all the criticisms of the critics.”<sup>11</sup>

We can see Anderson enforce some of the same points we’ve discussed, even touching on one we didn’t mention – that Daniel was quoted in the Maccabees, an inter-testamental book written during the same period the liberal critics claim the autograph of Daniel was written. So, it is clear from the evidence available from Josephus and the Jewish Scriptural canon that the early date of authorship of Daniel is well-established.

But there are a number of other ways in which we know Daniel was written at the time the Bible claims, including archeological/historical, paleographic/linguistic, and contemporaneous evidences. We will examine each of these in the following chapters.

- 
1. -Albert Barnes, *Notes on the Old Testament: Daniel, Vol. 1*, London: Blackie & Son, 1853, p. 8.
  2. -Roger T. Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church and Its Background in Early Judaism*, London: SPCK, 1985, p. 357.
  3. -Christopher T. Begg and Paul Spilsbury, *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary: Judean Antiquities Books 8-10*, Vol. 5, ed. Steve Mason, Boston: Brill, 2005, pp. 205-317.
  4. -*The Encyclopedia of Judaism*, article “Biblical Figures in Josephus,” eds., Jacob Neusner, Alan J. Avery-Peck, and William Scott Green, Boston: Brill, 2000, p. 1,788.
  5. -Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, X, 11.7, p. 341.
  6. -Ibid.

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7. -The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, article "Artaxerxes I, King of Persia," Apr. 3, 2020, in *Encyclopedia Britannica*. (<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Artaxerxes-I> - Retrieved 1/02/19)
8. -Josephus, *Flavius Josephus Against Apion*, 1.8, pp. 929-930.
9. -"Josephus: Historical Evidence Of The Old Testament Canon," May 29, 2012, *Blue Letter Bible*. (<http://blogs.blueletterbible.org/blb/2012/05/29/josephus-historical-evidence-of-the-old-testament-canon/> - Retrieved 1/02/19)
10. -Thomas J. Finley, "The Book of Daniel in the Canon of Scripture," in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. 165, No. 658, Dallas, TX: Dallas Theological Seminary, April-June, 2008, p. 197.
11. -Robert Anderson, *The Coming Prince*, 10<sup>th</sup> ed., Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, repr. 1957, Preface, xi-xli.

## CHAPTER 7

### ARCHEOLOGICAL / HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

One of the most convincing proofs that Daniel was written when it claims to be, involves the accuracy of detail related to the subjects it describes. These subjects include the details of the city of Babylon, the customs of the Babylonians and the Medes and Persians, and others. Modern archeology has unearthed evidence that agrees with the details presented in Daniel, thus, helping to authenticate the early dating and authenticity of the book.

The precision of the details within the book relative to the city of Babylon, for example, argues that the writer was an eyewitness of that ancient culture, and not a citizen of Judea some three-and-a-half centuries or more later. It is an indisputable fact that the farther an author is removed, both in time and in distance from the subject of his narration, the more indefinite he becomes with respect to architectural details, societal classes, sects, language, customs, etc. The Book of Daniel, however, is very specific with these kinds of references regarding the time and place he describes. Some examples of this include the following:

First, except for information provided by Daniel (Daniel 4:30), earlier historians did not know that Nebuchadnezzar had rebuilt Babylon. Peter Masters writes...

“The author also knew that Babylon had been rebuilt by Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4:30), another fact that was unknown to later historians until the excavations of more recent times.”<sup>1</sup>

Second, Daniel is very detailed in his use of terms that describe Magi castes (Daniel 2:4, and 27). Archaeological evidence – such as the Behistun Inscription (dated to 520 B.C.) – has confirmed the accuracy of this Persian Magi caste system.<sup>2</sup>

Third, Daniel was aware of the difference between the alterable laws of the Babylonians (Dan. 3:29) vs. the unalterable laws of the Medes and Persians (Dan. 6:12), as well as their different means of punishment (fire vs. lions). Roland Harrison tells us...

“Quite evidently the writer knew enough about the customs of the sixth century B.C. to depict Nebuchadnezzar as able to enact and modify Babylonian laws with absolute sovereignty (Dan. 2:12f, 46), while representing Darius the Mede as being completely powerless to change the laws of the Medes and Persians (Dan. 6:8f.; cf. Est. 1:9; 8:8). Again, he was quite accurate in recording the change from punishment by fire under the Babylonians (Dan. 3:11) to punishment by being thrown to lions under the Persian regime (Dan. 6:7), since fire was sacred to the Zoroastrians of Persia.”<sup>3</sup>

Fourth, Daniel records the Babylonian leadership being involved in revelry (drunken partying) at the time the city fell to the Medes and Persians (Daniel 5). Although this account is still rejected by critical scholarship, the early Greek historians Herodotus and Xenophon both concur that a drunken festival was in progress and Xenophon even says that this was one of the reasons why the Persians chose to attack on that particular night.<sup>4 5</sup>

But neither Herodotus nor Xenophon make mention of Belshazzar, who is closely associated with the revelry in Daniel 5.<sup>6</sup> This implies that the Greek historians reflect an external source for the same historical information recorded by Daniel regarding the party. If past

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experience holds, one can expect that secular history will one day find Daniel (and the Greek historians) correct on this point.

Fifth, Daniel correctly refers to the law of the “Medes and Persians” (note that Medes are listed first, then the Persians; Daniel 5:28, 6:8, 12, and 15); in later history, due to Persia’s ascendancy, it becomes “the Persians and Medes,” with Persians listed first. John Whitcomb says...

“The mention of Medes before Persians in the phrase, ‘the law of the Medes and Persians,’ is an evidence of the early date of the book; for in later years the Persians were usually mentioned before the Medes (Esther 1:3, 14, 18, 19, though not 10:2; cf. I Macc. 6:56).”<sup>7</sup>

Sixth, Daniel shows knowledge regarding details of geopolitical boundaries which would almost certainly have been lost to a later pseudonymous writer of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century B.C. Maccabean era. For instance, Daniel locates the city of Shushan in the province of Elam (Daniel 8:2), whereas later, due to boundary relocations, Shushan was in the province of Susiana. This argues for an early age of the book. Gleason Archer notes...

“The author of Daniel shows such an accurate knowledge of sixth-century events as would not have been open to a second-century writer; for example, in Dan. 8:2, the city of Shushan is described as being in the province of Elam back in the time of the Chaldeans. But from the Greek and Roman historians we learn that in the Persian period Shushan, or Susa, was assigned to a new province which was named after it, Susiana, and the formerly more extensive province of Elam was restricted to the territory west of the Eulaeus River. It is reasonable to conclude that only a very early author would have known that Susa was once considered part of the province of Elam.”<sup>8</sup>

Seventh, Daniel refers to the Babylonian King Belshazzar, most popularly known from the “writing on the wall” story recorded in Daniel 5. The Book of Daniel describes Belshazzar as being the final

Babylonian king, who was conquered by Cyrus, king of the Medes and Persians on the same night that the story took place.

Interestingly, all other known historical records once disagreed, listing Nabonidus as the final Babylonian king, with no mention of Belshazzar at all. Ancient historians like Herodotus, Megasthenes, Berossus, and Alexander Polyhistor, not to mention a vast number of cuneiform documents, were united in claiming that the last king of the Neo-Babylonian empire was Nabonidus.<sup>9</sup>

However, a series of archaeological discoveries now show that Belshazzar not only did exist, but all the details given about him in the Bible are correct. First, in 1854, four identical clay cylinders were discovered, confirming Belshazzar's existence, and naming him as Nabonidus' son.<sup>10</sup>

Then, in 1882, a translation of another ancient cuneiform text, *The Nabonidus Chronicle*, was published, revealing that Nabonidus was an absentee king. The text reveals that Nabonidus left his son Belshazzar, the crown prince, to take care of affairs in Babylon in his absence.<sup>11</sup>

Next, the Persian Verse Account of Nabonidus, published in 1924, stated that, as "he started out for a long journey", Nabonidus "entrusted the kingship" to "his oldest (son), the firstborn." So, Belshazzar clearly functioned in the role of a king for years while his father was away.<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, a variety of other ancient cuneiform texts were found in the early 1900's which also mentioned Belshazzar, including a tablet from Erech in which both he and his father Nabonidus were jointly invoked in an oath, suggesting that both had royal authority.<sup>13</sup>

So, the record of archeology has confirmed that Belshazzar was a co-regent with his father Nabonidus, governing Babylon in his father's absence. This reality is precisely implied in the Biblical text by Belshazzar only being able to offer Daniel the third position in the kingdom (Daniel 5:7, 16, and 29). Even by the time of the later Greek writers such as Herodotus, the name "Belshazzar" had apparently disappeared from the historical records, and was not discovered again until the Nabonidus Cylinder was discovered in 1854. This is very strong evidence that not only supports the accuracy of the Book of

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Daniel, but also indicates that it was written very early, at the time the Bible claims.

So, we have good evidence that the Book of Daniel was written no later than the Medo-Persian era from the fact that the author relates details of his time which were unknown to historians until recently. Bruce Waltke summarizes the information we have just examined, saying...

“The author possessed a more accurate knowledge of Neo-Babylonia and early Achaemenid Persian history than any other known historian since the sixth century B.C. Even Pfeiffer, who was one of the more radical critics of Daniel, was compelled to concede that it will presumably never be known how the author learned that the new Babylon was the creation of Nebuchadnezzar, as the excavations have proved, and that Belshazzar, mentioned only in Babylonian records, in Daniel, and in Baruch (1:1), which is based on Daniel, was functioning as king when Cyrus took Babylon in 539 B.C.”<sup>14</sup>

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1. -Peter Masters, “A Tour of Biblical Evidence in the British Museum” in *Bible and Spade*, Vol. 13, No. 2, Associates for Biblical Research, Spring, 2000, p. 54.
  2. -Wikipedia contributors, “Magi,” *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magi> - Retrieved 1/01/19)
  3. -Harrison, pp. 1120-1121.
  4. -Stephen R. Miller, “Daniel,” in *The New American Commentary*, eds. E. Ray Clendenen, Kenneth A. Mathews, and David S. Dockery, Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1994, p. 167.
  5. -*Encyclopedia Judaica*, Art. “Belshazzar,” CDRom Edition Version 1.0, ed. Geoffrey Wigoder, Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, Ltd., 1997.
  6. -Ibid.
  7. -John C. Whitcomb, *Darius the Mede*, Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1959, p. 55.
  8. -Gleason Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, Chicago, IL: Moody Press. 1998 p. 445.
  9. -R.P. Dougherty, *Nabonidus and Belshazzar: A Study of the Closing Events of the Neo-Babylonian Empire*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1929, pp. 7-12.
  10. -“The Nabonidus Cylinder from Ur,” trans. Paul-Alain Beaulieu, *Livius.org*. (<https://www.livius.org/sources/content/nabonidus-cylinder-from-ur/> - Retrieved 1/01/19)
  11. -*Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament with Supplement*, ed. J.B. Pritchard, London: Princeton University Press and Oxford University Press, 1970, p. 306.

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12. -Ibid, p. 313.
13. -Josh McDowell, *Daniel in the Critics' Den*, San Bernardino, CA: Campus Crusade for Christ, 1979, p. 64.
14. -Bruce K. Waltke, "The Date of the Book of Daniel," in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. 133, No. 532, Dallas, TX: Dallas Theological Seminary, Oct.-Dec., 1976, pp. 328-329.

## CHAPTER 8

### PALEOGRAPHICAL AND LINGUISTIC EVIDENCE

**A**nother major point of evidence indicating the early date of Daniel's authorship involves paleographical and linguistic evidence. Paleography is the study of ancient handwriting, while linguistics refers to the study of human language.

Portions of the Daniel manuscript from the Dead Sea Scrolls reveal, upon the basis of paleographic evidence (i.e., writing style), that the original document was composed several hundred years prior to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century B.C.<sup>1</sup> In other words, when the Dead Sea Scrolls manuscript of Daniel was analyzed, the style of writing it possessed indicated that the original of Daniel was several hundred years older than the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century B.C. dating assigned by liberal critics.

The Dead Sea Scrolls have been an asset in the debate regarding two major and well-disputed books of the Old Testament, Daniel and Isaiah. Before the discovery of the Scrolls, critical scholars argued that the Aramaic language used in Daniel was from a time no earlier than 167 B.C. during the Maccabean period. Other scholars, such as the well-respected archaeologist Kenneth Kitchen, studied Daniel and found that ninety percent of Daniel's Aramaic vocabulary was used in documents from the 5<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. or earlier.<sup>2</sup>

The Dead Sea Scrolls revealed that Kitchen's conclusion was well

founded. The Aramaic language used in the Dead Sea Scrolls proved to be very different from that found in the Book of Daniel. Old Testament scholars have concluded that the Aramaic in Daniel is closer to the form used in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Centuries B.C. than to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century. So, the paleographical comparison of the documents at Qumran with Daniel demonstrates that the Aramaic in Daniel is a much earlier composition than the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.<sup>3</sup>

Such a comparison further demonstrates that Daniel was written in a region different from that of Judea. For example, the Genesis Apocryphon found in Cave 1 is a 2<sup>nd</sup> Century B.C. document written in Aramaic – the same period during which critical scholars argue that Daniel was composed. If the critical date for Daniel’s composition were correct, it should reflect the same linguistic characteristics of the Genesis Apocryphon. Yet, the Aramaic of these two books is markedly dissimilar.<sup>4</sup>

The Genesis Apocryphon, for example, tends to place the verb toward the beginning of the clause, whereas Daniel tends to defer the verb to a later position in the clause. Due to such considerations, linguists suggest that Daniel reflects an Eastern type Aramaic, which is more flexible with word order, and exhibits scarcely any Western characteristics at all. In each significant category of linguistic comparison (i.e., morphology, grammar, syntax, vocabulary), the Genesis Apocryphon reflects a much later style than the language of Daniel.<sup>5</sup>

Additionally, according to Kenneth Kitchen, some of the Persian terms which appear in Daniel were only in use in the language until about 300 B.C. The meanings of these words were apparently lost by the time Daniel was translated into Greek for The Septuagint. Quoting Kitchen, Bruce Waltke writes...

“Kitchen notes that in four of the nineteen words in question, the old Greek renderings made about 100 B.C. are hopelessly mere guesswork. He reasons: ‘If the first important Greek translation of Daniel was made sometime within 100 B.C. to A.D. 100, roughly speaking, and the translator could not (or took no trouble to) reproduce the proper meaning of these terms, then one conclusion imposes itself: their

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meaning was already lost and forgotten (or, at least, drastically changed) long before he set to work. Now if Daniel were wholly a product of 165 B.C., then just a century or so in a continuous tradition is surely embarrassingly inadequate as a sufficient interval for that loss (or change) of meaning to occur by Near Eastern standards.”<sup>6</sup>

So, we can conclude that the paleographical and linguistic evidences force a belief in the early dating of the Book of Daniel. In the following chapter, we will examine one final piece of evidence.

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1. -*Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol. I, ed. Walter A. Elwell, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1988, p. 573.
  2. -Randall Price, *Secrets of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1996, p. 161-162.
  3. -*Ibid.*
  4. -J. Paul Tanner, “The Literary Structure of the Book of Daniel” in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. 137, No. 545, Dallas, TX: Dallas Theological Seminary, Jan.-Mar., 1968, p. 273.
  5. -Gleason Archer, “Modern Rationalism and the Book of Daniel,” in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Dallas, TX: Dallas Theological Seminary, Vol. 136, No. 542, April-June, 1979, pp. 129-147.
  6. -Kenneth A. Kitchen, et al., “The Aramaic of Daniel,” in *Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel*, London: Tyndale Press, 1965, p. 43, qtd. in Waltke, pp. 324.

## CHAPTER 9

### CONTEMPORANEOUS EVIDENCE

A final point of evidence indicating the early date of Daniel's authorship involves the fact that other widely-accepted 6<sup>th</sup> century writers claim to have been contemporaries of Daniel. In other words, these works themselves testify that Daniel was active at the same time they were.

Most significantly is the fact that Daniel is repeatedly mentioned in the Old Testament Book of Ezekiel. Even most critics widely accept the Book of Ezekiel as being written in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century B.C.<sup>1</sup>

Even the body critics who deny the Book of Ezekiel as being written by the historical Israelite prophet bearing that name, do not place the composition of Ezekiel late enough to deny the existence of genuine predictive prophecy in Daniel. But what is fascinating, is that the author, Ezekiel, explicitly refers to Daniel in Ezekiel 14:14, 20, and 28:3. This implies that Daniel was alive during his time. But the evidence is even more specific.

Ezekiel prophesied only about fifteen years after Daniel was taken as a captive to Babylon and after the initial historical events recorded in the Book of Daniel had taken place. Ezekiel's writings testify to Daniel's righteousness and God-given wisdom, providing exactly the sort of evidence one would expect as validation of Daniel's historicity.

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In Ezekiel's Old Testament book composed between 592 and 570 B.C.,<sup>2</sup> the prophet plainly refers to his contemporary Daniel as a famous person of history known to his countrymen, one whose righteousness and wisdom stood in stark contrast to the majority of his rebellious and ungodly nation. Ezekiel refers to Daniel's great wisdom in Ezekiel 28:3, (which is in perfect harmony with the Book of Daniel, which says that God gave Daniel wisdom in Daniel 1:17), and refers to Daniel's righteousness in Ezekiel 14:14 and 20 (confirmed in Daniel 6:16, 20; 12:2-3, 13). What this shows us is quite simple: Ezekiel, in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century B.C., couldn't have referred to Daniel as the real person described in the Book of Daniel if he was a fictional character invented and/or embellished upon many centuries later.

The simple understanding regarding Ezekiel's mention of Daniel is that Daniel's reputation was well known, even at an early time in his life, hence Ezekiel's reference to Daniel's character and wisdom. This was also the view of Josephus.<sup>3</sup>

This would be only natural if Daniel's reputation was already established by the time Ezekiel arrived in Babylon. So, the Book of Ezekiel – as a contemporary witness – helps to authenticate the legitimacy and early authorship of Daniel and his Biblical book.

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1. -Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, p. 410.
  2. -Ibid.
  3. -Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, X, 11.7, p. 340.

## CHAPTER 10

### CONCLUSION

**A**s we conclude this examination of the prophetic validity of the Book of Daniel, we can have confidence in the fact that it was actually written at the time the Bible claims. Let's recap what we have examined...

First, we established the main points of evidence that validate Daniel as a genuine prophetic source as well as the evidence it was written well prior to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century Maccabean period – the dating most liberal critics try to assign to it. Those points of evidence were as follows:

- Daniel was written prior to the time of Christ (the 1<sup>st</sup> Century A.D.)

All serious scholars clearly recognize this, and truly, it goes without saying. But we included it as a point just to emphasize that even if the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century Maccabean dating was correct, it wouldn't do harm to the prophetic validity of Daniel, as the book contains maybe the most incredible prophecy in the Bible (Daniel 9:25), which acts an exact countdown for the arrival of Christ – fulfilling it to the very day. It then prophesies of the events that followed, including the Messiah's

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death and the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. So, because all admit Daniel was written well prior to the time of Christ, the validity of Daniel as being genuine prophecy is established – if for no other reason – solely on those grounds.

- Daniel was written before the Septuagint (2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Centuries B.C.)

The Septuagint (the Hebrew Scriptures translated into Greek) was completed several hundred years before Christ. Daniel was included in the Septuagint as part of the Hebrew Scriptural canon. Therefore, we know Daniel was already translated into Greek around the same time the liberal critics try to assign its original authorship! Furthermore, in order for a book to have been written, circulated, and accepted as Scripture by the general Jewish population, some time was necessary – indicating that its original date of authorship must have been well prior to the date of its translation in the Septuagint.

- Daniel was written before the Dead Sea Scrolls (2<sup>nd</sup> Century B.C.)

Another point of evidence backing up our last point is that manuscripts of Daniel were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls uncovered at Qumran. Scholars analyzing these manuscripts have determined that the Daniel fragments demonstrate script from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century B.C. Since the Qumran documents are all copies of an earlier original, and taking into account the same points of evidence we just mentioned for the Septuagint, we should recognize that substantial time needed to pass in order for it to be venerated as Scripture and found in the Dead Sea Scrolls collection. Again, the evidence pushes back the date of original authorship to well prior to the Maccabean period.

- Daniel was written prior to the conquest of Jerusalem by Alexander the Great (4<sup>th</sup> Century B.C.)

A historical recording by Josephus states that upon his entry into the conquered city of Jerusalem, Alexander was presented with a scroll of the prophecies of Daniel, which described his career and accomplishments in advance. Alexander was so impressed that he spared the city and allowed the Jews to continue in the traditions of their fathers. This event is dated to around 332 B.C., meaning Daniel must have been written sometime prior to that.

We then examined a number of additional supporting points that all indicate Daniel was written at the time the Bible claims. Let's briefly review each...

- Evidence from Josephus and the Jewish Scriptural canon

History shows that the Jews had always accepted the Book of Daniel as a part of their canon of Scriptures. We have also seen that the Jews always believed that no books were added to their Scriptures after Artaxerxes' reign (in other words, nothing later than 425 B.C.). Hence, they did not believe in the later dating of Daniel as being composed in the time of Antiochus (2<sup>nd</sup> Century B.C.), during the Maccabean period. So then, we may state that ancient Judaism, with a united voice, ascribes the authorship of the Book of Daniel to the 6<sup>th</sup> Century prophet Daniel, at the time it claims to have been written.

- Archeological/Historical evidence

We have good evidence that the Book of Daniel was written no later than the Medo-Persian era from the fact that the author relates details of his time which were unknown to historians until recently, and which would have been unlikely to have been accurately recorded by a much later pseudonymous writer located in Judea, far away from Babylon.

- Paleographical/Linguistic evidence

Old Testament scholars have concluded that the Aramaic in Daniel

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is closer to the form used in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Centuries B.C. than to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century B.C. So, we can see that the paleographical analysis of Daniel demonstrates it to have a much earlier authorship than the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century B.C.

- Contemporaneous evidence

The Book of Ezekiel – as a contemporary 6<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. witness – helps to authenticate the legitimacy and early authorship of Daniel and his Biblical book. Since Ezekiel not only mentions Daniel multiple times, but also corroborates the same description of Daniel portrayed in the Book of Daniel, we have a contemporary source providing outside validation. Ezekiel, in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century B.C., couldn't have referred to Daniel as the real person described in the Book of Daniel if he was a fictional character invented and/or embellished upon many centuries later in the Maccabean period.

So, with these many astonishing confirmations in view, we can recognize the soundness of the Book of Daniel as being a valid prophetic account established hundreds of years before the events spoken of took place.



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