

Establishing The Prophetic Validity Of The Book Of Daniel



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Introduction

Many 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).

-Jack Finegan, "Handbook of Biblical Chronology," rev. ed., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998, p. 254.

-Edwin R. Thiele, "The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings," new rev. ed., Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1994, pp. 183-185.

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 6th 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.

-Paul T. Butler, "Daniel," Joplin, MO: College Press, 1970, p. 4.

While conservative scholars date the book to the 6th century B.C., liberal critical scholars of course, disagree. Due in large part 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 2nd century B.C. work (written after the fact) rather than an authentic 6th century B.C. work written by Daniel, as it claims.

-ibid., p. 5.

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 also provides the clearest and most accurate prophecy pinpointing the timeline of the appearance of the Messiah – an event fulfilled exactly as Daniel predicted (to the very day) in the first 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 11th Chapter) were ignored, the prophetic nature of this book is still firmly established elsewhere.

Put differently, even if the late dating of Daniel to the 2nd 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 2nd century B.C. time period! So, even if it was written in the 2nd century B.C., it still is prophetic as it deals with 1st century A.D. fulfillments.

But making the concession that the critics are correct about the late dating of Daniel is not necessary. In fact, the direct opposite becomes obvious when you recognize that there are a number of reasons that force one to acknowledge 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.

Daniel Was Written Before Christ (1st Century A.D.)

First, 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).

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

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 – 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 2nd century B.C. Let's continue...

Daniel Was Written Before The Septuagint (2nd – 3rd Centuries B.C.)

The 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 3rd century B.C. and then the rest of the Old Testament was translated in the 2nd century B.C.

-<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Septuagint> (Retrieved 8/9/18)

So, we should recognize that Daniel was already translated into Greek (the Septuagint) at 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 essentially 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 written quite some time earlier.

So, the fact that Daniel was included in the Septuagint is an evidence that pushes the date of its authorship back to before the 2nd century B.C. But there is more evidence that confirms this...

Daniel Was Written Before The Dead Sea Scrolls (2nd Century B.C.)

The 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 2nd century B.C."
-Frank M. Cross, "The Ancient Library of Qumran," 2nd ed. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1961, p. 43.

So, it has been long established that fragmentary copies of Daniel found in the Dead Sea Scrolls date to the 2nd 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 2nd 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 2nd 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 2nd century dating of the book of Daniel was...

“absolutely precluded by the evidence from Qumran...”

-Roland K. Harrison, “Introduction to the Old Testament,” Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1969, p. 1127.

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 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.”

-Roland K. Harrison, “Daniel, Book of,” in “The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia,” ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Revised, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979–1988, pp. 861–862.

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...

The Daniel fragments from Qumran are also very significant because the Masoretic Text (MT) – the Hebrew source text from which our Bibles’ Old Testaments are translated – comes from a major manuscript that is dated to 1008 A.D.

-Ernst Würthwein, “The Text of the Old Testament,” 2nd ed., Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979, p. 35.

Thus, because of the discovery of the Scrolls, we are now, for the first time in history, able to compare the Hebrew and Aramaic of the Book of Daniel with manuscripts of the same book that are about 1,000 years older. According to Alfred Mertens, a comparison between the Masoretic Text and the 1,000-year-earlier Qumran manuscripts reveals that:

“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.”

-Alfred Mertens, “Das Buch Daniel im Lichte der Texte vom Toten Meer,” in “Stuttgarter Biblische Monographien 12,” Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1971, p. 31.

These textual witnesses 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.

But there are also historical records that necessitate an earlier dating of Daniel. Let's continue...

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 1st century historian (in "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..."

-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.

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.

-ibid.

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.

Obviously, this whole concept of the book of Daniel being showed to Alexander in the early 330's B.C. – which Josephus records as history – indicates 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!

Let's now discuss some further evidences from Josephus and the Jewish Scriptural canon...

Further Evidence from Josephus and the Jewish Scriptural Canon

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

“The ancient Hebrews never called [Daniel’s] genuineness or authenticity in question,”

-Albert Barnes, “Notes on the Old Testament: Daniel, Vol. 1,” London: Blackie & Son, 1853, p. 8.

Roger Beckwith says:

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

-Roger T. Beckwith, “The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church and Its Background in Early Judaism,” London: SPCK, 1985, p. 357.

The earliest Jewish historian in antiquity, Josephus, believed without any question that Daniel authored the book bearing his name.

-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.

-“Biblical Figures in Josephus,” in “The Encyclopedia of Judaism,” eds., Jacob Neusner, Alan J. Avery-Peck, and William Scott Green, Boston: Brill, 2000, p. 1,788.

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.”

-Josephus, “The Antiquities of the Jews,” X, 11.7, p. 341.

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.”

-ibid.

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.).

-<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Artaxerxes-I> (Retrieved 1/02/19)

-Josephus, “Flavius Josephus Against Apion,” 1.8, pp. 929-930.

The reign of Artaxerxes is the same time of the writing of Malachi – the last book in the Old Testament.

-<http://blogs.blueletterbible.org/blb/2012/05/29/josephus-historical-evidence-of-the-old-testament-canon/> (Retrieved 1/02/19)

So, we have seen that Josephus viewed Daniel as a prophet who authored the Book of Daniel, 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 5th century B.C. There is, then, no honest way to read Josephus

without understanding that he viewed the date of Daniel to have been written prior to the 5th 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 were rejected from the divine canon. Why not Daniel as well – if it came from the same era?

-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.

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 425 B.C.). Hence, they did not believe in the later dating of Daniel as being composed in the time of Antiochus (2nd 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 sixth-century prophet Daniel, at the time it claims to have been written. No other conclusion can be drawn.

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.”

-Robert Anderson, “The Coming Prince,” 10th ed., Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, repr. 1957, Preface, xi-xli.

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. Let’s take a brief look at each of these...

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:

- Except for information provided by Daniel (Daniel 4:30), earlier historians did not know that Nebuchadnezzar had rebuilt Babylon.

Peter Masters says the following:

“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.”

-Peter Masters, "A Tour of Biblical Evidence in the British Museum in Bible and Spade," Vol. 13, No. 2, in "Associates for Biblical Research," Spring, 2000, p. 54.

- 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.

-<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magi> (Retrieved 1/01/19)

- 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 the following:

“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.”

-Harrison, pp. 1120-1121.

- Daniel records the Babylonian leadership being involved in revelry (or, 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.

-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.

-"Encyclopedia Judaica," CDROM Edition Version 1.0, ed. Geoffrey Wigoder, Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, Ltd., 1997, Art. "Belshazzar."

But neither Herodotus or Xenophon make mention of Belshazzar who is closely associated with the revelry in Daniel 5 (*ibid.*). This implies that the Greek historians reflect an external source for the same historical information recorded by Daniel regarding the party. If past experience holds, one can expect that secular history will one day find Daniel (and the Greek historians) correct on this point.

- Daniel 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" (also depicted by the unequally sized horns in Daniel 8:3).

John Whitcomb says the following:

"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. 1 Macc. 6:56)."

-John C. Whitcomb, "Darius the Mede," Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1959, p. 55.

- Daniel shows knowledge regarding details of geopolitical boundaries which would almost certainly have been lost to a later pseudonymous writer of the 2nd 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 tells us the following:

“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.”

-Gleason Archer, “A Survey of Old Testament Introduction,” Chicago, IL: Moody Press. 1998 p. 445.

- 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.

However, 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.

-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.

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.

-livius.org/na-nd/nabonidus/cylinder-ur.html (Retrieved 1/01/19)
(The Nabonidus Cylinder from Ur, trans. Paul-Alain Beaulieu).

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.

-"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.

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.

-Ibid, p. 313.

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.

-Josh McDowell, “Daniel in the Critics’ Den,” San Bernardino, CA: Campus Crusade for Christ, 1979, p. 64.

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 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 following:

“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.”

-Bruce K. Waltke, “The Date of the Book of Daniel,” in “Bibliotheca Sacra,” Vol. 133, No. 532, Dallas, TX: Dallas Theological Seminary, October-December, 1976, pp. 328-329.

Paleographical/Linguistic Evidence

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 2nd century B.C.

-“Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible,” Vol. I, ed. Walter A. Elwell, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1988, p. 573.

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 2nd century B.C.

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 5th century B.C. or earlier.

-Randall Price, “Secrets of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1996, p. 161-162.

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 4th and 5th century B.C. than to the 2nd century B.C. So, we can see that the

paleographical comparison of the documents at Qumran with Daniel demonstrates that the Aramaic in Daniel is a much earlier composition than the 2nd century B.C.

-ibid.

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 2nd century B.C. document written in Aramaic – the same period during which liberal 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.

-J. Paul Tanner, "The Literary Structure of the Book of Daniel in *Bibliotheca Sacra*," Vol. 137, No. 545, Dallas, TX: Dallas Theological Seminary, January-March, 1968, p. 273.

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 (admittedly written in the 2nd century B.C.) reflects a much later style than the language of Daniel.

-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.

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 says the following:

“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 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.’”

-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.

So, we can conclude that the paleographical/linguistic evidences force a belief in the early dating of the Book of Daniel. Let’s now examine another piece of evidence...

Contemporaneous Evidence

Daniel is repeatedly mentioned in the Old Testament Book of Ezekiel. Most critics widely accept the Book of Ezekiel as being written in the 6th century B.C.

-Archer, "A Survey of Old Testament Introduction," p. 410.

Even the body of Scripture 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, clearly 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. Let's continue...

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.

In Ezekiel's Old Testament book composed between 592 and 570 B.C., (ibid.) 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 (Ezekiel 28:3), which is in perfect harmony with the Book of Daniel, which says that God gave Daniel wisdom (Daniel 1:17), and the Book of Daniel clearly evidences Daniel's righteousness (cf. Dan. 6:16, 20; 12:2-3, 13). What this tells us is very clear:

Ezekiel, in the 6th 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.

-Josephus, "The Antiquities of the Jews," X, 11.7, p. 340.

This would be only natural because 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.

Conclusion

As we conclude this examination of the prophetic validity of the Book of Daniel, we should be confident 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 2nd 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 1st 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 2nd 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 prophecies of the events that followed, including the Messiah's 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 (2nd – 3rd 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 (2nd 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 2nd 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 (4th 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 (2nd 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 sixth-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 is closer to the form used in the 4th and 5th century B.C. than to the 2nd century B.C. So, we can see that the paleographical analysis of Daniel demonstrates it to have a much earlier authorship than the 2nd century B.C.

- Contemporaneous evidence

The Book of Ezekiel – as a contemporary 6th 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 6th 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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