



THE BOOK OF DANIEL

No other book in the Bible has been attacked like the Book of Daniel. For 1600 years, beginning with Porphyry, a Syrian, in the Third Century, the book has been in the "Critic's Den" and fiercely assailed by sceptical writers. Porphyry claimed that instead of being written by Daniel about B. C. 533, it was a forgery written in the time of the Maccabees about B. C. 168, and after Antiochus Epiphanes, so clearly foretold in the book, had appeared, and was written to comfort and encourage the Jews in those trying times. Some modern critics claim that Daniel, if such a person ever lived, had nothing to do with the book at all, that a holy, pious, and gifted Jew, who lived after the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, (B. C. 165), wrote it, and that it is pure fiction. But how could a man who would write such a book and try to palm it off as real history be a holy and pious Jew? This shows to what an extremity those who do not want to accept the book, because it foretells the future, are driven.

There is no question but that the Book of Daniel existed long before the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, B. C. 175-165. How did it get into the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Scriptures, that was completed in B. C. 285, or over 100 years before it is claimed that a pious Jew wrote it? Josephus, the Jewish Historian, gives us a history of the Jewish people from Abraham down to the destruction of Jerusalem . A. D. 70. Narrating incidents of the struggle with Antiochus Epiphanes, he says that these things came to pass **"according to the prophecy of Daniel which was given 408 years before."** Which means, according to Josephus, that the Book of Daniel was written about B. C. 573. Josephus also tells us that when Alexander the Great, who is foretold in Daniel's prophecies ([Dan. 8:5-8](#)) came in the course of his conquests to Jerusalem, B. C. 332, that Jaddua, the High Priest, showed him the reference to himself in the Book of Daniel, which so pleased him that he spared the city. According to this the Book of Daniel must have been written prior to B. C. 332. Again, Ezekiel was a contemporary of Daniel, and wrote in Babylon the book which bears his name. He was held in high esteem by his fellow exiles and was much consulted by them. If Daniel was in Babylon in high official position Ezekiel must have known it. But he need not necessarily have mentioned Daniel in his book. But he does. Three times his name is mentioned—

"Though these three men, Noah, DANIEL, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God." [Ezek. 14:14,20; 28:3.](#)

Thus Ezekiel bears witness to the fact that such a man as Daniel existed, and that he was so noted for his righteousness as to be classed with Noah, and for his wisdom as to be classed with Job.

But the highest authority for the authenticity of the Book of Daniel is our Lord, who said in His Olivet Discourse—

"When ye therefore shall see the 'Abomination of Desolation,' spoken of by DANIEL THE PROPHET, stand in the Holy Place, whoso readeth, let him understand." [Matt. 24:15.](#)

Whosoever therefore denies the Authenticity of the Book of Daniel impeaches the integrity and wisdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, for He, in the above quotation, affirms that there was such a Prophet as Daniel, and that He foretold that there was such a thing as the

"Abomination of Desolation" to stand in the Holy Place of the Temple.

THE ARGUMENT OF SILENCE

It is claimed that no such person of influence and authority as Daniel ever lived at Babylon, because the name Daniel does not appear upon the monuments or among the historical records of Babylonia. The claim is premature because comparatively few such records have been unearthed or deciphered, and the absence of Daniel's name is no proof, for his Jewish name Daniel was changed to the heathen name Belteshazzar. Neither is it any proof because the name Belteshazzar does not appear, for the name might have been abbreviated and spelled differently, as was often the custom with lengthy names. The fact then of silence is no argument. For illustration, we read in [Luke 2:41-50](#) that when Jesus was 12 years of age He went up to Jerusalem at the "Feast of the Passover." Did He not go up to any other Feast between that time and when He entered on His Public Ministry? We do not know. The Scriptures are silent. We know from John's Gospel that He went up to the Feasts regularly after His Baptism, is it not reasonable to suppose that He did before? The "Law" required every male to regularly attend the Feasts, and as Jesus scrupulously kept the Law, the inference is that He from His twelfth year went regularly to the Feasts, at least to the Passover Feast, which was a type of Himself. The silence then as to Daniel's name among the Babylonian records is no proof that he never existed.

It is a fact that we must not forget, that heathen monarchs, like Nebuchadnezzar, recorded on the monuments only the things that glorified themselves, and the great men of their Empires are not mentioned. What about the governors, judges, generals, priests, wise men, and the sculptors, architects, engineers, etc., who planned, and supervised the building of the magnificent walls, towers, bridges, tubes, temples and palaces of "Great Babylon?" Their names do not appear upon the records, why then Daniel's?

The Book of Daniel is discounted because it does not give a list of kings between Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. But why should it? It would seem from the record that Daniel was deposed from his high office at the death of Nebuchadnezzar, and does not publicly appear until he is called on to pronounce the doom of Belshazzar. Why then should he record events, etc., not connected with the purpose of his book?

The presence of fifteen Persian and three Greek words in the Book of Daniel has led some to claim that the book could not have been written as early as B. C. 533. But the presence of these words is an argument for the early date. If the book had been written in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, the author would not only have inserted a few Greek words, but he would have incorporated in it many Greek expressions and ideas. The Greek words are the names of musical instruments, probably imported by Nebuchadnezzar from Greece, or played by Greek musicians captured in war. The use of foreign words is confirmatory of Daniel's presence at the court of a country that was constantly being visited by emissaries from other lands.

Proofs of the Authenticity of the Book

Mention is made in [Dan. 1:3](#) of Ashpenaz, Master of the Eunuchs. The word in the original is **Rabsaris**. But until about twenty-five years ago the word was not found upon the monuments of Babylon, and its absence was used by the critics as proof that there was no such official at the court of Nebuchadnezzar, and therefore the Book of Daniel was not authentic. But the name has been discovered upon a conical brick preserved in the British Museum, thus proving that Daniel is right. ("Inspiration and Accuracy of the Holy Scriptures." John Urquhart. P. 358-359)

We are told in [Dan. 1:2](#) that Nebuchadnezzar carried the vessels of the House of God (the Temple at Jerusalem) "into the land of Shinar, to the house of his god." From an inscription left by Nebuchadnezzar we find that it was his custom to thus place the choicest of his spoils in the house of his god. Could a writer, writing 400 years later, who knew nothing whatever of Nebuchadnezzar's custom, ascribe such conduct to him?

Again, the fact that at the Babylonian court there were a class of men called "**seers**," who were classified as magicians, astrologers, and sorcerers, and over which Daniel was made head, is another proof of the historical character of the book, for a later fictional writer, picturing a vanished state of society after his imagination, would not be likely to give the proper classification.

THE GENTILE NATIONS

While the Book of Daniel treats of the "Times of the Gentiles," it does not give an outline of all the Gentile nations, but only of those which were successively to have sway over the territory of the "Prophetic Earth," or that part of the earth covered by the Old Roman Empire. Bible prophecy has nothing to say about the nations as such in their relation to one another, but only in their relation to Israel and the Holy Land.

"When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam (at Babel), He set the bounds of the people ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL." [Deut. 32:8](#).

The key to all prophecy is the Jew. If the Jewish nation had not forsaken God and neglected His Sabbaths, there would have been no "Times of the Gentiles." The "Times of the Gentiles" began when God transferred earthly rule from the Kings of Israel to the Gentile king Nebuchadnezzar, and they will continue until Israel again becomes the "Head of the Nations." Daniel is distinctly the Prophet of the "Times of the Gentiles." His vision sweeps the whole course of Gentile World Rule until the setting up of the Messianic or Millennial Kingdom of Christ. Daniel was not a Prophet in the same sense that Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Minor Prophets were prophets. Their mission was to go to the people and proclaim the Word of the Lord, while Daniel's mission was to record what was revealed to him

through visions. While he did not have the "Prophetic Office," he had the "Prophetic Gift." The Book of Daniel is the Apocalypse of the Old Testament, as the Book of Revelation is the Apocalypse of the New Testament, and one cannot be understood without the other, and it is worthy of note that as Daniel is thrice called the man "greatly beloved," the Apostle John is called the "beloved disciple." To these two men was accorded the privilege of seeing in vision the whole "course of time" from B. C. 606, on down to the Second Coming of Christ.

THE DIVISIONS OF THE BOOK

The Book naturally divides itself into two grand divisions of six chapters each. The first division is mainly "Historical," and the second is "Prophetical." The Book is written in two languages. The first chapter, and the first three verses of the second are written in Hebrew, and so are chapters 8 to 12, but from the fourth verse of the second chapter to the end of the seventh the language is Aramaic, the ancient language of Syria, and substantially identical with Chaldaic, the language of ancient Babylonia, and the language at that time of trade and international intercourse. The use of the two languages is apparent. What concerns the Gentile Empires is written in their language, Aramaic, and what concerns the Jews is written in Hebrew. This is evidence that the Book was written at Babylon, and written by a Jew. As further evidence the Hebrew is the same in style as the Hebrew of Ezekiel, who was a captive at Babylon at the same time as Daniel.

DANIEL

Of Daniel himself we know more than of any of the other prophets. He was of the Tribe of Judah, and of noble, if not royal, blood. He was carried captive from Jerusalem in the third year of Jehoiakim, B. C. 606, in the first invasion of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar. He was probably twenty years of age when he was taken to Babylon, and in a short time he rose to a very high position in the Empire, which he held during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. At his death Daniel went into retirement and is not heard of again until he was summoned to pronounce the doom of Belshazzar. He lived through the whole period of the "Seventy Years Captivity," and became the "Chief President" over the 120 Princes of the Kingdom, under Darius the Median, when he was at least ninety years old. He is the only spotless character in the Bible outside of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is not one flaw to be found in his character. He was a man "greatly beloved" of God. He associated with kings and politicians. He led a public life. He held office, yet his character was never impeached. He talked with angels. The Lord Himself appeared unto him, and he had visions of God. He was a great man of faith, and though his name is not mentioned in the great "Faith Chapter" of the New Testament, he is referred to in it as one who "stopped the mouths of lions." [Heb. 11:33](#). He was the—

PROPHETIC STATESMAN

of his day. It was given to him to study the "**SIGNS OF THE TIMES**," to know the outcome of all the world's boasted civilization, and to see that the nations of the earth should degenerate in political power until the clay of democracy, socialism, and anarchy should so weaken the nations that there would be no cohesion among them, and that the only salvation for a chaotic world would be the return of Christ, and the setting up of His Millennial Kingdom.

FIRST DIVISION: HISTORICAL

Chapters 1-6

THE HEBREW CAPTIVES

*"And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes; children in whom was no blemish, but well favored, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. . . . Now among these were of the Children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: unto whom the 'Prince of the Eunuchs' gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of '**Beltshazzar**;' and to Hananiah, of '**Shadrach**;' and to Mishael, of '**Meshach**;' and to Azariah, of '**Abednego**.'" [Dan. 1:3-4,6-7](#).*

The Prophet Isaiah said to King Hezekiah—

*"Hear the word of the Lord of Hosts: behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, **shall be carried to Babylon**: nothing shall be left, saith the Lord. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away: and they shall be **EUNUCHS** in the palace of the King of Babylon." [Isa. 39:5-7](#).*

We see from this Scripture that the four Hebrew captives, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, as they were of royal blood, were descendants of the good king Hezekiah, and that they were made **EUNUCHS**. This is confirmed by the fact that they were turned over to the "Prince of the Eunuchs," who changed their names, and who had supervision over them for three years. The name of Daniel (God is my Judge) was changed to "Beltshazzar" (Whom Bel favors); Hananiah (Beloved of the Lord) to "**Shadrach**" (Illumined by the Sun-God); Mishael (Who is as God) to "**Meshach**" (Who is like Venus); and Azariah (the Lord is my help) to "**Abednego**" (The servant of Nego). The purpose in changing their names was to wean them away from their land and religion, and get them to adopt the religion and habits of the heathen nation where their future was to be spent.

But changing a man's name does not change his character, and these young men had been too deeply rooted in the religion and faith of their own nation to adopt the practices of a heathen nation. There is a striking similarity between the experience of Joseph in Egypt and of Daniel in Babylon. Both were Hebrews. Both were prisoners in a strange and heathen land. Both were dreamers, and revealers of dreams. The moral character of each was severely tested. That of Joseph in the house of Potiphar ([Gen. 39](#)), and that of Daniel in the king's palace. These tests were especially severe on account of their age at the time. They were both about twenty. But both stood firm. Both were a great blessing to the homes where they dwelt, and both were raised to positions of great honor. The secret was their loyalty to their God.

The testing for Daniel and his companions was along the line of their religion. They were commanded to be fed with royal dainties and wine from the King's table.

"And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank : so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king." [Dan. 1:5](#)

Now such fare, and from such a source, would be very attractive and appetizing for youths of a carnal nature, and they could have congratulated themselves that they had been selected for such an honor, and that they were to spend their lives in the midst of the comforts, luxuries, and pleasures of Babylon. There were many excuses they might have made to each other, such as that they were captives and must obey, or that they must comply with the customs of the country, for to disobey would cost them the favor of the king, and interfere with their advancement, and might even cost them their lives, which danger three of them actually did face when they were cast into the "Burning Fiery Furnace." They knew to refuse the food would make them appear singular, and expose them to criticism and ridicule, but they felt that for them there could be no compromise. For they knew that the meat from the King's table would at times be of a kind forbidden by the Law of their God, as swine's flesh (see [Lev. 11](#)) ; or it might be meat from which the blood had not been drawn ([Lev. 17:10-14](#)); or it might be meat that had first been offered to an idol, and to eat of which might be looked upon as approving the religious customs of Babylon ([1 Cor. 8](#)), and cause them to be ceremonially defiled. There was therefore but one course to pursue, and in it Daniel was supported by his three companions, and so we read—

"But Daniel purposed in his HEART that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the 'Prince of the Eunuchs' that he might not defile himself." [Dan. 1:8](#)

Daniel knew that he could only be defiled by his own act. Therefore he purposed in his heart not to **defile himself**. It was the crisis in his life, which was safely passed, otherwise we probably would never have heard of him again. We next read that God honored his loyalty by preparing in advance a way of deliverance.

"Now God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the Prince of the Eunuchs. And the Prince of the Eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king." [Dan. 1:9-10](#).

To this Daniel had a courteous reply. He did not assume a sanctimonious air, nor make a blatant display of his religious views. He made no assault on the Chaldean religion and the worship of idols, but in a frank and courteous manner made his request—

"Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the Prince of the Eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenances of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants." [Dan. 1:11-13](#).

This was a fair test. Daniel did not want to get the "Prince of the Eunuchs" into trouble and cause him to lose his head, and so he arranged the matter in this way satisfactorily with Melzar the Steward. Ten days was sufficient time to prove whether "pulse and water" would keep them in good condition.

*"So he (Melzar the Steward) consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days. And at the end of ten days **their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat**. Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse."* [Dan. 1:14-16](#).

What was the outcome of the test?

*"As for these four children, **GOD gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.**"* [Dan. 1:17](#).

Like Joseph and Moses, Daniel and his companions received their training in the palace of a king. They were chosen from among others to learn the language and literature of the Chaldeans, so as to act as wise men and councillors at court. There was nothing wrong in that. There is nothing in the Christian religion that forbids the acquisition of knowledge, or the study of the sciences, although it is a pathway beset with temptations that may lead to a loss of faith in God and His Word, but in Daniel's case there were no bad results. The fact that Daniel and his companions underwent a three-year course of instruction implies that there was a "Palace School" or "National University" for the instruction and training of youth of noble descent, and that such were fed from the King's table, and therefore the school could not have been far away from the Palace, and that the special subject of study was the literature and language of a certain

people called Chaldeans. Now we know from the clay libraries of Nineveh and Babylon that the Chaldeans were a learned people. They had made great advances in grammar, mathematics, astronomy, and the sciences. We must not forget that Babylon was located on the site of Babel, and that the people of Babel inherited all the skill and wisdom of the Antediluvians, who were the inventors of musical instruments, and skilled workers in iron. ([Gen. 4:20-22.](#))

*"Now at the end of the days (three years) that the king had said he should bring them in, then the Prince of the Eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king. And in **all matters of wisdom and understanding**, that the king inquired of them, he found them **TEN TIMES** better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm." [Dan. 1:18-20.](#)*

There is a beautiful lesson for us in all this. Daniel and his companions had no hope of returning to their native land, at least not for seventy years, and they had every reason for falling in with the customs of the land. They did not act as they did because they foresaw that the end would be prosperity, they had every reason to expect the reverse, yet the outcome was that Daniel was made the "Chief of the Governors" over all the wise men of Babylon ([Dan. 2:48](#)), and the counsellor of Belshazzar, and "Prime Minister" under Darius. Let us like Daniel live

THE SEPARATED LIFE.

As Christians we find ourselves captives in the Babylonian life of worldliness and pleasure that surrounds us, and many of us instead of being transformed are conformed to this world. We have fallen in with the spirit of this "Present Evil Age," and are living a life of "**Compromise**," the outcome of which is a life of powerlessness and spiritual barrenness, the result of which is we have no "dreams" or "visions" of the things that God is waiting to reveal to us out of His Holy Word. Let us dare to be a Daniel in these days of Babylonian worldliness.