

Daniel



Lesson 2-The Time and Setting of Daniel

Focus: Daniel 1:1-2

❖ What do we know about the time when Daniel was written?

- The Book of Daniel marks many dates when the various visions were given, and recorded. The events and time periods are well dated. Babylon conquered the Assyrian Empire in 612 B.C. The Egyptians were defeated by them as well **in 605 B.C.** The Persians conquered Babylon in 539 B.C. Daniel lived throughout the 70 year Jewish period of captivity. He lived and served both in Babylon and Persia's reigns. **The latest vision Daniel records having was in the "third year of Cyrus [Persian]" (536 B.C.; Dan. 10:1). Daniel's book was no doubt completed by Cyrus' 9th year (about 530 B.C.).**
- Many critics have argued that Daniel is a fraudulent book; that it could not have been written so early because its prophecies are so detailed and accurate. They don't want to believe and therefore say, "How could it have been?" Generally these try to put its authorship around the time of Antiochus Epiphanes (175-163 B.C.). *However*, their arguments are not compelling. The prophecies of Daniel point out many, just as detailed events that were to occur during and after the time of the 1st Century Roman Empire. Critics arguments are defeated!!
- Daniel was a book that existed **long before the days of Jesus**, in the 1st Century! Notice how Jesus even refers to it in His teachings (**Matthew 24:15**).
- **Much of the Jews History** (their captivity period) is **wrapped up around the events described in the book of Daniel**. (This Holy Writing was a well accepted Scripture among them for a long time). The Jewish prophets are all interrelated in their writings and make a very detailed and accurate account of Historical events concerning them. For example, the prophet **Ezekiel**, who spoke of Jerusalem's destruction, **mentions Daniel three times in his book (Ezekiel 14:14,20; 28:3)**—It is no secret to history about Jerusalem's destruction by the Babylonians or it's restoration during the Persian period. The writings and prophecies of Daniel surround this period and that beyond!!
- The Apostle John, who recorded the **vision of Revelation around AD 90** (the last New Testament book in the Bible), elaborated on some of the very events Daniel describes.
- **The Dead Sea Scrolls** are also worth mentioning. **Between the years of 1946 to 1956** there were **972 ancient** parchment and papyrus **documents** found in 11 caves near the Dead Sea in Judea/Israel (Qumran community). Many of those documents were Jewish (Hebrew) Scriptures. They contain copies of many books in the Bible (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Genesis to Deuteronomy, etc.). **Eight manuscripts of Daniel** were found there too. All of the Dead Sea manuscripts (not just Daniel) generally date between 150BC and AD 70— they are some of the oldest known parchment copies of the Hebrew Scriptures. The translation of Daniel we have in our Bibles today is in very accurate agreement to these.

Daniel existed long before the time of the Qumran community which existed nearly 200 years before the time of Christ.

- ❖ **Jerusalem was destroyed by the King of Babylon—Many of the Jews were taken as captives into the land of Babylon (Read Daniel 1:1-2)**
 - The Bible says, “The Lord gave Jehoiakim King of Judah into his [Nebuchadnezzar’s] hand...” (v.2). *“The third year of Jehoiakim...” would have been **about 605 BC.***
- ❖ **Why do you think God would give up His people to be captured into a foreign land? And to have their homeland destroyed? What do the prophets say?**
 - “...worse than the heathen...” **(2 Chronicles 33:9-11)**
 - **What did Ezekiel say about the people’s sins? (Ezekiel 22:8,26,31; 23:37,38) What did he say about their punishment? (Ezekiel 17:12, taken captive to Babylon)**
 - **What did Jeremiah say? Jeremiah counseled** the king and people of Israel to go out of their cities and present themselves to the Babylonians in peace **(not to put up a fight)** (See **Jeremiah 38:17,18**)—This was their punishment from God. They were going to spend **70 years in the captivity of Babylon (Jeremiah 20:4; 25:11,12; 29:10)**. *His message to Israel was very **unpopular**. The people did not want to hear it, nor did the kings and nobles. They and the false prophets tried and said to resist Babylon. But the people were stuck in their cities, surrounded by the Babylonian armies for at least two years. People were starving to death; some were even eating their children. King Zedekiah of Judah tried to escape and he lost his sons and his eyes (Jer. 52:10,11).*
 - **What did Isaiah write about Israel’s sins? (Isaiah 56:2; 59:1,2, Sabbath breaking, etc.) What about their punishment? (Isaiah 39:6,7)**
 - **Lesson:** *More extreme measures of punishment have to be taken when people choose to live in stubborn, disobedient and sinful lives, refusing to listen to all authority!*
- ❖ **What did King Solomon Pray for Israel when their Temple was first dedicated to God? (2 Chronicles 6:36-39).** *If Israel chose to walk in complete rebellion to God’s Law and Covenant, then God had promised to send a terrible punishment upon them (Deuteronomy 28:49,50,53,58). Yet, God was merciful enough to restore His people, for those who would seek Him (ref. 2 Chronicles 7:14).*
- ❖ **How did Israel describe this captivity in their Psalms? (Psalm 137:1-9)***(note: this is a very famous Psalm of the Captivity period)*

Question (s) for the Heart:

Would you like to have the blessing and peace of God in your life? _____ *(instead of the cursings)*