

Key:

Purple – Introduction, Conclusion, Main Points, and Sermon Thread

Blue – Explanation/Exposition

Red – Application

Green – Illustration

Brown – Quotation

Yellow – Sermon Note

Introduction to Daniel—Every Knee Shall Bow

Daniel 1:1

Let's take our Bibles together and turn to the book of Daniel, in the OT. Daniel is my favorite book of the Bible. Several months ago when the guys from The Preacher's Guild suggested that the next book they preach through would be Daniel, I said "Yeah! Game on." I didn't say that externally, but internally. It was a great choice.

Now, why is Daniel my favorite book of the Bible? Well, I'll touch on that a bit today. But here are a few reasons. (1) First of all it's an amazing mixture of historical narrative, prophecy, and apocalyptic literature. Three of my favorite types of Scripture.

(2) Secondly it's about courageous countercultural faithfulness to the Lord. And that's inspiring. I've been inspired by that ever since I was a teenager... ever since I was the same age as Daniel when he was taken captive to Babylon, and he stared down the most powerful king in the world.

(3) And thirdly, I love the book of Daniel because Yahweh, the God of the Israelites is presented in this book as the true sovereign power in this world. And all the other kings and kingdoms will bow the knee to Daniel's God... to my God.

So, let's get into this book today. My job in the next few minutes is simply to introduce the book. I'll do that by giving you, "Four Historical Facts about the Book of Daniel." Then I'll give you, "Four False Claims about the Book of Daniel." And then I'll finish up by giving you, "Four Additional Details about the Book of Daniel."

Twelve points and then we're done. Let's go!

Let's start with the first of...

Four Historical Facts about the Book of Daniel:

Write this down. The Book of Daniel...

1) Takes place during the **Babylonian** captivity (Dan 1:1; 2 Kgs 24:12-16)

That historical reference point is given in the first verse of the book. Look at **Daniel 1:1**.

¹ In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it.

Now, here's what I want to do. I want to give you a five-minute summary of the entire OT, in order to get you up to speed historically with where this takes place. So stay with me here.

Let's start in around 2,000 BC in the Ur of the Chaldees. In those days, God called a man out of that pagan world to serve him and follow him. God called a man named Abram. And Abram believed God and followed God. And Abram's name was changed to Abraham.

And Abraham had two sons, Isaac and Ishmael. But the son of promise was Isaac, born to Abraham in his old age. And Isaac had two sons, Jacob and Esau. But the son of promise was Jacob. And Jacob had twelve sons and one daughter named Dinah. And those twelve sons became the twelve tribes of Israel. And the Jewish people were derived from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or Abraham, Isaac, and *Israel* (Jacob's name was changed to Israel).

And as part of God's plan, the Israelites went down to Egypt for 400 years and expanded into a great people. It was terrifying the Egyptians. So, Pharaoh enslaved them, and so they cried out to God for deliverance. In response, God raised up a deliverer named Moses. And Moses brought them out of Egypt and into the Promised Land... with a few detours along the way.

One detour was a good detour. They went to Sinai to receive the law. The other detour was a bad detour. They rebelled against God, so God made them wander in the wilderness for forty years. Even the stately Moses defied the Lord. He struck the rock instead of speaking to it, and so he got barred from the Promised Land.

But Joshua, Moses's successor, brought the people into the land. And the twelve tribes were allotted twelve portions of the land. And there was widespread victory as the people took the land that Abraham was promised hundreds of years earlier. This took place in roughly 1,500 BC. Technically I hold to an early date for the Exodus, which is closer to 1446 BC. But let's just say 1,500 BC and keep round numbers.

So if you are keeping track, in approximately 2,000 BC, God called Abraham. And around 1,500 BC, God brought the people out of Egypt and into the Promised Land. After that, the Israelites experienced a 400-year period of ups and downs we call the Judges period. The Israelites would forget God. Then the surrounding peoples would oppress them. They would cry out. And God would bring a warrior-savior-judge to rescue them.

This happened again and again and again. And the problems in Israel got increasingly worse. And after many iterations of this cycle, the Israelites began pleading for a king. They wanted a king like the other nations. Now God had always planned to give them a king. It was good that they wanted one. But their error was asking for a king like the other nations.

And so, God gave them a king like the other nations. He gave them a big strong oaf of a king named Saul. And Saul had no heart for God. He was a disaster. Then God gave them a better king. And that king had a whole heart for the Lord. His name was David. And then David had a son, and that son had half a heart for the Lord. His name was Solomon. And God promised David that he would have a Great Son that would save his people and rule the world. That greater-than-David, Son of David, king who would rule the world—just for the record—wasn't Solomon. That king came later.

And King David and King Solomon lived round about 1,000 BC. So 2,000 BC, God called Abraham. 1,500 BC God brought the Israelites out of Egypt. 1,000 BC, God anointed David King and promised him a great Son.

Now Solomon was a good ruler and king. But he drifted from God at the end of his reign. And his son was a total disaster—Rehoboam. Rehoboam was more like Reho-BOMB, because he blew up the kingdom. Because of his youth and naivety, the nation was split into two kingdoms. The northern nation of Israel included ten of the twelve tribes of Jacob. The southern kingdom, which was called Judah, included Judah and Benjamin. The Levitical priests were split between the two nations.

The southern kingdom of Judah was weaker and was ruled by the sons of David. The northern kingdom was stronger, but it was also weaker spiritually. There were twenty kings who ruled over the northern nation of Israel. Every single one of them did evil in the eyes of the Lord. **Their batting average was zero.** And as judgment, the northern kingdom was destroyed and taken into captivity by Assyria in 722 BC. They were assimilated into the pagan tribes that surrounded them. And they became the Samaritans of Jesus's days.

The southern tribe of Judah had a better batting average. Their batting average was something over .300. They had good kings like Hezekiah, Asa, Jehoshaphat, and Josiah who did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. But they also had wicked kings like Manasseh, Amon, Ahaz, and Jehoram. And eventually, they were sent away into captivity as well. This captivity was enacted this time by the Babylonians in—here's the key date—605 BC. That's the starting date of the book of Daniel.

But after this captivity, unlike the Assyrian captivity, God allowed his people to go back. And they returned to the land of Israel seventy years later. And by 500 BC, they had rebuilt the temple in Jerusalem. Shortly after that, they rebuilt the walls around the city of Jerusalem. And they rebuilt their inheritance in the land of promise.

So 2,000 BC, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 1,500 BC, Moses and the Exodus. 1,000 BC is King David. And around 500 BC, the Israelites, or the Jews of Judah, return to Jerusalem from Babylonian captivity. And everything in the book of **Daniel** takes place during the Babylonian captivity, and then later in Persia. God is going to give Daniel prophecies and visions of the future for Israel. But Daniel himself spends his entire life in exile. After leaving Israel as a young man, he never returns.¹

Write this down as a second historical fact about the book of Daniel.

¹ There is a Daniel who returns in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah (see Ezra 8:2; Neh 10:6). But this is probably not the same Daniel. This is roughly 150 years after 605 BC and the taking of Daniel exile to Babylon.

2) Jeremiah prophesied **seventy** years of judgment (Jer 25:1–11)

Keep your finger in Daniel, and turn with me to the book of Jeremiah. In chapter 25 of that prophetic book, Jeremiah prophesies seventy years of exile and judgment. Jeremiah was in Jerusalem when it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. He was an older contemporary of Daniel and also Ezekiel. Daniel probably heard Jeremiah prophesy as a young boy.

And Jeremiah said this in **25:1**,

¹ The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah (that was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), ² which Jeremiah the prophet spoke to all the people of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem: ³ “For twenty-three years, from the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, to this day, the word of the Lord has come to me, and I have spoken persistently to you, but you have not listened. ⁴ You have neither listened nor inclined your ears to hear, although the Lord persistently sent to you all his servants the prophets, ⁵ saying, ‘Turn now, every one of you, from his evil way and evil deeds, and dwell upon the land that the Lord has given to you and your fathers from of old and forever. ⁶ Do not go after other gods to serve and worship them, or provoke me to anger with the work of your hands. Then I will do you no harm.’ ⁷ Yet you have not listened to me, declares the Lord, that you might provoke me to anger with the work of your hands to your own harm. ⁸ “Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts: Because you have not obeyed my words, ⁹ behold, I will send for all the tribes of the north, declares the Lord, and for Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant,

Notice, if you will, Nebuchadnezzar is God’s *servant*. **Keep that in mind as we study the book of Daniel together.**

and I will bring them [the Babylonians] against this land and its inhabitants, and against all these surrounding nations. I will devote them to destruction, and make them a horror, a hissing, and an everlasting desolation. ¹⁰ Moreover, I will banish from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the grinding of the millstones and the light of the lamp. ¹¹ This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

Sure enough and true to God’s word, that’s what was happening at the beginning of the book of Daniel. In **Daniel 1:1**, it says,

¹ In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it.

In **Daniel 1:1**, it says in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim. That’s by the Babylonian reckoning of the calendar. In **Jeremiah 25:1** it says in the fourth year of the reign Jehoiakim. That’s by a Jewish reckoning of the calendar.

And King Nebuchadnezzar is the one who attacked Jerusalem himself. Actually Nebuchadnezzar wasn’t even the king at the start of this siege. His father, Nabopolassar was. But after the death of his father, Nebuchadnezzar became king and returned to Babylon as the most powerful man over the most powerful nation in the world. This is the historical backdrop of the book of Daniel. **Keep that in mind in the weeks ahead.**

And by the way, Daniel was intimately familiar with this prophecy of Jeremiah. In **Daniel 9**, when Daniel is an old man in Persia, Daniel is praying to the Lord. And he knows that the seventy years are about to expire. He knows that the clock has counted down. And that’s when the angel Gabriel gives Daniel the amazing statement concerning the “seventy sevens.”

Write this down as a third historical fact about the book of Daniel.

3) Isaiah prophesied King **Hezekiah’s** offspring would serve in Babylon (Isa 39:5–7; 2 Kgs 20:16–18)

Turn with me to the book of Isaiah, and let’s look at **Isaiah 39**. Isaiah prophesied roughly a century before Jeremiah. He prophesied in the days when the northern nation of Israel was taken into captivity in Assyria. And he prophesied during a precarious time when Hezekiah, one of the sons of David, was ruling over Judah. And Judah was just about destroyed by Sennacherib and the Assyrian monstrosity of a kingdom. But Judah miraculously survived. And Hezekiah was a good king.

But Hezekiah had a weak moment later in life. Look at **Isaiah 39:1**.

¹ At that time Merodach-baladan the son of Baladan, king of Babylon,

Not Nebuchadnezzar! This was years before Nebuchadnezzar became king and Babylon became a force to be reckoned with. Assyria was the powerful kingdom in this day, not Babylon.

¹ At that time Merodach-baladan the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent envoys with letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that he had been sick and had recovered. ² And Hezekiah welcomed them gladly. And he showed them his treasure house, the silver, the gold, the spices, the precious oil, his whole armory, all that was found in his storehouses. There was nothing in his house or in all his realm that Hezekiah did not show them.

³ Then Isaiah the prophet came to King Hezekiah, and said to him, "What did these men say? And from where did they come to you?" Hezekiah said, "They have come to me from a far country, from Babylon." ⁴ He said, "What have they seen in your house?" Hezekiah answered, "They have seen all that is in my house. There is nothing in my storehouses that I did not show them." ⁵ Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the Lord of hosts: ⁶ Behold, the days are coming, when all that is in your house, and that which your fathers have stored up till this day, shall be carried to Babylon. Nothing shall be left, says the Lord.

⁷ And some of your own sons, who will come from you, whom you will father, shall be taken away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon." ⁸ Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The word of the Lord that you have spoken is good." For he thought, "There will be peace and security in my days."

Not the best response there by a good king in **verse 8**. But notice if you will, Isaiah prophesied the Babylonian captivity about a century before it happened and during the days of Hezekiah.

And notice too, that Hezekiah's offspring will be taken captive. Do you see that in **verse 7**? And they will be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon? In other words, they will be castrated, and they will serve the king of Babylon. Not all of them; but some of them.

We know that's the case because Jehoiachin, the grandson of King Josiah and the great-great-great-great grandson of Hezekiah was taken to Babylon unharmed (**2 Kgs 25:27–30**). His lineage was preserved, and he's recorded in the genealogy of Jesus in **Matthew 1**.²

But other offspring of Hezekiah became eunuchs. Yet other royal descendants of Hezekiah fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy by serving in the Babylonian court as castrated eunuchs.

Now turn back with me to **Daniel 1**, and let me connect the dots of this prophecy. Look at **Daniel 1:3–4**.

³ Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility, ⁴ youths without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to stand in the king's palace, and to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans.

Skip down to **verse 6**.

⁶ Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah of the tribe of Judah.

Who are Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah? Well, we know them better as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These four young men were of the tribe of Judah. They were of the royal family and of the nobility. They were *probably* descendants of Hezekiah. And they were *quite probably* castrated. **That was S.O.P. for Babylon when they brought in young men from other nations to educate them.** It made them more compliant.

Why is there no mention of Daniel having a wife or children in the book of Daniel? The best answer to that is because he couldn't. He was the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy to Hezekiah.

Would I take a bullet for that? Probably not. But it makes the best sense of the Biblical data. And it makes Daniel, in my mind, more admirable as a Biblical character, not less. His faithfulness to his God was more impressive than we even realize if he had been humiliated in this way as a young man... as probably a teenager.

Write this down as a fourth historical fact about the book of Daniel.

4) Daniel was taken to Babylon as a youngster in **605 BC** and served under both the Babylonian and Medo-Persian empires

What's amazing about Daniel is that he outlived Nebuchadnezzar. He outlived several of Nebuchadnezzar's successors. And he even outlived the Babylonian Empire itself! And by **Daniel 6**, he's serving the Medo-Persian king, not the Babylonian king. But in reality, he's not serving either of those kings. Not really. He's serving the King of Kings.

Okay, let's transition. Daniel is a fascinating book that has been the source of countless works of literature and scholarship. And much of that scholarship is fantastic. I'm so grateful to good men and women who have written and taught on this book. I've learned so much from them.

But for whatever reason, Daniel is also the subject of much bad scholarship. Much of it is skeptical in nature. And this dates back to a third-century AD skeptic named Porphyry who mocked Christians

² His name is recorded in Matthew 1:11 as Jechoniah. The names Jechoniah, Jehoiachin, and Coniah refer to the same person, the same son of Josiah (see also 2 Kgs 24:8–16; Jer 22:24, 27:20; 1 Chr 3:17; Ezek 1:2; 2 Kgs 25:27–30).

and dismissed the prophecies in the book of **Daniel**. And unfortunately, much modern Biblical scholarship takes its cue from him.

So if you read a non-evangelical commentary on the book of **Daniel**, you probably will run into one of these four theories. I'm not going to call them theories. I'm going to call them "false claims."

Write these down as...

Four False Claims about the Book of Daniel:

Here's the first.

1) The book was written centuries after the life of **Daniel**

So not in the sixth century BC, in the time of Nebuchadnezzar and others. And not in the life of Daniel, but later than that.

Porphyry and others suggested that the book of Daniel was written during the Maccabean period of Israelite history, perhaps in the second century BC. This is referred to technically as "the Maccabean thesis." The theory is built around three points. (1) The language used in Daniel, Aramaic, is late. And Daniel borrows terms from Persian and Greek which makes it a late writing. The problem with that theory is that Aramaic is as old or older than Hebrew. That idea has been summarily dismissed by better scholarship.

And the borrowing of terms from Persian and Greek is perfectly natural for a sixth century composition, especially if Daniel was well-educated in the Babylonian court, which he was. Also some of Daniel's writing took place in Persia, so why wouldn't he have Persian loanwords.

(2) The second point has to do with theology. Scholars assume that Daniel included language and terminology that was popular in the intertestamental period including statements about eternal life, angels, and a Messiah to come. And yes, it's true that Daniel has more explicit information about these matters than other books... that's part of the reason why I love this book. But those things are not absent in the other pages of the OT. Certainly the Messiah is talked about elsewhere. Angels are mentioned elsewhere, even if they are not named like they are in **Daniel**. And also, there are references and inferences to eternal life elsewhere in the OT. I would argue that eternal life is implicit to OT Scripture. So this is a precarious argument for a late date.

(3) And the third issue has to do with specific prophecies in the book concerning future events. Daniel predicts the coming of Alexander the Great. He predicts the fourfold split of the Greek Empire. He predicts the abominable activities of a Greek ruler named Antiochus Epiphanes. The precision and the clarity of those prophecies are too much for many liberal scholars to stomach.

And so, they say, you can write these down as #2.

2) The prophecies in Daniel are **ex eventu**

The technical term is *vaticinium ex eventu* or prophecy *ex eventu*, meaning "prophecy after the event." These are predictive "prophecies" that are written after the event occurs. So, for example, someone wrote about Alexander the Great after he ruled Greece, and pretended to put that in the mouth of Daniel centuries before in Babylon. And someone wrote about the Greek Empire and Antiochus Ephiphanes after they existed, and they pretended to put it in the mouth of Daniel centuries before. That's the theory. They are prophecies *ex eventu* or after the event, which prompts the question, "How can they be *prophecies* if the event has already happened?"

It's a cynical reading of the OT text. It's a suspicious reading. Why do they suggest this? Because they can't envision a world in which God predicted future events through his prophet. It's an antisupernaturalist reading of the Bible. And I can't *stomach* that!

The reason this doesn't work is because there are other places in the OT where predictions happen. I just gave you one earlier with Isaiah and Hezekiah's offspring. Also there's Jeremiah's seventy years. Also, Isaiah predicted the coming of Cyrus the Great by name. Also Daniel himself prophesied things that came long after the Greek Empire and the second century, even if you conceded a second century BC date of writing.

Daniel predicted the power and the prestige of the Roman Empire. Daniel predicted the coming of the Messiah in his prophecy of "seventy sevens." How could that have been prophecy *ex eventu*? Daniel didn't live after the time of Christ.

And also, as you guys know, part of those “seventy sevens” involves things that are still future for us today, during the tribulation. Daniel prophesied that 2,500 years ago. That’s still to come. How could that be prophecy *ex eventu*?

I’m dealing with this now, so that our Preacher’s Guild guys don’t have to. We can summarily dismiss Porphyry and anyone who would come to this conclusion about the book of Daniel.

Here’s a third thing that circulates in commentaries. Just be aware of it. Some scholars suggest that the Danielic narratives of Daniel 1–6 are ahistorical “court tales” or novellas, rather than legitimate history.

3) The narratives are ahistorical **novellas**

And here’s how this theory works. Supposedly, some well-meaning Jew in the Maccabean period wrote fictional details about some guy named Daniel who lived in the days of Babylon and Persia and stood up to the powers-that-be. And the purpose of that fantasy writing was to inspire the Jews in the second century BC Maccabean period to stand up to the powers-that-be in their day.

For those of us who hold to inerrancy... for those of us who hold to Bible-believing evangelical convictions, we cannot countenance this theory. In fact, it’s an insult to our view of Scripture. No less than 13 times in this book, Daniel says, “I, Daniel” or some such equivalent. That’s in (1) **Daniel 7:2**, (2) **Daniel 7:15**, (3) **Daniel 7:28**, (4) **Daniel 8:1**, (5) **Daniel 8:15**, (6) **Daniel 8:27**, (7) **Daniel 9:2**, (8) **Daniel 9:22**, (9) **Daniel 10:2**, (10) **Daniel 10:7**, (11) **Daniel 10:11**, (12) **Daniel 10:12**, and (13) **Daniel 12:5**. And the conservative view of Scripture and the conservative view of the Christian canon never allows for pseudonymous writing in the canon. Not in the NT and not in the OT! Anonymous writing, yes. Even some books of the NT are anonymous (e.g., **Hebrews**). But not pseudonymous.

And by the way, I think we do a disservice to the book of **Daniel** sometimes as evangelicals. **I’ve read almost every children’s Bible out there. Sanja and I worked through this with Alastair over a ten-year period. Every night we would read with him. And some of the picture of Daniel in the Lion’s Den make me cringe. Daniel patting the heads of these smiley-faced lions like they’re having a tea party or something. I hate that!**

At my house, I have this picture painted by Briton Rivière.



It’s a picture of Daniel in the Lions’ Den. And this is what it should look like. Bones on the floor! The lions pacing around Daniel wanting to eat him. But the angel closed the mouths of the lions. And they are staring at him with fear and wonder. And there’s the old man, Daniel, in front of these lions, waiting for the dawn and for God’s deliverance. That’s what this should look like.

There’s another painting that I love in this regard. Rembrandt painted a painting called, “Belshazzar’s Feast,” which is based on **Daniel 5:1–31**. And it’s a little anachronistic with the clothing and the garb of the king and his entourage. We’ll forgive Rembrandt for that.



But what I love about this painting is Belshazzar's face. I love the Hebrew and the terrifying hand in the background too. But I really love the face of Belshazzar. I love the shock and the awe of these people as they see this disembodied hand writing on the wall. And the hand writes, "Mene, Mene, Tekel, and Parsin" in Hebrew as Belshazzar soils himself.³ And it makes you wonder, who's the real king of the world? Who's the genuine ruler of the universe?

Look, these narratives, that we're going to work through in the next six weeks actually happened. Nebuchadnezzar actually heated up a fiery furnace to burn those Hebrew boys to a crisp for their insolence (**Dan 3:1–30**). Nobody made that up. These are not parables or moral tales. These things happened.

And that leads to a final "false fact." Some say that ...

4) Daniel was not a **historical** person

The previous theory might assert that Daniel was a real historical person. But the stories made up about him were fabricated court tales. This theory, #4, eliminates him as a person altogether. In this theory, the author of the book of **Daniel** created the character of Daniel out of whole cloth.

But how do we know that Daniel was a real historical character and the one who wrote this book. I already gave you the "I, Daniel" statements. Additionally, there's this statement in **Ezekiel**. You don't have to turn there. I'll put this on the screen.

Ezekiel 14:14 says, "Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it [i.e., the pestilence to come on Jerusalem], they would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness, declares the Lord God."

Similarly **Ezekiel 14:20** says, "Even if Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it..." And also, **Ezekiel 28:3** says sarcastically of the king of Tyre, "You are indeed wiser than Daniel; no secret is hidden from you."

I told you earlier that Daniel was a younger contemporary of Jeremiah. Well Ezekiel was a contemporary of Daniel during the Babylonian captivity. Daniel was taken into exile in 605 BC. Ezekiel was taken later in 597 BC. The city of Jerusalem was burned and destroyed in 586 BC. Jeremiah saw that with his own eyes. But even in the days of Ezekiel, Daniel was famous for his piety in Babylon. He was famous for his righteousness and faithfulness. He was compared to Job and Noah who were both righteous in a wicked age, just like Daniel.

This statement about Daniel in Ezekiel is so disconcerting to some scholars, that they have advanced the theory that Ezekiel wasn't talking about the prophet Daniel at this time. How could he? According to them, Daniel didn't exist. He was a later invention. No, instead Ezekiel was talking about the pagan, idol-worshipping, disreputable "Dan-el" from Canaanite literature. That's who Ezekiel put forth as righteous like Noah and Job. That's who the Lord God put forth as righteous like Noah and Job.

Listen, that theory is—in my humble opinion—bonkers. It's bonkers! Ezekiel was not talking about a pagan Dan-el. He was talking about the Daniel of the Bible, his faithful Israelite brother-prophet held captive in Babylon.

But also—and here's the nail in the coffin for this false claim—Jesus affirmed that Daniel was a real historical person and ascribed the authorship of this book to him.

Jesus said in **Matthew 24:15**,

"So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel standing in the holy place..."

³ This is a possible translation of the Aramaic in Daniel 5:6 where the ESV has "his limbs gave way."

Not some pseudonymous author from the second century BC. But the prophet Daniel... the real historical figure, Daniel.

So, enough with the false facts. Let's leave those behind. Write this down as...

Four Additional Details about the Book of Daniel:

Four additional, accurate details about the Book of Daniel. Here's the first. It has been...

1) Traditionally and historically ascribed to the prophet **Daniel**

Almost every ancient source, other than Porphyry, ascribes authorship of this book to the prophet Daniel. In other words, the overwhelming majority of ancient Jewish and Christian sources attributed the Book of Daniel to the prophet Daniel himself. And that view hasn't been seriously questioned outside of modern, liberal scholarship. A

And by the way, Porphyry, that cynic, received a scathing critique of his view by the church father, Jerome, in his commentary on **Daniel**. Good for Jerome. We need more of that.

"Who wrote the book of Daniel, Pastor Tony?" Look, this is not a time for me to get cute. I say Daniel... obviously Daniel inspired by the Holy Spirit. I say Daniel, and I haven't been convinced otherwise.

Here's a second detail. Daniel was...

2) Written in both **Hebrew** and **Aramaic**

This is unusual as an OT book. And I think this substantiates Danielic authorship. Because Daniel was well-educated by the time he was done with his training in Babylon. He knew Hebrew. He knew Aramaic. He probably also knew a handful of other languages including Akkadian, the diplomatic and literary language of the Assyrians and Babylonians.

When I was in seminary, I took a class on Aramaic. I took it the same semester that Alastair was born. So that was a difficult semester. But I wanted to learn Aramaic, because I wanted to translate the book of Daniel in its entirety. And I did. I was able to. Thankfully Aramaic was close enough to Hebrew that I was able to get through it.

And just so you know, here's how the book of **Daniel** and these languages work. **Daniel 1** is in Hebrew. **Daniel 2–7** are in Aramaic. And then, **Daniel 8–12** reverts back to Hebrew.

Why is it this way? It's hard to say. Probably it has to do with the content of those chapters. In **chapter 1**, you're dealing with the Hebrew boys taken captive and their idiosyncratic, dietary laws. This has an expressly Jewish flavor to it. **Daniel 2–7** deals more with the kings and kingdoms of the day, Nebuchadnezzar and his successors. Daniel was part of that, but the main story involves conflicts between the rulers of this world and the true Ruler of the world. So possibly to appeal to a wider audience than just the Jews, Daniel, who was capable, wrote in Aramaic.

And then, at the end of the book (**Dan 8–12**), when the subject matter reverts back to the Israelites, he reverts back to Hebrew. That's the best sense I can make of that.

Now that's one way to structure and divide this book. But the more natural way which we can see in English is to divide it right down the middle. Daniel is...

3) Divided into **two** distinct but interconnected sections

Daniel 1–6 is predominantly narrative. **Daniel 7–12** is primarily prophetic and apocalyptic. **Daniel 1–6** reads like the narratives of **Genesis** and **1 and 2 Kings**. **Daniel 7–12** reads more like prophetic literature. And the closest parallel to **Daniel 7–12** isn't **Isaiah** and **Jeremiah** or any of the minor prophets; it's **Revelation** in the NT. And we'll deal with all of it. In the next six weeks, we'll explore **Daniel 1–6**. And then this fall, we'll preach through **Daniel 7–12**.

Finally, let me give you one massive, all-encompassing theme for this book. Hopefully you can see how this theme has influenced the title for this series, "Every Knee Shall Bow."

The Book of Daniel...

4) Emphasizes God's sovereign **kingship** over every human kingdom

Nebuchadnezzar! The most powerful king in the ancient world. Come to find out, not that powerful. In fact, he answers to a higher, more powerful authority.

Alexander the Great! Great military general. Greatest of the ancient world. Come to find out, not that powerful. In fact, he answers to a higher, more powerful general and military leader.

Antiochus Epiphanes! The great precursor to the antichrist. The type of the future antitype antichrist. Come to find out, not that powerful.

Even the antichrist himself! The ruler of the world during the tribulation for three and a half years! The epitome of every evil ruler and regime—the Beast! Come to find out... not that powerful!. He answers to... he bows before... a higher, more powerful, Christ.

If I could go NT on you, let me quote this passage from **Philippians 2:5–11**.

⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

I'll close with this. When I was in seminary in Chicago, we took a trip to a local museum at The University of Chicago. It used to be called the "Oriental Institute." They changed it to something else now. But it was fascinating.

The museum had these different rooms. And in them, you would see the grandeur of these great, powerful, ancient kingdoms. There was the Egyptian room celebrating Egypt. And there was some cool stuff there: papyri and mummies and hieroglyphics. There was a replica at that museum of the Rosetta Stone that helped crack the code of Egyptian hieroglyphics.

And then we came to the Sumerian room. It was awesome. They had these old clay documents called cuneiform tablets. And ancient people would write on them with these styluses. You wouldn't write with a pen. You would puncture with a stylus. And it would make these marks called cuneiform. It's the first writing in human history. And one of the reasons we have their writing from 5,000 years ago is because when you set fire to paper it burns. When you set fire to clay tablets it hardens them and makes them last for centuries. So we have more written material from that era than we do from many other ancient eras, even eras closer to our own.

And then we came to the Assyrian room. That was amazing. The Assyrians were so powerful and imposing. They left us a mountain of ancient texts. In fact, the Assyrians were brutal, but we owe our dating of the Exodus and other Israelite history to the Assyrians. You see the Bible never uses what's called hard chronology. They never say, "722 BC." They did not reckon time that way. It was always relative chronology not hard chronology. It was always Solomon reigned so many years after David and then his son Rehoboam became king... that kind of stuff. It was *relative* not *hard* chronology.

But the Assyrians recorded solar eclipses. And the Assyrians interacted with the Israelites, and that gives us hard dates to calculate with. Because astronomical dating can help us calculate backwards to the solar eclipses in the Assyrian Empire. And then from there, we can count backwards with the relative chronology of the Israelites to Josiah, Hezekiah, David, and even Moses and the Exodus. I learned all about that from Dr. Lawson Younger at the Oriental Institute of Chicago.

And then we went to the Babylonian room. That was amazing. They had all these ancient relics and replicas of ancient relics of the Babylonians. Some of those included the amazingly colorful walls of Babylon decorated in royal blue with pictures of lions and other animals.

And then we went to the Persian room at the Oriental Institute. That was amazing too.

But then, you stop and think about it. The Egyptians. That empire and that greatness doesn't exist anymore. All we have left are relics.

Assyria? Assyria as a world power? That hasn't been true for more than 2,500 years! Babylon is nothing. Sure, they'll return eschatologically. But ancient Babylon is nothing anymore. They gave way to Persia. And Persia gave way to Greece. And Greece gave way to Rome. And none of those "empires" means much of anything today.

And then there was Spain. And then there was France. And then there was Britain. “The sun never sets on the British Empire.” And then there was the Soviet Union. And then there’s America.

Those “empires” come and go and they will all eventually bow the knee to the true Ruler of the universe. And there’s only one true King. And there’s only one lasting kingdom. And every other kingdom bows to him.

That’s what the book of Daniel is about. Come back next week for more on that. Pray with me.

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