

DANIEL

STUDY GUIDE

AUTHOR & DATE

The authorship of this great book depends largely on whether or not one believes in the supernatural ability to tell the future. Traditionally, Daniel has been considered the one writing the book largely in its present form. However, some believe an anonymous author, using the name of Daniel, wrote the latter portion of the book (ch. 7-12) during 2nd century B.C. to encourage Jews during the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes during the Maccabean period (175-163 B.C.). There is far more evidence pointing to **Daniel** as the author of the whole book:

- Daniel speaks in first person (7:2; 8:1; 9:2; 10:2, etc.)
- Details regarding Babylon and various punishments reflect eye-witness knowledge

Daniel, whose name means “God is my judge” is an interesting fellow! Most likely from an upper-class family, he was taken to Babylon as a youth in 605 B.C. (2 Kgs 20:18; 24:15; Isa. 39:7). Selected as part of a training program to serve in King Nebuchadnezzar’s administration (Dan. 1:3-5), Daniel rose to the surface along with his three companions Hananiah (Shadrach), Mishael (Meshach), and Azariah (Abednego). His supernatural favor and giftings of dream interpretation, wisdom, and understanding helped promote him to one of the highest positions in the kingdom, yet his heart remained concerned about his own Jewish people. Daniel’s dreams and visions became of great importance, even quoted by Jesus in Matt. 24:15. Though Daniel proved himself as an accomplished administrator, he also demonstrated accurate, foretelling prophecy. His visions related to end-times continue to be of focus.

The writing date of Daniel is based upon which option of authorship one believes. Assuming Daniel wrote the book, the timing is narrowed by:

- Daniel’s exile to Babylon (605 B.C.)
- Survival through four kings
 - Nebuchadnezzar – Babylon 605-562 B.C.
 - Belshazzar – Babylon 555-539 B.C.
 - Darius the Mede – specific dates unknown
 - Cyrus – Persian 539 - 530 B.C
- Ezekiel’s mentions of Daniel (Ezek. 14:14, 20; 28:3) all point to the 6th century
- Latest date reference in Dan. 10:1, which would be about 536 B.C.

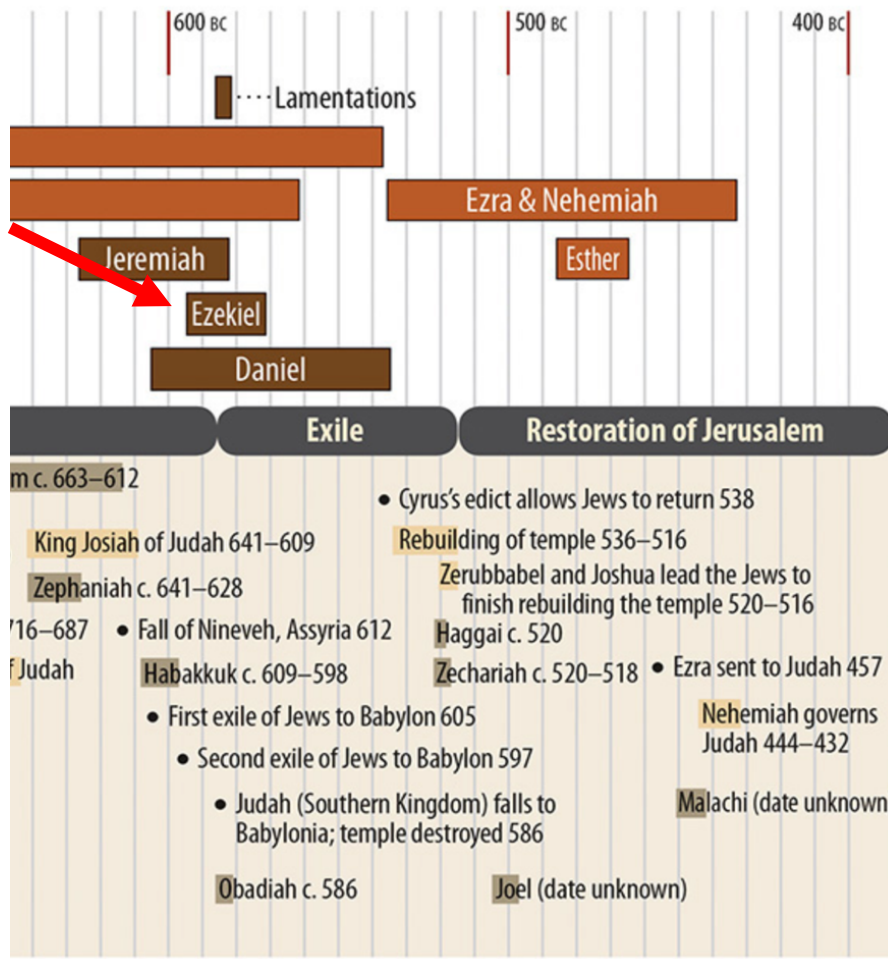
Therefore, the estimated date of writing is **between 536-530 B.C.** However, those who do not ascribe to Daniel’s authorship place the book somewhere around 165 B.C.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The book of Daniel was written in two languages: **Hebrew** (Dan. 1:1-2:4a; 8:1-12:13) and **Aramaic** (Dan. 2:4b-7:28). Obviously, Hebrew was Daniel’s original language, but Aramaic was the common language among empires, much like English is used internationally today.

Focusing less on Israel and Judah’s exile history and more on God’s sovereignty over all nations, miraculous interventions, and orchestrations for His purposes and people, this book includes several prophecies which have already been fulfilled with great accuracy, including a large portion of the “seventy sevens” (Dan 9:24). However, the final week has yet to be completed, so take note of what is included in that stage.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT



Source: Blue Letter Bible, “Old Testament Timeline”

LITERARY STRUCTURE

Part 1: Devotion to God and Rulers (Dan. 1-6)

- A. Faithfulness in Small Things (Dan. 1)
- B. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream & Demand (Dan. 2)
- C. Fiery Furnace (Dan. 3)
- D. Proud Nebuchadnezzar Humbled (Dan. 4)
- E. Writing on the Wall (Dan. 5)
- F. Lion's Den (Dan. 6)

Part 2: Daniel's Visions: Coming Kingdoms and God's Victory over Evil (Dan. 7-12)

- A. Four Beasts (Dan. 7)
- B. Ram and Goat (Dan. 8)
- C. Daniel's Prayer (Dan. 9)
- D. Man Dressed in Linen (Dan. 10)
- E. War Between Kings (Dan. 11)
- F. God's Defeat over Evil (Dan. 12)

OBSERVATION WORDS

Be on the lookout for the following words used throughout the book. Don't just mark them, but note what you learn about them.

- **God / Lord** (*any other names, references of God, character traits, etc.*)
- **Holy Spirit** (*specific mentions, miracles/wonders, fulfilled prophecy, symbols, etc.*)
- **Messianic Prophecies (Jesus) and foreshadows/types of Jesus**
- **Kingdom**
- **Dream/vision**
- **Prayer/plead**
- **Fast/fasting**
- **Holy people/saints**
- **Mentioned sins/offenses to God**

- Describe what this book teaches regarding earthly kingdoms. How does this affect your perspective on today's world?

- Read Dan. 6:4-5 again. Can this be said of you? If being a Christian was illegal, would you be found guilty? What other accusations or charges might be brought up from your life? What does Christ's work on the cross and your confession of faith in Jesus mean for accusations from your past?

- Describe end-time events and specific progressions. Look specifically at chapters 7 and 12, along with the cross-references below.
 - Matt. 24
 - Luke 12:32
 - 1 Cor. 15:22-28
 - 1 Thess. 4:13-5:11
 - Rev. 2:26
 - Rev. 13:1-13
 - Rev. 14:12-13
 - Rev. 20

- Look at Daniel's prayer (ch. 9). What can you learn from his prayer and apply to your own prayers?

- There are several kinds of fasting described in Daniel. What are they, why do those fasts take place, and what can you learn from Daniel's pattern of fasting?

KEY WORD:

KEY VERSE:

KEY CHAPTER: