

Daniel 1:1

Back to the Future II: From Isaiah to Daniel

I. Introduction to Daniel

a. Authorship & Dating

- i. Book claims to be written around 530 BC (Daniel 7:1; 12:4)
- ii. Critics claim it was written in 167 BC during Maccabean era
- iii. Jesus' words support Daniel's authorship/early dating
 1. Mt 24:15
 2. Mt. 26:64; c.f. Dan. 7:13-14
- iv. Ezekiel, who lived in roughly 575 BC, describes Daniel as a real and historical figure (Ezek. 14:14, 20; 28:3). *See also*, Ezekiel, Robert W. Manweiler who writes, "Ezekiel is probably the most carefully dated of all Old Testament books... we here note that the majority of biblical scholars, even of those who reject the inspiration and unity of the Bible, believe most of the book was written in the sixth century BC by the prophet Ezekiel.
- v. Josephus believed that the book of Daniel was shown to Alexander the Great, when he came to Jerusalem in 330 BC:

"He (Alexander) came into the city; and when he went up into the temple, he offered sacrifice to God, according to the high priest's direction, and magnificently treated both the high priest and the priests. And when the book of Daniel was showed to him, wherein Daniel declared that one of the Greeks should destroy the empire of the Persians, he supposed that himself was the person intended... The next day he called them to him, and had them ask what favors they pleased of him... (and) he granted all they desired.

Josephus Antiquities Book 11, chapter 8, section 5.

- vi. 1 Maccabees 2:59-61, "Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael had faith, and they were saved from the flames. Daniel was a man of integrity, and he was rescued from the lion's jaws. So bear in mind how in the history of the generations no one who trusts in Heaven ever lacks strength."
- vii. James M. Rochford, M.A. Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, addresses critics objections in "Evidence Unseen" as follows:

OBJECTION #1: Why was Daniel placed with the Writings—rather than the Prophets—in the Jewish Bible?

CLAIM: Christian Bibles and the LXX place Daniel with the last of four major prophetic books. However, Jewish Bibles place Daniel with the Writings—not the Prophets. Critical scholars argue that the prophetic canon was already closed before Daniel wrote, so he wasn't included.

RESPONSE: Daniel's occupation was not as a prophet—even though he did speak prophetic words. Mainly, Daniel served as a statesman and a royal official. J. Barton Payne concurs, “For though Christ spoke of Daniel's function as prophetic, his position was that of governmental official and inspired writer, rather than ministering prophet.”[15] This could explain why he wasn't placed with the other prophets—not because he didn't make predictions—but because he didn't hold this office in Israel. In Christ's context (Mt. 24:15), he was specifically referring to Daniel's prediction, which explains why he called him a prophet.

OBJECTION #2: Daniel speaks much too accurately of the Maccabean Revolt.

CLAIM: Even critical scholars admit that Daniel 11 is strikingly close to the events of Antiochus Epiphanes IV and the Maccabean Revolt. This is one of their central reasons for late-dating the book. Since Daniel speaks so accurately about these events, it appears that he was probably writing them historically—not prophetically.

RESPONSE: This objection reveals the anti-supernatural bias of the critics. Notice that this objection does not offer evidence against the theistic worldview (i.e. a God existing who can predict the future); instead, it just assumes an atheistic or naturalistic worldview. When you read this argument, ask yourself: Where are their arguments that there is no God that can predict the future? Of course, they don't offer any. Instead, they simply assume that this isn't possible. Therefore, this argument is not for a historian or commentator; it is an argument for a philosopher of religion.

Isaiah claims that God knows “the end from the beginning” (Isa. 46:10), and Isaiah even predicts the person and work of Jesus Christ, which is several hundred years in advance—even if we assume that the critical dating of Isaiah is correct (Isa. 42, 49, 50, 53). Even given a late date for Daniel (~167 BC), we still

see that Daniel predicts the death of Christ 200 years in advance. Therefore, this argument on the basis of denying predictive prophecy doesn't hold water.

Moreover, if Daniel was writing during the time of the Maccabees, why doesn't he specifically name them? If he was already lying, he could have simply gone the whole way. In addition, Daniel also doesn't picture the earlier kings as incredibly evil—like Antiochus IV was. If Daniel was truly writing during this time period, we would expect him to place these Pagan kings in a poor light (like Antiochus), but he generally doesn't.

OBJECTION #3: Daniel contains advanced theology which means it is most likely late dated.

CLAIM: Critics point out that Daniel mentions angels (Dan. 3:28; 6:22), the Messiah (Dan. 7:13-14; 9:25-26), and a resurrected final judgment (Dan. 12:2). These features of Hebrew thinking come later—not earlier—in their history.

RESPONSE: There are a number of problems with the assumptions within this objection. Each of these concepts can be seen throughout the OT—not just in the later apocalyptic books like Daniel:

Angels: Angels are actually mentioned throughout the entire OT, including the book of Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Job, Psalms, Isaiah, Hosea, and Zechariah. Demons are mentioned in the earliest portions of Scripture as well (Lev. 17:7; Ps. 106:36-37; Deut. 32:17).

Resurrection: The resurrection of the dead is also mentioned in earlier books of the Bible (Isa. 26:19; Ezek. 37; Job 19:25-26; Ps. 22:29).

Messiah: Of course, Bible believers argue that Jesus is mentioned throughout the entire OT, because Jesus himself held to this view (Lk. 24:25-27, 44-46). For an extensive study on this, see our earlier article, “Jesus and Messianic Prophecy.”

- b. The book of Daniel is divided into two sections on the basis of its content: “court tales” of chapters 1-6, and the “apocalyptic visions” of chapters 7-12. But chapters 2-7 are preserved in Aramaic, while chapters 1 and 8-12 are in Hebrew. Language. See also Isaiah 36:11.

So what?