

AUTHENTICITY

E.B. Pusey, *Daniel the Prophet* (1865) p. 1 • The book of Daniel is especially fitted to be a battleground between faith and unbelief. It admits of no half-way measures. It is either Divine or an imposture.... The writer, were he not Daniel, must have lied on a most frightful scale.

St. Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* (A.D. 407) Prologue • Porphyry (ca. A.D. 235–ca. 305) wrote his twelfth book against the prophecy of Daniel, denying that it was composed by the person to whom it is ascribed in its title, but rather by some individual living in Judaea at the time of the Antiochus who was surnamed Epiphanes. He furthermore alleged that “Daniel” did not foretell the future so much as he related the past, and lastly that whatever he spoke of up till the time of Antiochus contained authentic history, whereas anything he may have conjectured beyond that point was false, inasmuch as he would not have foreknown the future.

John J. Collins, *A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Hermeneia, 1993) p. 25–26 • After Porphyry, the authenticity of Daniel remained unchallenged down to the seventeenth century.... By the end of the nineteenth century, however, there was an established consensus in favor of the Maccabean dating, reflected in the commentaries of Marti, Behrmann, Bevan, and Driver, although the conservative defense of Danielic authenticity continues to the present.

Adela Yarbro Collins, *A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Hermeneia, 1993) p. 122–123 • In the twentieth century, the great debates about universal history, the identification of the Antichrist, and millennial expectation are no longer taken seriously in academic biblical scholarship....

Some scholars have lamented the decline in the importance attached to the book in recent times. In many respects, however, the loss is gain. Several major themes in the traditional understanding of Daniel are now recognized as invalid. The prophecies of Daniel can no longer serve as christological proofs; nor can the chronological schemata serve to structure universal history.... Attempts to calculate the end on the basis of Daniel’s numbers have been problematic throughout the history of interpretation.

The great achievement of two centuries of historical criticism of the Book of Daniel has been to clarify the genre of the book, not only in the technical sense of the literary forms that constitute it but in the broad sense of the kind of writing that is involved and the expectations that are appropriate to it. Daniel is not a reliable source of factual information about either the past or the future....

Viewed in its historical and literary context, Daniel emerges as a religious document that is more akin to poetry than to historiography or futurology. It is, of course, an important historical witness to one strand of Judaism in the Hellenistic period, a strand that would be vitally important for the emergence of Christianity. Its witness, however, is largely in the language of legend and myth, which appeals to the imagination rather than to the rational intellect. That language has often been prone to misunderstanding by literalists, but it has nonetheless enriched the religious imagination of both Judaism and Christianity.

Andrew Steinmann, *Daniel* (ConC, 2014) pp. xvi–xvii • It is a book about Christ, who preserved his people through the Babylonian captivity and pointed them forward to the coming of his kingdom at his first as well as his second advent. For us who live between those two advents, Daniel sustains our faith that the God who accomplished our redemption through the suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ will preserve us until Christ’s return, whereupon we shall be raised (Dan 12:1–3)....

I pray that by God’s grace this commentary may prove useful to the church and may lead many to Christ, the messianic King, whose gracious reign over his people is eternal.

Objections to Daniel's Authenticity

1. Historical inaccuracies
2. Greek, Persian loanwords
3. Late character of Hebrew, Aramaic
4. Impossibility of miracles, prophecy
5. Placed among the Ketuvim in the Tanakh
6. Not mentioned in Sirach 49

Theodoret of Cyrus, *Commentary on Daniel* (ca. A.D. 433) Preface • It is the Jews' folly and shamelessness that causes us to pass over the other [prophets] for the moment and expound this author's prophecies and make them clear, embarking as they did on such brazen behavior as to cordon off this author from the band of the prophets and strip him of the prophetic title itself.

Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* (ca. A.D. 94) 10.249 • "Daniel the prophet"

Daniel in Ezekiel

Ezekiel 14 ¹² And the word of the LORD came to me: ¹³ "Son of man, when a land sins against me by acting faithlessly, and I stretch out my hand against it, and break its staff of bread and send famine upon it, and cut off from it man and beast, ¹⁴ even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness, says the Lord GOD (cf. v. 20).

Ezekiel 28 ³ You are indeed wiser than Daniel; no secret is hidden from you.

The Tale of Aqhat (ca. 1350 B.C.) A.i.18–29 • Unhappy is Danel the Rapha-man, / A-sighing is Ghazir the Harnamiyy-man; / Who hath no son like his brethren, / Nor scion hath like his kindred. / Surely there's a son for him <like> his brethren's, / And a scion like unto his kindred's! / He gives oblation to the gods to eat, / Oblation to drink to the holy ones. / Wilt thou not bless him, O Bull El, my father, / Beatify him, O Creator of Creatures? / So shall there be a son in his house, / A scion in the midst of his palace....

A.ii.8d–16 • Danel's face lights up, / While above his forehead shines. / He *parts his jaws* and laughs, / Places his foot on the footstool, / And lifts up his voice and cries: / Now will I sit and rest / And my soul be at ease in my breast. / For a son's born to me like my brethren's / A scion like unto my kindred's / Etc., etc.

A.v.2–8 • And behold, on the seventh day— / Straightway Daniel the Rapha-man, / Forthwith Ghazir the Harnam[iyy]-man, / Is upright, sitting before the gate, / Beneath a *mighty tree* on the threshing floor, / Judging the cause of the widow, / Adjudicating the case of the fatherless.

Ezra 8 ¹ These are the heads of their fathers' houses, and this is the genealogy of those who went up with me from Babylonia, in the reign of Artaxerxes the king: ² Of the sons of Phinehas, Gershom. Of the sons of Ithamar, Daniel....

1 Chronicles 3 ¹ These are the sons of David that were born to him in Hebron: the first-born Amnon, by Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; the second Daniel, by Abigail the Carmelitess, ² the third Absalom....

Genesis 30 ⁵ And Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. ⁶ Then Rachel said, "God has judged me, and has also heard my voice and given me a son"; therefore she called his name Dan.

Jubilees (ca. 160 B.C.) 4.20 • And in the twelfth jubilee in its seventh week, [Enoch] took for himself a wife and her name was 'Edni, the daughter of Dan'el, his father's brother, as a wife, and in the sixth year of this week she bore a son for him. And he called him Methuselah.

Sirach 49

Sirach 49 ⁵ A foreign nation

⁶ ... set fire to the chosen city of the sanctuary,
and made her streets desolate,
according to the word of Jeremiah.

⁷ For they had afflicted him;
yet he had been consecrated in the womb as prophet,
to pluck up and afflict and destroy,
and likewise to build and to plant.

⁸ It was Ezekiel who saw the vision of glory
which God showed him above the chariot of the cherubim.

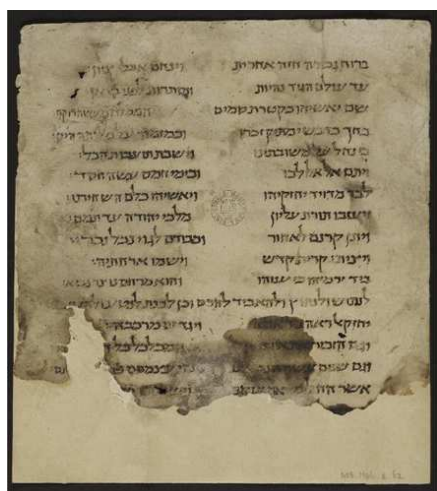
⁹ For God remembered his enemies with storm,
and did good to those who directed their ways aright.

¹⁰ May the bones of the twelve prophets
revive from where they lie,
for they comforted the people of Jacob
and delivered them with confident hope.

¹¹ How shall we magnify Zerubbabel?
He was like a signet on the right hand,

¹² and so was Jeshua the son of Jozadak;
in their days they built the house
and raised a temple holy to the Lord,
prepared for everlasting glory (RSV).

Sirach 49 ⁹ He also referred to JOB, / who always held fast to the ways of righteousness (AYBC).



Sirach 36 ¹ Have mercy upon us, O Lord, the God of all, and look upon us,
² and cause the fear of thee to fall upon all the nations.

³ Lift up thy hand against foreign nations
and let them see thy might.

⁴ As in us thou hast been sanctified before them,
so in them be thou magnified before us;

⁵ and let them know thee, as we have known
that there is not God but thee, O Lord.

⁶ Show signs anew, and work further wonders;
make thy hand and thy right arm glorious.

⁷ Rouse thy anger and pour out thy wrath;
destroy the adversary and wipe out the enemy.

⁸ Hasten the day, and remember the appointed time,
and let people recount thy mighty deeds (RSV).

Sirach 36 ¹⁰⁽⁸⁾ Hasten the ending (קץ, *qets*), appoint the time (מועד, *mô'ed*) / when your mighty deeds are to be proclaimed (AYBC).

Daniel 8 ¹⁹ ... the vision is for the time of the end.

Daniel 11 ²⁷ ... the end is yet to be at the time appointed.

Daniel 11 ³¹ ... until the time of the end, for it is yet for the time appointed.

Sirach 36 ²² Hearken to the prayer of thy servants....

Daniel 9 ¹⁷ Hearken to the prayer of thy servants....

Sirach 3 ³⁰ Righteousness atones for sin.

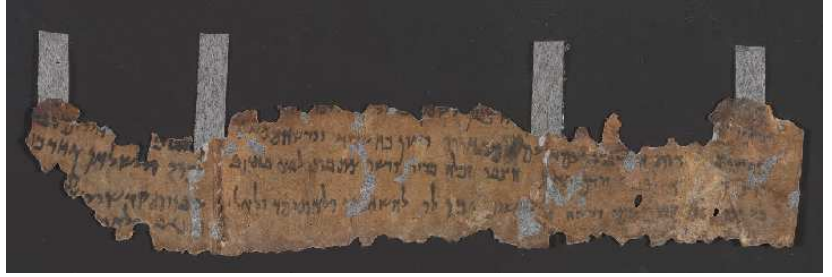
Daniel 4 ²⁷ Break off your sins with righteousness.

Dead Sea Scrolls

4QDaniel^c (ca. 120 B.C.) 11¹³ For the king of the north shall again raise] an army, [gre]ater th[an the former one; and after some years he shall come on with] a great [army] and [abundant] suppl[ies].

14 ["In] those [times] many shall resist [the king of the south; and the men of violence among your own people] shall assert themselves in order to fulfill [the visi]on; [but they shall fail. 15 Then] the king of the north arrives

and throws up siegeworks, and captures a well-fortified city. [And the fo]rces of the s[ou]th sh[all] not stand, or even his elite troops, for there shall be no strength to stand (DSSB).



The Case of Belshazzar

Friedrich Bleek, "Ueber Verfasser und Zweck des Buches Daniel" (*Theologische Zeitschrift*, 1822) pp. 269–271 • It is rightly stated that Babylon was conquered by the Medes and Persians under the last of the Chaldean kings, storming in at night after a long siege, when a great festival was being celebrated in the city in honor of the gods (Herodotus 1.191, Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 7.5). It is highly probable that the author had this incident in mind; but beyond that, I believe that there is nothing historical at the bottom of his story; everything else is probably free poetry. Even that the Babylonian king perished taking the city is not entirely certain. It is narrated solely by Xenophon, but is in contradiction with the reports of Berossus (in Josephus, *Against Apion*) and Megasthenes (in Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica*). Great difficulty arises here with the usual view of the historical character of these essays, since in the secular historians the last Babylonian king is called Naboned or Labynetus,... here the king is called Belshazzar....

In our opinion, however, we have no reason at all to go into this investigation further, since if these stories are merely parabolic fiction, it is quite possible that the author himself was not clearly aware of which of the Babylonian kings appearing in the story he actually wanted to put here.

Heinrich Gottfried Kirmss, *Commentatio historico critica exhibens descriptionem et censuram recentium de Danielis libro opinionum* (1828) p. 11 • ... his ignorance would be astonishing. Does Daniel, one of those clothed in purple, not know the name of his king? The one others call Cyaxares II, he names "Darius the Mede," and he calls "Belshazzar" the Labynetus of Herodotus.

Ferdinand Hitzig, *Das Buch Daniel* (1850) 73–74 • The last king of Babylon before Cyrus is called by Berossus (in Josephus and in Alexander Polyhistor, quoted in Eusebius, *Chronicon* 1.45) and Abydenus (quoted in Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 9.41, *Chronicon* 1.60.) "Nabonned" (Nabonedoch, Naboden); and this name is confirmed by meeting with the Λαβύνητος of Herodotus, as well as by the Ναβονάδιος of [Ptolemy's] Canon of Kings.... The name בלשאצר (Βαλτάσαρ) is elsewhere only attested to by the Book of Baruch (!).... "Nabonned" seems secure....

The report of the local, more ancient historical writer [Berossus] has been confirmed, and that of Daniel has been refuted.

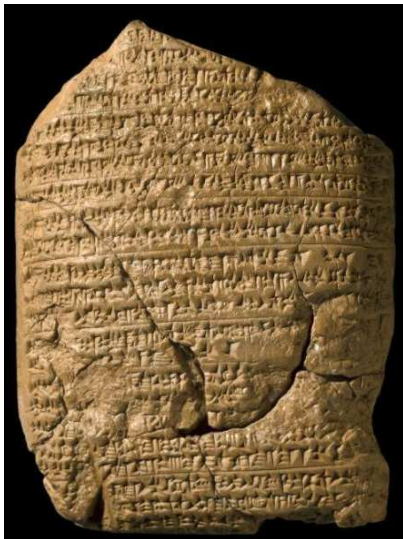
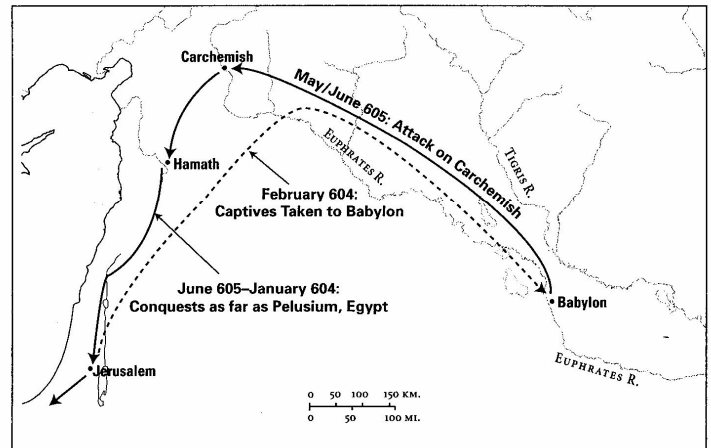
Ur Foundation Cylinder (ca. 540 B.C.) As for me, Nabonidus, king of Babylon, save me from sinning against your great godhead and grant me as a present a life long of days, and as for Belshazzar, the eldest son, my offspring, instill reverence for your great godhead in his heart and may he not commit any cultic mistake. May he be satiated with a life of plenitude.



Daniel 1 ¹ In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. ² And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God; and he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god.

Berosus, *Babylonica* (ca. 278 B.C.) His father Nabopolassar, hearing of the defection of the satrap in charge of Egypt, Coele-Syria, and Phoenicia, and being himself unequal to the fatigues of a campaign, committed part of his army to his son Nebuchadnezzar, still in the prime of life, and sent him against the rebel. Nebuchadnezzar engaged and defeated the latter in a pitched battle and returned the district to Babylonian rule. Meanwhile, as it happened, his father Nabopolassar sickened and died in the city of Babylon, after a reign of twenty-one years. Being informed before long of his father's death, Nebuchadnezzar settled the affairs of Egypt and the other countries. The prisoners—Jews, Phoenicians, Syrians, and those of Egyptian nationality—were consigned to some of his friends, with orders to conduct them to Babylonia, along with the heavy troops and the rest of the spoils; while he himself, with a small escort, pushed across the desert to Babylon. There he found the administration in the hands of the Chaldaeans and the throne reserved for him by their chief nobleman. Being now master of his father's entire realm, he gave orders to allot to the captives, on their arrival, settlements in the most suitable districts of Babylonia. He then magnificently decorated the temple of Bel and the other temples with the spoils of war (quoted in Josephus, *C. Ap.* 1.134–139).

Nebuchadnezzar's Campaign of 605–604 BC



Neo-Babylonian Chronicle (ca. 540 B.C.) Chronicle 5, Obv.1–11 • [The twenty-first year]: (605 B.C.) The king of Akkad stayed home. Nebuchadrezzar, his eldest son, the crown prince, mustered the army of Akkad. He took his army's lead and marched to Carchemish which is on the bank of the Euphrates. He crossed the river [to encounter the army of Egypt] which was encamped at Carchemish. [...] They did battle together. The army of Egypt retreated before him. He inflicted a [defeat] upon them, finished them off completely. In the district of Hamath the army of Akkad overtook the remainder of the army of [Egypt which] managed to escape [from] the defeat and was not overcome. They inflicted a defeat upon them. Not a single man returned home. At that time Nebuchadrezzar conquered the whole area of the Ha[t]ti-country.

For twenty one years Nabopolassar ruled Babylon. On the eighth day of the month of Ab (August 16) he died. In the month of Elul Nebuchadrezzar returned to Babylon and on the first day of the month of Elul (September 7) he ascended the royal throne in Babylon (BM 21946).

1 Chronicles 36 ⁵ Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD his God. ⁶ Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and bound him in fetters to take him to Babylon. ⁷ Nebuchadnezzar also carried part of the vessels of the house of the LORD to Babylon and put them in his palace in Babylon.

Jeremiah 25 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 Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon)....

Andrew Steinmann, *Daniel* (ConC, 2014) p. 80 • The problem is easily solved, however, when it is noted that Jeremiah employs the nonaccession-year system for counting the years of a king's reign. Under this system, if a king began his reign in the middle of a year, this first, partial year was counted as his first year. Daniel, however, uses the accession-year system that was current in Babylon under the Babylonian and Persian kings. This system did not count the partial year at the beginning of a king's reign.

Daniel 1 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, handsome and skilful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to serve in the king's palace, and to teach them the letters and language of the Chaldeans.

Isaiah 39 ⁷ And some of your own sons, who are born to you, shall be taken away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

Genesis 39 ⁶ Now Joseph was handsome and good-looking.

Daniel 1 ⁵ The king assigned them a daily portion of the rich food which the king ate, and of the wine which he drank. They were to be educated for three years, and at the end of that time they were to stand before the king. ⁶ Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah of the tribe of Judah. ⁷ And the chief of the eunuchs gave them names: Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego.

Daniel: "God is my judge."

Hananiah: "The Lord is gracious."

Mishael: "Who is what God is?"

Azariah: "The Lord has helped."

Belteshazzar: "May Bel protect his life"

Shadrach: "The command of Aku"

Meshach: "Who is what Aku is?"

Abednego: "Servant of Nebo"

Daniel 1 ⁸ But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's rich food, or with the wine which he drank; therefore he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself. ⁹ And God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs; ¹⁰ and the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, "I fear lest my lord the king, who appointed your food and your drink, should see that you were in poorer condition than the youths who are of your own age. So you would endanger my head with the king." ¹¹ Then Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; ¹² "Test your servants for ten days; let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink. ¹³ Then let our appearance and the appearance of the youths who eat the king's rich food be observed by you, and according to what you see deal with your servants." ¹⁴ So he hearkened to them in this matter, and tested them for ten days. ¹⁵ At the end of ten days it was seen that they were better in appearance and fatter in flesh than all the youths who ate the king's rich food. ¹⁶ So the steward took away their rich food and the wine they were to drink, and gave them vegetables.

Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars* (A.D. 119) *Claud.* 25 • He banished from Rome all the Jews, who were continually making disturbances at the instigation of one Chrestus.

Paulus Orosius, *Seven Books of History Against the Pagans* (ca. A.D. 417) 7.6.15–16 • In the ninth year of the same reign (A.D. 49), Josephus reports that the Jews were expelled from the City by Claudius. But Suetonius convinces me more who speaks in the following manner: “Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome, who were constantly stirring up revolutions because of their ill-feeling toward Christ.”

Romans (A.D. 57) 14 ¹ As for the man who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not for disputes over opinions. ² One believes he may eat anything, while the weak man eats only vegetables. ³ Let not him who eats despise him who abstains, and let not him who abstains pass judgment on him who eats; for God has welcomed him. ⁴ Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Master is able to make him stand.

A. Leo Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia, Portrait of a Dead Civilization* (1964) 188–189 • According to an explicit and detailed text of the Seleucid period, the images in the temple of Uruk were served two meals per day. The first and principal meal was brought in the morning when the temple opened, and the other was served at night, apparently immediately before the closing of the doors of the sanctuary.... Each repast consisted of two courses, called “main” and “second.” ...

From the several extant descriptions of divine repasts, the following sequence can be reconstructed. First, a table was brought in and placed before the image, then water for washing was offered in a bowl. A number of liquid and semiliquid dishes in appropriate serving vessels were placed on the table in a prescribed arrangement, and containers with beverages were likewise set out. Next, specific cuts of meat were served as a main dish. Finally, fruit was brought in in what one of the texts takes the trouble to describe as a beautiful arrangement, thus adding an esthetic touch comparable to the Egyptian use of flowers on such occasions. Musicians performed.... Eventually, the table was cleared and removed and water in a bowl again offered to the image for the cleansing of the fingers.

Having been presented to the image, the dishes from the god’s meal were sent to the king for his consumption. Clearly, the food offered to the deity was considered blessed by contact with the divine and capable of transferring that blessing to the person who was to eat it.

Daniel 1 ¹⁷ As for these four youths, God gave them learning and skill in all letters and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. ¹⁸ At the end of the time, when the king had commanded that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. ¹⁹ And the king spoke with them, and among them all none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore they stood before the king. ²⁰ And in every matter of wisdom and understanding concerning which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom. ²¹ And Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus.