

New Facebook Bible Study of Daniel – Beginning today, 04/25/20.

INTRODUCTION: Daniel is considered a controversial book by some. I want to declare as I start this study that I am an amillennialist who believes in the divine inspiration of Holy Scripture and the authority of God's Word over the imaginations of humans. God knows all things and he can predict the future before it happens. God can name names, places, and events in accordance with his plans.

The Book of Daniel provides two kinds of subject matter. In chapters 1–6 the author, writing in the third person, relates what happened to him and three companions at the court of Nebuchadnezzar and of Belshazzar, the last Babylonian regent, and during the reign of Cyrus, the first Persian king.

In chapters 7–12 Daniel, speaking in the first person, tells of visions he was granted. They are four in number. The first two appeared to him in the Babylonian period; the last two, after the Persian Empire was founded.

Because the future was revealed to Daniel by means of visions and dreams, prophetic utterance is cast in the form of symbolic imagery. The animals which cross the pages of the book are not to be thought of as actual zoological specimens of a given era but as representing peoples, kings, and kingdoms. The huge statue, composed of various kinds of metals, will not appear at a point in time, but signifies a succession of earthly centers of power. Numbers, describing the beginning or the duration of envisioned action, are not to be computed mathematically but have figurative, nonnumerical significance. Prophecy cast in this form is called apocalyptic. It had numerous imitators among the writers of non-Biblical literature during the inter-testamental period. In the New Testament book "The Revelation to John" this type of predictive symbolism is a dominant characteristic and Daniel shares many characteristics with Revelation.

The book of Daniel, like the rest of the Old Testament, is written in Hebrew—except for the section from 2:4 to 7:28, which is in Aramaic (what used to be called Chaldee). Aramaic was the commercial and diplomatic language of the time. This is what might be expected in a book written for Jews living among Babylonians, containing copies of official Babylonian documents in their original Babylonian language.

The book claims to be the composition of a writer named Daniel, who was brought to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar in 606/5 B.C. Jesus quoted from it and said the words were spoken by "the prophet Daniel." (Mt 24:15) Its genuineness was accepted by the Jews and early Christians. The traditional view that the book is a true historical document dating from the days of Daniel himself, persisted unanimously among Christian and Jewish scholars until the rise of modern criticism.

One reason some believe that it was written between 170 and 165 B.C. is that the Book of Daniel was written so late that the Hebrew canon of prophetic books was already closed and it therefore had to be incorporated in the third and final collection of sacred Scripture, called the Writings. However, a different reason for its position in the Hebrew listing of books can be advanced. Daniel was not called to the prophetic office, as were previous and later spokesmen of divine truth. While he was granted the gift of prophecy, he was and remained a statesman and counselor of kings.

You can also review it as the reigns of four different monarchs. Nebuchadnezzar (chapters 1–4); Belshazzar (chapters 5, 7–8); Darius (chapters 6 & 9); and Cyrus (chapters 10–12)

I would encourage you to stop and read the entire Book of Daniel in one sitting before you begin our in-depth study. This will give you the whole sweep of Daniel and help you to make it a unity as we study it. May God bless our studies together.

Tomorrow is my day of rest. I will post our first textual study Monday evening. My goal is to post 6 days a week, Monday through Saturday. However, since I generally do it in the evening, it may seem to you like I post Tuesday through Sunday.