

# Dating Daniel

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I just received an email from an acquaintance of mine that contained a link to a YouTube video which was a tribute to Ronald Reagan. The title of the email was “Was he our last good and decent President?” In my mind, I think he was. People ridiculed President Reagan and it seems people, especially in this age will ridicule anything that seems decent and good and proper. In the video, Ronald Reagan said:

*The Bible holds the answer to every problem.*

So naturally, the Bible is a target—a very major target for people who want to look down on things. I would like to start by looking at 2 Timothy 3, a scripture we’ve read many times.

**2 Timothy 3:15** *and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

*16) All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness ... (NKJV)*

In these days, there are many attacks on our faith. The Bible tells us that:

*The Word of God is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge.*

It’s really the bedrock of our belief system—our knowledge of God and the right way of life and of the future. God tells us the future that is coming. It’s only natural that Satan would attack the Bible in a great way, trying to discredit it. Trying to discredit it as God’s inspired Word. People especially in more recent times have analyzed and analyzed the Bible trying to find contradictions, trying to find something to criticize. The goal is to bring doubt to the Bible, as God’s inspired Word.

An example is especially the book of Daniel. I would like to look at that as an example. The book of Daniel describes miracles and has detailed prophecies of the rise and fall of nations. Things that have been verified very thoroughly. Theologians describe the miracles as fantasies and not as prophecies but things that are history. Daniel wasn’t really written back then but later and as a history and not really as miraculous prophecies. They have come up with a list of so-called problems in the book of Daniel, especially when it was written. From Wikipedia, the traditionalists view dates Daniel to the 6th century B.C. which was the 500’s B.C., back in the time of Nebuchadnezzar and Darius, when Daniel lived. It goes on that there are a few modern biblical scholars who would seriously defend such an opinion. Modern biblical scholarship dates the book of Daniel to the time of the Maccabees—168 to 165 B.C. As with other supposed discrepancies in the Bible, these arguments over when Daniel was written tend to fall apart when you really analyze them. There are four that I would like to look at.

1. Daniel's predictions of the future—The so-called experts say these were too detailed and couldn't have been actual prophecies.
2. Daniel was written partly in Hebrew and partly in Aramaic which would indicate more than one author. The Aramaic was in more recent dialect.
3. Daniel contains some Greek words which wouldn't be possible if it was written in the 6th century B.C. It also contains some Persian words.
4. Daniel contains historical inaccuracies concerning Kings, back in the 6th century B.C.

Starting at number one. To say the predictions in Daniel are not realistic or logical really is defying the existence of God. God as an infinitely wise and powerful Creator through which all things are possible. He created the physical universe, mankind, the earth—everything. In Matthew 19:26, Jesus Christ said:

*“With God all things are possible”.*

I would like to look at Isaiah 46:9.

**Isaiah 46:9** *Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me,  
10) Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,  
11) Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man who executes My counsel, from a far country. Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it. (NKJV)*

So, God is in control of history and the future. He can prophesy things and bring them to pass because He has absolute knowledge and understanding. This argument boils down to, do you believe in God?

Number two, languages used and the possibility of more than one author. Daniel was written, as I said, partly in Hebrew and partly in Aramaic. Daniel 2-7 was the section written in Aramaic. Daniel 1 is an introduction to Daniel's background and how his friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came to be in favor with King Nebuchadnezzar and it was written in Hebrew. It turns out that the things here that pertain especially to Israel, were written in Hebrew. The things that are a witness to a general audience or to the world in general were written in Aramaic and you can see that when you read through Daniel with that in mind. Daniel chapters 2-7 were in Aramaic and to a greater audience. What's contained in that section is:

- *Nebuchadnezzar's dream where he saw this great image with the head of gold and the chest and arms and shoulders and so on.*
- *Nebuchadnezzar's image of the gold that he built and then commanded everyone to bow down to—and the fiery furnace.*

- *Then also his dream of the tree which was cut down and which pertained to him. The time he was forced to live as animal for seven years and lost his mind.*

So, Nebuchadnezzar did a lot of dreaming here.

- *Belshazzar's feast was also in this section—the hand writing on the wall.*
- *Daniel in the lions' den — and then at the end...*
- *Visions of sequential kingdoms which parallels the first section of Daniel's initial dream.*

These were all written in Aramaic because they essentially show miracles and the Hand of God to a wider audience. So, these chapters—Daniel 2-7— contain events that gave witness to God's great power and were acknowledged by the leaders back then. Let's look at Nebuchadnezzar's first dream. We're going to go through a lot of things in Daniel, starting in chapter 2.

**Daniel 2:1** *Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him.*

*2) Then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. (NKJV)*

This is kind of a strange situation because Nebuchadnezzar forgot the dream so he commanded that these astrologers and sooth-sayers both tell him what the dream was and also interpret it, which is a very unusual thing. Of course, none of them could except when it came to Daniel. Daniel then prayed to God and He gave him the interpretation to the dream and he was able to pass that on to Nebuchadnezzar.

Continuing in verse 27.

*27) Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, "The secret which the king has demanded, the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king.*

*28) But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these: (NKJV)*

Daniel goes on and describes the dream and the interpretation.

Continue in verse 47.

*47) The king answered Daniel, and said, "Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret." (NKJV)*

Here is the king who admitted a belief in God as the great, one and only, *God the Creator*. In comes this image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up in chapter 3.

**Daniel 3:1** *Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its width six cubits. He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. (NKJV)*

He had then commanded everyone to come and worship this image he had set up. Of course, Daniel and his friends couldn't do that because they had to worship only the true God.

Continuing in verse 12.

*12) There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up." (NKJV)*

Continuing in verse 21.

*21) Then these men were bound in their coats, their trousers, their turbans, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. (NKJV)*

Continuing in verse 25.

*25) "Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."  
26) Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace and spoke, saying, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here." Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire. (NKJV)*

Then in verse 29.

*29) Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this." (NKJV)*

Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged God as the one true God. Then there is the great tree in the next chapter. This is a quote from King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4:1.

**Daniel 4:1** *Nebuchadnezzar the king, To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you.  
2) I thought it good to declare the signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for me. (NKJV)*

Continuing in verse 10.

*10) These were the visions of my head while on my bed: I was looking, and behold, A tree in the midst of the earth, And its height was great. (NKJV)*

He mentions the tree is cut down; we've all read this story. Over in verse 25. This is the vision Daniel revealed to him.

*25) They shall drive you from men, your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make you eat grass like oxen. They shall wet you with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses. (NKJV)*

This came about and Nebuchadnezzar was forced out into the open field and ate grass like the beasts that were there for seven years.

Continuing in verse 34.

*34) And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom is from generation to generation.  
35) All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven And among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand Or say to Him, "What have You done?" (NKJV)*

Great King Nebuchadnezzar was attributing all of this to God as being the one true God.

The handwriting on the wall is in chapter 5.

*Daniel 5:1 Belshazzar the king made a great feast for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine in the presence of the thousand. (NKJV)*

So, he made this great feast and called for the gold and silver cups that had come out of the temple in Jerusalem and they were drinking wine out of them. Then the handwriting appeared on the wall.

Continuing in verse 5.

*5) In the same hour the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. (NKJV)*

This was the handwriting on the wall. Down in verse 25 this was the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. Daniel was called in and asked to interpret this writing. This was the interpretation of each word.

Continuing in verse 26.

26) *This is the interpretation of each word. MENE: God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it;*

27) *TEKEL: You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting;*

28) *PERES: Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.”*

29) *Then Belshazzar gave the command, and they clothed Daniel with purple and put a chain of gold around his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. (NKJV)*

So here again is another ruler recognizing a miracle from God. Daniel was able to interpret the writing and it was proclaimed and made known. All of these rulers came to realize that God was the great God and the only true God and proclaimed this to the civilizations and the world in general around them.

Daniel and the lions' den is in chapter 6. I can begin with what Josephus wrote; he wrote a lot about Daniel and concerning the lions' den, Josephus added something that is interesting to the story. He said:

*When Daniel was taken out of the lions' den, his accusers came and said that it wasn't a big miracle from God The lions had been well fed before Daniel was thrown in there, so they just didn't bother him.*

So, there's no real miracle from God. Where have we heard this before? We've heard it about many things like the Red Sea and Noah and the ark and so forth. Daniel continues ...

*To test this, the lions were fed to the full—meat was thrown in there until they didn't want anymore and then took all these accusers and their families and threw them in. Immediately the lions tore them all apart.*

That showed God's power—God definitely was protecting Daniel. Daniel 6:25.

**Daniel 6:25** *Then King Darius wrote: To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you.*

*26) I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For He is the living God, And steadfast forever; His kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed, And His dominion shall endure to the end.*

*27) He delivers and rescues, And He works signs and wonders In heaven and on earth, Who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. (NKJV)*

Darius made this public announcement about his belief in God and that God really works miracles and is the one true God. All these events really are a witness in these chapters. Witness to the society around of God's power and these things were declared by the rulers and it was natural then to write this in the Aramaic because of the society around in that time.

As far as the remainder of Daniel, Daniel 8-12, in chapter 8 it talks about the rising of Greece, the temple being desecrated, the destruction of the holy people. Chapter 9 is the seventy weeks prophecy, the destruction of Jerusalem and Daniel's long

prayer about the sins of his people. Chapter 10-12 are events from Daniel's time to the end, especially affecting the Israeli people, the abomination of desolation and the resurrection. Daniel returned to Hebrew to write the end of this book. Reading Daniel with that in mind, I think you can see why there were different languages and how they were directed.

Gleason Archer wrote a book titled, A Survey of the Old Testament. He mentioned some things that the Aramaic in Daniel was a western dialect so it couldn't have been composed in Babylon, hence he said that Daniel couldn't have been the actual author. It mentions that recent discoveries of a 5th century Aramaic documents show that Daniel was like Ezra, written in a form of imperial Aramaic which was an official literary dialect back in that time. Daniel and Ezra were written in a dialect of Aramaic that was current back in those years.

What about the Greek and Persian words? There are only three Greek words, they were the names of musical instruments. It's common to keep the name of instruments—we do that. For instance, the piano and violin are Italian words. The guitar comes from a Spanish word. I think that is not really an honored argument when you think of names of instruments that were borrowed from Greece. There were fifteen Persian words and these were all words pertaining to government and administrative terms. Since Daniel was part of the government, it's only commonsense that he would use these terms. It's only natural that Daniel would use the language or the Persian terms because he was involved in government affairs. It also says these Persian words were not found later than 33 B.C. and all of them were called old Persian words.

What about the supposed errors and inconsistencies? Back in Daniel 1.

**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.* (NKJV)

The argument is, this conflicts with Jeremiah 46:2, so we'll look at that.

**Jeremiah 46:2** *Against Egypt. Concerning the army of Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt, which was by the River Euphrates in Carchemish, and which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon defeated in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah:* (NKJV)

In Jeremiah 25:17—I won't go there—but he mentions that Nebuchadnezzar came against Egypt and against Jerusalem and other cities at that time, which would be the fourth year of Nebuchadnezzar. In Daniel 1, he mentions the third year. This argument really backfires on itself because in Palestine it was common to count the first year of a king's reign as a partial year. It normally would be a partial year because a king would be raised to office perhaps in the middle of the year like July. So if he served from July through December that would be considered his first year. Then the next would be the second year. This was not the way it was done in Babylon. There, the first full year was considered his first year. So, the fourth year on Palestine would be the third year in Babylon, which really is a proof that this was written in Babylon and not sometime later in the time of the Maccabees.

For a long time, it was stated that there was no record or archaeological evidence of a king named Belshazzar. Sources have since ancient times stated that Nabonidus was the last king of Babylon. In 1853 there were discoveries of small clay cylinders in Mesopotamia and these were the Nabonidus cylinders. One resides in the British Museum. From *Britannica online*, based on these Nabonidus cylinders, he was king from 556 to 539 B.C. Nabonidus made his son Belshazzar co-king and spent much of his reign in Arabia, fighting his wars and returning to Babylon in 539 where he was captured by Cyrus. In Daniel 5, when Daniel interpreted the handwriting on the wall, Belshazzar offered to make him the third ruler in the kingdom. Since Belshazzar was really the second ruler under his father, he could only offer the third rulership. Ezekiel and Daniel were contemporaries. Ezekiel 14:14 lists Noah, Daniel and Job as three righteous men. Men that had a close relationship with God, through whom God spoke and gave prophecies.

Josephus wrote about Daniel things that happened in his life and about his prophecies. Now they had come to pass. In Josephus book ten, chapter 11 and paragraph 7, Josephus gives an account of Daniel in the lions' den that is actually an interesting read because he adds a few more details than the Bible does. At the end of that account, he says the following:

*When therefore those that had intended to destroy Daniel by treachery were themselves destroyed. King Darius sent letters all over the country and praised the God whom Daniel worshipped and saw that He was the only true God and had all power.*

Then Josephus goes on to describe Daniel's prophecies and how they had all come to pass exactly. At the end of that, Josephus wrote:

*Indeed this all came to pass that our nation suffered these things under Antiochus Epiphany according to Daniel's vision.*

Then he wrote:

*Many years before they came to pass and in the very same manner, Daniel also wrote concerning the woman government and that our country shall be made desolate by them. All these things did this man leave in writing as God had showed them to him.*

I would like to look at 2 Peter 2:1-2.

**2 Peter 2:1** *But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.*

*2) And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. (NKJV)*

This really is a prophecy that is being fulfilled in our very time because prophecy is being evil spoken of and the book of Daniel is an example of part of the Bible that is being evil spoken of. As Paul says, all scripture is the word of God and has been



miraculously preserved for us by God over all these ages and we have it. We need to love it and respect it and take care of it.