

# Why Study the Book of Daniel?

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- A. In my experience, some have been greatly opposed to studying from the Old Testament.
  - 1. The reasoning has been that because we live under the New Testament, there is no need to study from the Old Testament.
  - 2. However, there are many sound reasons to take a serious look at the Old Testament & Daniel, in particular.
- B. Daniel is the Word of God.
  - 1. As the Word of God, this Book originated with God & not with man.
    - a. “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” (2 Tm 3:16).
    - b. “No prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pt 1:20-21).
  - 2. Because this book came from the mind of God & was breathed out by him, it deserves our attention.
- C. The Book of Daniel points to Jesus.
  - 1. Jesus saw the Old Testament as pointing to him & saw himself as the culmination of the Old Testament.
    - a. For the Old Testament pointing to Jesus:
      - 1) “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me” (Jn 5:39).
      - 2) “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled” (Lk 24:44).
    - b. For Jesus as the culmination of the Old Testament:
      - 1) “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished” (Mt 5:17-18).
      - 2) The apostles, likewise, saw Jesus as the culmination of the Law: “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes” (Rm 10:4).
  - 2. The Book of Daniel tells us much about Jesus:
    - a. In interpreting Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, Daniel speaks of the kingdom of Christ: “In the days of those kings [the Roman emperors] the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever” (Dan 2:44).
    - b. In one of Daniel’s visions, Daniel saw the coronation of Jesus as king (Dan 7:13-14).
      - 1) It is likely from this passage that Jesus applied the title “Son of Man” to himself.
      - 2) It is clear that “Son of Man” means far more than a simple declaration of Jesus’

humanity.

- a) “Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Mt 24:30-31).
- b) When Caiaphas asked Jesus to make some sort of defense, Jesus says, “I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven” (Mt 26:64).
  - i. Caiaphas believed such a response was blasphemous (Mt 26:65).
  - ii. The Sanhedrin then condemned Jesus to die (Mt 26:66-68).

D. The Book of Daniel provides comfort to the Christian.

1. God is presented as the One who rules all.
  - a. When the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream was given to Daniel, Daniel replies (Dan 2:20-21).
  - b. “The Most High God rules the kingdom of mankind and sets over it whom he will” (Dan 6:21).
  - c. If God has enough power to raise up & bring down kings, doesn’t it stand to reason that he has enough power to help me when I face difficulties?
2. Daniel provides the clearest statements about the resurrection of the dead in all the Old Testament.
  - a. Prior to the time of Daniel, God had revealed only a little about the afterlife. Except for a few sporadic statements (e.g., the statement that God **is** the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob [cf Mt 22:32] & the statement that David could go to his dead infant), death was viewed as a shadowy, dark realm (e.g., Job 14:14; Ps 88:10-12; Ps 115:17).
  - b. Yet, Daniel says unambiguously that the dead shall be resurrected—“And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Dan 12:2).

E. The Book of Daniel increases our faith in the inspiration of the Scriptures.

1. The Book of Daniel contains numerous amazing prophecies.
  - a. Daniel informs the readers of the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes.
    - 1) References from Daniel:
      - a) “He shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator” (Dan 9:27).
      - b) “Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall take away the regular burnt offering. And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate” (Dan 11:31).
    - 2) Before we move to discuss Antiochus IV Epiphanes, let me say a word about Jesus’ use of this prophecy.
      - a) Jesus applies this prophecy to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70: “So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing

in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains” (Mt 24:15-16).

- b) There are two possible explanations for this:
  - i. It may be that this prophecy—like many biblical prophecies—has two applications: It may be that the prophecy was fulfilled in the days of Antiochus & then again when Titus besieged Jerusalem & destroyed the Temple.
  - ii. The far more likely explanation, in my view, is that Jesus referenced Daniel 12:11: “From the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days.”
    - i) The destruction of the Temple would be the final “abomination of desolation” for the regular burnt offerings would be taken away forever.
    - ii) After Titus, the future Roman emperor, destroyed the Temple in AD 70 never again would burnt offerings be offered in Jerusalem.
- 3) Now, let’s think about these prophecies concerning Antiochus IV Epiphanes.
  - a) Dan 11:21-39.
  - b) Notice what this passage declares:
    - i. Armies shall be utterly swept away before him.
    - ii. He shall stir up his heart & power against the king of the south.
    - iii. His army shall be swept away by the king of the south.
    - iv. He shall be set against the holy covenant.
    - v. Ships of Kittim shall come against him, he shall become afraid & withdraw.
    - vi. He shall profane the temple & the fortress, and he shall take away the regular burnt offering.
    - vii. He shall exalt himself above every god & speak astonishing things against the God of gods.
  - c) Reference to Antiochus IV Epiphanes.
    - i. He took the name “Epiphanes”—which literally means “Manifest One.”
    - ii. He paid off important people in order to obtain the throne.
    - iii. He plundered part of Egypt’s richest territory (Judea was part of the Egyptian empire at this point). He divided the spoil among his soldiers.
    - iv. As Antiochus came back from plundering Egypt, he stopped in Palestine & found an insurrection (cf. 1 Maccabees 1:16-28).
      - i) He dealt ruthlessly with the Jews.
      - ii) He killed 80,000 people & plundered the Temple.
      - iii) The Jews then started a full-fledged rebellion, generally referred to as the Maccabean Revolt.
    - v. In 168 BC, Antiochus invaded Egypt again, but this time Antiochus was soundly defeated.
      - i) When Antiochus arrived near Alexandria, Gaius Popilius Laenas, a Roman commander, handed him a letter from the Roman government ordering him to leave Egypt at once or risk war with Rome.
      - ii) Next, Gaius drew a circle in the sand around Antiochus & told him to

make a decision before he left the circle (this is where the phrase “line in the sand” originates).

- iii) Antiochus wisely chose to leave Egypt.
  - vi. The next year, Antiochus again turned attention to Palestine.
    - i) He sent his chief tax collector to Jerusalem who began to kill people on the Sabbath.
    - ii) He also began to reward those who accepted Hellenistic principles.
  - vii. In 167, Antiochus’ forces came back to stamp out Jewish religious practices.
    - i) They stopped the Jewish burnt offering, but they did offer swine upon the altar.
    - ii) They set up an idol to Zeus in the Temple.
  - d) In fact, the prophecy of Daniel 11 describes Antiochus so well that many liberal “scholars” assign the book to the time of Antiochus rather than the Babylonian Captivity. The reasoning is that for prophecies to be so precise one had to know about the events as they happened, not write of them in advance (we’ll say more about this later).
2. The Book also speaks about Alexander the Great.
- a. Dan 11:3-4.
  - b. Alexander died in 323 BC, and his kingdom was divided between four of his generals, none of whom were his descendants.
  - c. Josephus says that when Alexander was in Jerusalem, the Book of Daniel was showed to him & that he recognized himself in the prophecies.
    - 1) “And when the Book of Daniel was showed him wherein Daniel declared that one of the Greeks should destroy the empire of the Persians, he supposed that himself was the person intended. And . . . he was then glad” (*Antiquities of the Jews*, 11.8.5).
    - 2) While the episode from Josephus is most certainly fictional, it does show that Alexander was viewed as the fulfillment of this prophecy from long ago.