

Truth Triumphant

The Book of Daniel

J. G. Sahl

I. The Basics About The Book

A. This book derives its title from the human author Daniel whose name means “God is my Judge.”

B. This book was written by a member of the tribe of Judah while in exile from the Promise Land.

1. He was part of the tribe of Judah and possibly from the royal family. (Dan. 1:1-6)

2. He was most likely still a teenager when taken captive to Babylon during the first deportation of Israelites.

3. He was not controlled by peer pressure even during his teenage years as his heart was set upon pleasing the LORD.

4. He was noted for his personal integrity in all his ways. (Dan. 6:5)

5. He was faithful in his service to God as a counselor to the king in a gentile court for seventy years.

6. He was used by God to bear a testimony to the truth to the gentile world even though the nation of Israel was being judged for its sin.

7. He is an example for the saints concerning a proper walk with the Lord while living in a perverse and sinful generation.

C. This book covers the historical period of the seventy years of the exile, but eschatologically moves through the whole course of human history to its culmination when the Lord establishes His own righteous kingdom.

D. This book has been severely attacked by liberal critics for its authenticity.

1. They state that Daniel makes use of knowledge which would not have been available at that time, but the linguistic research has validated rather than disprove the authenticity of Daniel.

2. They state that Daniel has historic inaccuracies, but archeological and historical findings continue to confirm the historical accuracy of the work.

3. They state that Daniel is not recognized as prophetic Scripture by the Jews since it is not included in the prophetic portion of the Hebrew Canon; yet such statements show the liberal bias of these individuals since the section of the Hebrew Canon known as the writings is just as much Scripture as the rest of the Old Testament. He is known as Daniel the prophet and affirmed as such by the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 24:15).

E. This book is recognized as authentic both biblically (Ezekiel 14:14; 14:20; 28:3; Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14) and extrabiblically in such works as Josephus.

- F. This book contains apocalyptic form of prophetic material.
- G. This book has been designated as the key to understanding all biblical prophecy.

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H. This book was written by a man known for his personal piety and devotion to the Lord as he faithfully served as a governmental adviser or statesman in Gentile courts.

I. This book naturally divides itself into sections based upon Daniel’s use of Hebrew for the Jewish section of the work and Aramaic for the Gentile section of the work.

J. This book reveals the sovereign rule of Yahweh over all the nations of the earth.

K. This book reveals the inability of men to thwart the planned purposes of God.

L. This book discloses that it is only through the righteous rule of the Messiah that peace and blessing will come to men.

II. The Structure of the Book

A. The Key Verse: Daniel 4:34-35

B. The Key Words: appearance, appointed, decree, deliver, dreams, end time, exiles from Judah, granted, horn, interpretation, king, kingdom, latter days, Most High God, mysteries, reveal, sovereignty, visions.

C. The Breakdown of the Book

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| 1. | The Personal History of Daniel | Daniel 1 |
| 2. | The Prophetic History of the Gentiles | Daniel 2-7 |
| a. | The Dream of the Great Image | Daniel 2 |
| b. | The Deliverance from the Fiery Furnace | Daniel 3 |
| c. | The Dream of Nebuchadnezzar | Daniel 4 |
| d. | The Denunciation of Belshazzar | Daniel 5 |
| e. | The Decree of Darius | Daniel 6 |
| f. | The Dream of the Four Beasts | Daniel 7 |
| 3. | The Prophetic History of the Jews | Daniel 8-12 |
| a. | The Vision of the Gentile Oppression | Daniel 8 |
| b. | The Vision of the Seventy Units of Seven | Daniel 9 |
| c. | The Vision of Future Events | Daniel 10-12 |

III. The Major Theme of the Book

A. The Human Standpoint: the course of the Gentile kingdom on the earth until Israel’s deliverance from them by the Messiah.

B. The Divine Standpoint: the divine sovereignty over all the nations of the earth.

C. The Authorial Purpose: to encourage unwavering obedience to the Lord by His people as they await His sovereign moving among all the nations of the earth to establish His righteous kingdom upon the whole earth.