

Introduction to the Prophecy of Daniel

This morning we are beginning a great adventure in the book of Daniel. Daniel is one of sixty-six books in the entire world that are inspired by God. Think about it: sixty-six books in the world are inspired, and Daniel is one of them. It is a special, unique book. It is also a prophetic book. Many people are familiar with the book of Daniel to some degree. I think most of us are aware of the youth known as Daniel. He ended up being taken from the city of Jerusalem to the empire of Babylon—in fact, the city of Babylon. He ended up being appointed to a key position after he interpreted a dream for king Nebuchadnezzar. We read that later in life, he prayed on his knees and ended up being cast into a lions' den as a result of his praying. We are also familiar, if you have been in church very long, that he had some friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and

Abednego, who were thrown into a fiery furnace.

DREAM OF KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR. You may have heard about King Nebuchadnezzar. In one chapter of the book of Daniel, we learn that this man lived like a beast in the fields for seven years because he did not give God honor. This man also had a dream about a statue made of various metals. The metals symbolized different empires or kingdoms that would at some point in time be in control of the land of Palestine. Some people believe that the statue is about all of the empires of the world, but that is not true. The kingdoms or empires that are depicted by the statue are ones that would have control of the land of Israel. What is fascinating is that the first empire

was the Babylonian Empire, followed by the Medo-Persian Empire, then the Grecian Empire, and the Roman Empire. Today we are in a period of time that is referred to in the Bible as the times of the Gentiles. Daniel chapters two and seven, and other parts of Daniel, look into the future, and we learn about the tribulation period, the return of Christ, the millennial kingdom, and heaven itself. Daniel is a fascinating, incredible, prophetic book. In the process of dealing with the various prophecies, we learn that there is a surprise prophecy that is sometimes totally ignored. It appears in Daniel 9. It foretells

the death of Christ. The book Daniel contains a prophecy that pinpoints the year in which Christ would die. What is important about the prophecy is that anybody who died before that year or after that year cannot qualify as the Messiah because

Daniel says this is the time when the Messiah will die. The prophecy points to Christ. This is a fabulous study.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH THE BOOK OF DANIEL. The book of Daniel will give you a panorama of prophetic history: our times, the future, and heaven itself. It covers over one hundred prophecies. We are going to learn throughout the book that Daniel is trustworthy, and the Bible is trustworthy. When I was in my late twenties, I remember telling my wife that I wanted to study the book of Daniel during Easter vacation. So I started reading Daniel 1 and just kept reading. I was thrilled with the book of Daniel. I learned that the book contained prophecy after prophecy. Then I picked up a history book and



I compared the prophecies to the history book. I discovered that the book of Daniel corresponded to what I saw in history books. The book was full of very accurately fulfilled prophecies. It was an absolute thrill for me to see that the prophecies in Daniel were literally fulfilled. The prophecies were not vague like those of Nostradamus. The prophecies did not require manipulation in order to appear to be fulfilled. Daniel has very specific, fulfilled prophecies.

In fact, Daniel 11 has over one hundred prophecies! If you do not have prior knowledge of history or a good history book dealing with that period of time, you cannot make sense of Daniel 11. I was absolutely thrilled with what I learned.

But my excitement came to an end once I stumbled onto a critic, who claimed that Daniel was not prophecy, but was recorded

history. He said the reason the prophecies seem so precise and accurate was that Daniel was written after the events occurred; it was just recorded history. It became obvious that the reason the critics say that is because they do not believe in God. Therefore, they seek a reason to *not* believe that Daniel was a prophet, to not believe the book of Daniel deals with prophecy, and is to be trusted.

I discovered that this critic was just like the third cen-

tury A.D. critic Porphyry who claimed the book of Daniel was written during the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, which would be roughly 170 B.C. That would mean that the book of Daniel was written roughly 400 years after Daniel died. Consequently, that would mean Daniel is not prophecy, but recorded history.

At that point, I was in a panic, and I was struggling with

trusting the Bible. Therefore, I began a very interesting journey of research that has continued for years. Daniel has been one of my favorite books. Therefore, I want to share with you why you can believe that Daniel is prophecy and to be trusted. It is not recorded history.

The book of Daniel seems to be one of the critics' favorite targets because it is one of the most important Old Testament books

dealing with prophecy. Daniel has been relentlessly attacked. The critics will criticize the book of Daniel in one particular area. Then Christians do their research and show the critics are not correct. The response by the critics is to employ a different rescue technique. What I mean by rescue technique is that they find fault in another area that seems to support their view that Daniel cannot be prophecy. It is like a war. Attack and counter attack, with Christians eventually winning! It is

The Great Statue

Daniel 2:36-45



Babylon

605 - 539 B.C.

Medo-Persia

539 - 331 B.C.

Greece

331 - 146 B.C.

*Stone Made
Without Hands
Dan 2:45*

ROME

146 B.C. - A.D. 476

Future Empire

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important that we understand that critics are not truth-seekers. They are God-rejectors looking for proof that they are correct in their rejection of the book of Daniel. During our study of Daniel, I will explain some of these criticisms as we deal with the verses they attack.

PLAN FOR THIS INTRODUCTION TO DANIEL. However, rather than engage in one battle after another with the critics, I want to provide some positive reasons why we should believe that the book of Daniel is prophecy from the very beginning of our study. Therefore, I want to give you five reasons why the book of Daniel is prophetically accurate.

But before I can do that, I must briefly introduce the prophecy in Daniel 2, because I plan to refer to this prophecy repeatedly in this study. The prophecy is symbolized by a statue that appeared in Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2. In Daniel 2, we are told of a statue whose head is gold, whose chest

is silver, waist is bronze, legs are iron, and the feet are a mixture of iron and clay. The head of gold represents the empire of Babylon. The chest of silver represents the empire of Medo-Persia. The bronze waist represents the empire of Greece. The legs of iron represent the empire of Rome. When a large stone smashes the idol, it represents a future empire.

Now there are several other details about the statue that are important to understand. First, the empire of Babylon was defeated by the Medo-Persian Empire in 539 B.C. The Medo-Persian Empire was defeated by the Grecian Empire in 331 B.C. The Grecian Empire was defeated by the Roman Empire in 146 B.C. Now that is the prophecy found in Daniel 2. Eventually, those four empires are destroyed and a future

empire will appear which will last forever. I want to explain more about this statue, but I will have to wait until later on when we study Daniel 2.

DANIEL WAS WRITTEN BEFORE 164 B.C. Now we are ready for the five reasons why we can believe that the book of Daniel is prophetically accurate: The first reason is found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, a compilation of many different manuscripts. The manuscripts in which we are interested are the eight relating to the book of Daniel. The Dead Sea Scrolls were found in an area called Qumran in various caves. Among these scrolls, two complete copies of the book of Daniel were found in Qumran Cave 4. The reason those two manuscripts

are so important is that they have been carbon 14 dated to 164 B.C. Now critics claim that the scrolls of Daniel that were found at Qumran have a date ranging from 164 B.C. to 50 A.D. Then they claim that Daniel had not yet been written while Jesus

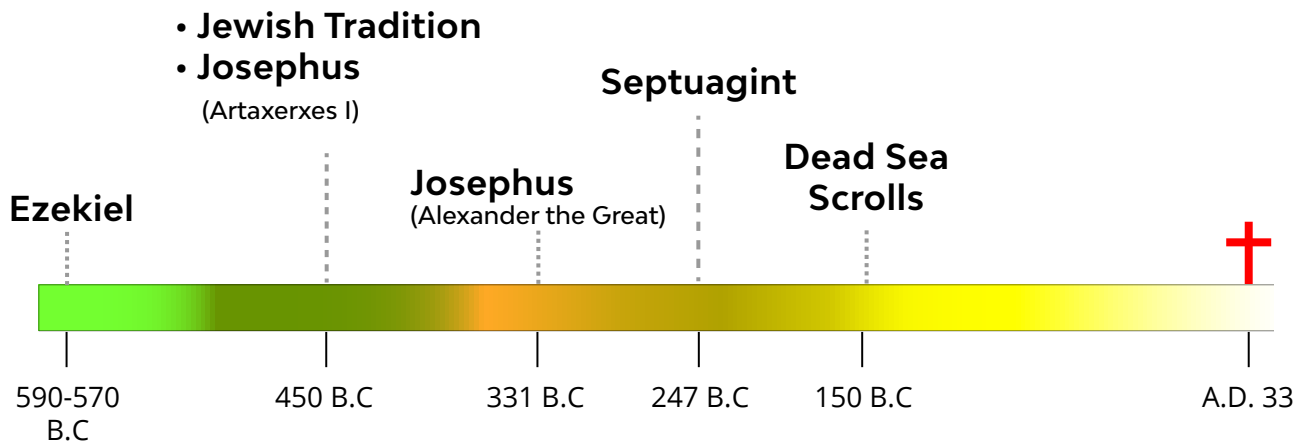


was alive. The implication is that the prophecy about Jesus in Daniel 9:24-26 was written to appear to be prophetic.

But, there are two problems with that view. First, there are two Daniel manuscripts that were found in Cave-4 that have a carbon 14 date of 164 B.C. That means the book of Daniel existed before 164 B.C. Even if the A.D. 50 date is accurate, it is unimportant since two copies have a 164 B.C. date.

You may ask, "Why is that important?" The reason it is important is that the prophecy in Daniel 2 prophesied that Rome would defeat the empire of Greece in 146 B.C. That means the book of Daniel existed before Rome defeated Greece. That means Daniel was a prophet, and the prophecy in Daniel 2 was not just recorded history. The book of Daniel

Daniel Was Written Before Major Prophecies



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existed before the Roman Empire defeated the Empire of Greece.

There is another important prophecy in Daniel 9 that prophesied the death of Christ would occur in March 24, A.D. 33. Since the book of Daniel existed before A.D. 33, that means the prophecy about the death of Christ was accurate and prophetic. This means the book of Daniel existed before two very key prophecies were fulfilled. The first prophecy would be the Roman Empire defeating the empire of Greece. The next prophecy occurred before the death of Christ in A.D. 33, almost 200 years before Christ died. That is important.

Another important thing to think about is that if the book of Daniel existed in Qumran Cave 4 in 164 B.C., then the book of Daniel had to exist before that. Therefore, the question is, “How much older is Daniel than that?”

DANIEL WAS WRITTEN IN 200 B.C. An older document known as the Greek Septuagint provides part of the answer since the book of Daniel is in the Septuagint. Historical documents reveal the first translation of the Septuagint was com-

pleted about 280-200 B.C.¹ The Septuagint is also referred to as the LXX. The acronym, LXX, refers to the number seventy. It is designated that way because historical documents state that seventy-two—not seventy—but seventy-two Jewish scholars in Alexandria, Egypt, began the translation of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament into Greek. Therefore, even though seventy-two scholars were involved in the translation, it is referred to as the LXX. Now, why is this important? The answer is the Greek Septuagint of 247 B.C. contains the book of Daniel.

Some critics say, “That is when the Septuagint was commissioned. It was not really completed until about 150 B.C.” The critics are correct. There is an inscription at the beginning of the Septuagint that states it was completed in 150 B.C. But in reply, we must realize that it was being translated from 247 B.C. to 150 B.C. So the question is when was the book of Daniel actually written? All that is important for us to realize is that the book of Daniel existed before the Roman Empire

1. David Graves. Biblical Archaeology. Electronic Christian Media. 2018. p. 103.

defeated the Grecian Empire, and the book of Daniel existed before the death of Christ in 33 A.D. These are two strong proofs the book of Daniel is accurate prophecy.

DANIEL WAS WRITTEN BEFORE 331 B.C. There is another interesting book written by Flavius Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*. He reports that in 331 B.C., Alexander the Great, the general of the Grecian Army, came to Jerusalem. His intent was to besiege and defeat the city. We are told that the Jewish high priest went out to meet Alexander the Great. When he reached Alexander the Great, he showed him in the book of Daniel that it was prophesied that he, Alexander, would come to the nation of Israel.[2] Alexander the Great was so impressed

when he saw himself in the prophecy of Daniel, that he entered the city of Jerusalem in peace. Here is the quote from Flavius Josephus,

And when he had said this to Parmenio, and had given the high priest his right hand, the priests ran along by him, and he came into the city; and when he went up into the temple, he offered sacrifice to God, according to the high priest's direction, and magnificently treated both the high priest and the priests. And when the book of Daniel was showed him, a wherein Daniel declared that one of the Greeks should destroy the empire of the Persians, he supposed that himself was the person intended; and as he was then glad, he dismissed the multitude for the present, but the next day he called them to him, and bade them ask what favors they pleased of him . . .²

Now what does that tell you? It tells us the book of Daniel existed before 331 B.C. What was King Nebuchadnezzar told in his dream? He was told the Grecian Empire would defeat the Medo-Persian Empire. That occurred in 331 B.C. Now that is really important, because now we have the prophecy of Jesus Christ affirmed in the book of Daniel. The book of Daniel existed before the Roman Empire defeated the Grecian Empire. The book of Daniel existed before the Grecian Empire defeated the Medo-Persian Empire.

DANIEL WAS WRITTEN BEFORE 450 B.C. Jewish tradition claims the book of Daniel existed by 450 B.C. But the

more significant point is that Flavius Josephus states in *Against Apion*, Vol. 1, Book 1, Sec 8 that the Hebrews had . . .

. . . only

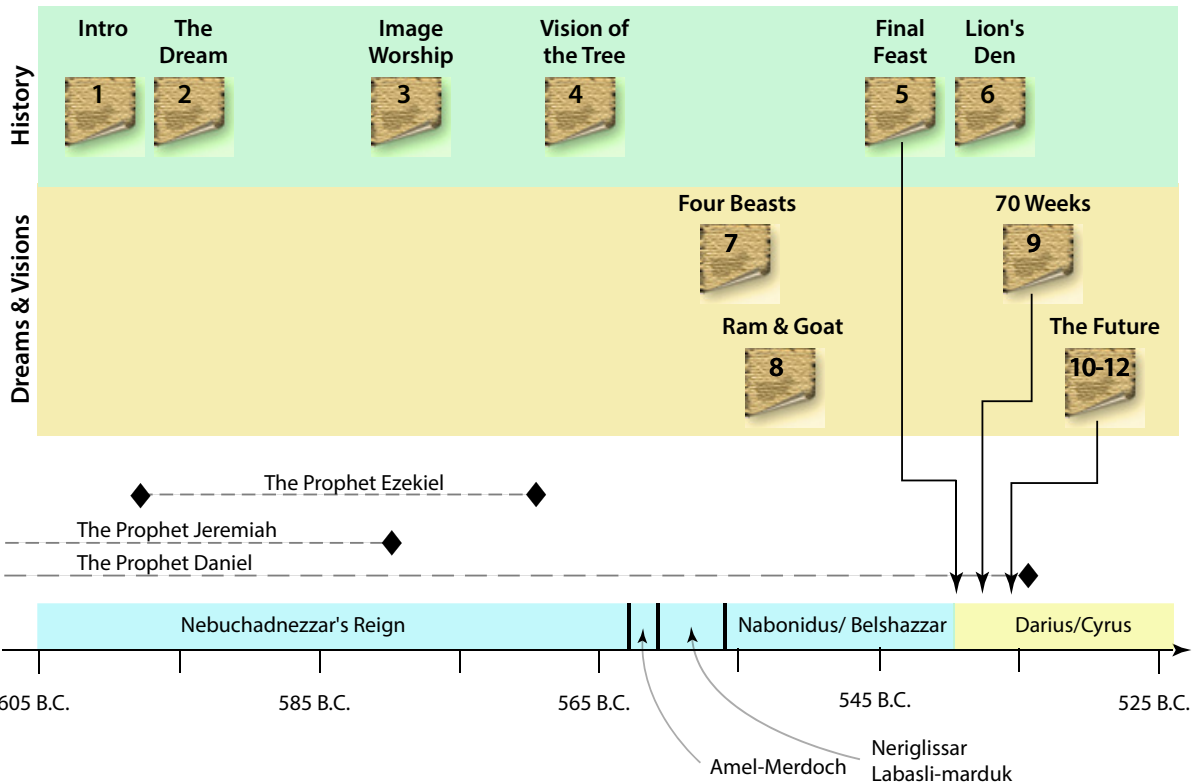
twenty-two books, which contain the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be divine; and of them five belong to Moses, which contain his laws and the traditions of the origin of mankind till his death. This interval of time was little short of three thousand years; but as to the time from the death of Moses till the reign of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, who reigned after Xerxes, the prophets, who were after Moses, wrote down what was done in their times in thirteen books. The remaining four books contain hymns to God, and precepts for the conduct of human life.³

Unabridged (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987), 307.

2 Flavius Josephus and William Whiston, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Introduction to the Prophecy of Daniel*

3 Flavius Josephus and William Whiston, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and*

Outline of Daniel



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That is, the Hebrew Bible contained twenty-two books. The twenty-two books that Daniel referred to were the same books contained in the current Hebrew Bible or the Tanakh. The Tanakh contains twenty-four books. The difference between the twenty-two books that Josephus refers to and the current Hebrew Bible is that the Judges and Ruth were combined, and Jeremiah and Lamentations were combined in the twenty-two books. This means the book of Daniel existed before 450 B.C. This is another proof the book of Daniel existed the Empire of Greece defeated the Medo-Persian Empire, before Roman Empire defeated the Grecian Empire, and before Jesus died in 33 A.D.

DANIEL WAS WRITTEN BEFORE 570 B.C. There is another proof that Daniel is prophecy. It is a very important one. The book of Ezekiel refers to Daniel. We know that the

book of Ezekiel was written roughly 590-570 B.C. In Ezekiel 14:14 we are told,

Even though these three men . . . Ezekiel 14:14a (NASB)

Ezekiel is referring to three men. Who are the three men? He mentions them,

. . . Noah, Daniel and Job were in its midst, by their own righteousness they could only deliver themselves," declares the Lord GOD. Ezekiel 14:14b (NASB)

Then in verse 20 Ezekiel refers to Noah and Daniel and Job again. Do you know what that means? That means Daniel was at least a contemporary of Ezekiel. Ezekiel knew of Daniel, and Daniel existed at the time of or before Ezekiel (590 to 570

BC.). Some critics want us to believe that the book of Daniel was written much later. The critics also tell us that Daniel did not write the book of Daniel. They say Daniel was not the author of the book of Daniel, that it was written by somebody else. So, it is not really prophecy.

In Daniel 9:27 we read,

And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate. Daniel 9:27 (NASB)

Now notice the phrase “wing of abominations.” Next, we need to notice that Daniel 12:11 says,

From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation . . . Daniel 12:11 (NASB)

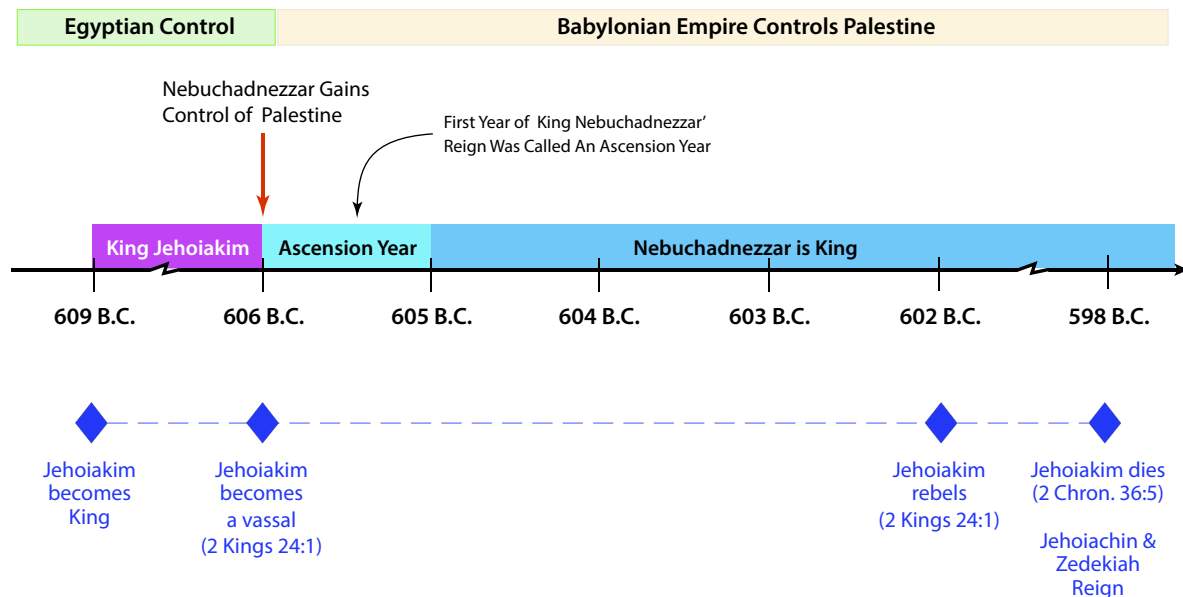
So Daniel 9 refers to the abomination of desolation. Daniel 12 refers to the abomination of desolation. Another important passage about the abomination is in Matthew 24:15 where Jesus has just been asked about the signs of the end times by the disciples. And we are told in Matthew 24:4-6,

And Jesus answered and said to them, “See to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will mislead many. You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. . . .” Matthew 24:4-6a (NASB)

Then in verse 15, we are told Jesus said,

Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLA-

Babylonian Ascension Year



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TION . . . Matthew 24:15a (NASB)

We just saw the phrase “abomination of desolation” in Daniel 9:27 and Daniel 12:11. Now watch what Jesus said.

. . . which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet . . . Matthew 24:15a (NASB)

So Ezekiel tells us that Daniel was a contemporary and Ezekiel was written by 590-570 B.C. Even the critics agree with the date and Jesus claims that Daniel wrote the book. So it was not somebody in 170 B.C. who wrote the book of Daniel. Ezekiel tells us that Daniel existed in 590-570 B.C. This assures us that the book of Daniel was written by Daniel and that he lived during the 6th century B.C.

Note this—the book of Daniel is incredible, it is accurate prophecy. It prophesied the falls of the Babylonian Empire, the Medo-Persian Empire, the Grecian Empire, and the Roman Empire, and then predicts the death of Christ in 33 A.D. The book of Daniel is inspired, trustworthy, as is all of the Bible.

We are going to learn as we read the different chapters that the critics are in error. They are doubters looking for proof of their doubt. Every time believers show them why they are wrong, they invent another rescuing device to support their doubt. Unfortunately, they want us to join them. We have seen this same tactic by the critics repeatedly used against the Old Testament. They make a claim that the Old Testament is not written by God. We show them differently, and they employ another rescuing device because they are not looking for a reason to believe. They are looking for a reason to doubt. So we conclude that Daniel wrote the book of Daniel before he died. We believe he died shortly after 539 B.C.

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF DANIEL. The book of Daniel has twelve chapters that can be divided into two parts. Chapters 1-6 all deal with history. There will also be some prophecies in those chapters, but they are primarily history. Then the last six chapters, 7-12, are Daniel’s visions about the future. They are going to be very fascinating.

It is important to understand that Daniel will be referring to the sequence of kings in the Babylonian Empire. Then we will discover that the Medo-Persian Empire invades and

defeats the Babylonian Empire. We will learn about two other kings, Darius and Cyrus. In all of these events, Daniel is historically accurate and gives us more reasons to trust the book.

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE BOOK OF DANIEL. So you may think that Daniel is about fulfilled prophecy. We are going to learn that there are prophecies about the future, our future, that have not yet come to pass. Because of his past fulfilled prophecies, we can trust the book of Daniel for those prophecies related to the future of our world.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF DANIEL. I said it would be a long introduction to this book. Now we are ready to consider Daniel 1:1-2. Daniel 1:1 says,

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it.

Daniel 1:1 (NASB)

History tells us that the Babylonian Empire came to power roughly about 626 B.C. Daniel does not start with the year of 626 B.C. The book starts with the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah. History tells us that in the year of 605 B.C. the Babylonian Empire had engaged the Egyptian Army in a city called Carchemish. It was located in the southern part of Turkey. The Babylonian army crossed the Euphrates River and engaged the Egyptian army. The Egyptian army was led by Pharaoh Necho. The Babylonian army was led by Nebuchadnezzar. He is designated here in verse one as King Nebuchadnezzar. When the Babylonian army crossed the Euphrates River, they defeated the Egyptian army. As a result, the Egyptian army retreated to the city of Hamath, in modern-day Syria. The Babylonian army pursued them and delivered a crushing defeat. The Egyptian army fled in retreat all the way back to Egypt. Then King Nebuchadnezzar continued to make his way down through the land of Palestine. Eventually, he came to the city of Jerusalem. We are told here in verse 1 that he besieged the city. Why did he do that? Why did he come to Jerusalem? History tells us that King Jehoiakim had made an alliance with the Egyptian Pharaoh. As a result, after Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Egyptian Army, he decided to come all the way down to Jerusalem to defeat the Jews who had joined Pharaoh Necho.

Confusion About the Reign of Jehoiakim. So Nebuchad-

nezzar besieged Jerusalem. We are told that it is the third year, 605 B.C. of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah. Some critics refer to Jeremiah 46:2 which says the invasion occurred in the fourth year of Jehoiakim king of Judah. Then they compare that to Daniel 1:1 which says it occurred in the third year. This could seem to be a major problem. The critics take advantage of this difference and claim the Bible is inconsistent or contradictory containing errors.

Unfortunately, such critics are not very good scholars. They do not know that the Babylonians considered a king's first year as his ascension year and do not count the ascension year as part of his official reign. The reign is counted as starting with the year that follows his ascension. That is what Daniel recorded in verse 1. Daniel lived in the city of Babylon and was consistent with his upbringing there. So there is no disagreement at all.

The Sovereignty of God. In 605 B.C, Nebuchadnezzar invaded Israel and successfully besieged Jerusalem. Look at verse 2.

The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the vessels of the house of God; and he brought them to the land of Shinar . . . Daniel 1:2 (NASB)

Shinar is another name for Babylon, so this refers to the land in which the city of Babylon existed. This means that Nebuchadnezzar took some of the vessels of gold from the house of God. Then he took them to the city of Babylon, and put them in the house of his god. He also took vessels and put them in his treasury.

We are also told that the Lord gave Jehoiakim, king of Judah, into his hand. Why was Nebuchadnezzar able to defeat Jehoiakim? It was God's decision. God is sovereign. Now I want you to think with me for a minute. God was patient with the kingdom of Judah. Most of the kings were not completely wicked. Their conduct was both good and bad. There were a few good kings. So God was patient. God showed mercy. Do you know what God could have done earlier because some of the kings in Judah were really wicked? God could have just removed the kingdom. But He did not do that. God was patient. He showed mercy until Manasseh, a very wicked king,

had his sons and daughters offered to an idol as burnt offerings.

Then in 605 B.C., God brought King Nebuchadnezzar down to Jerusalem to seize it. The king took King Jehoiakim to Babylon in chains. He also took Daniel and some of his friends along with other Jews back to the city of Babylon because he heard that his father had died. He returned to Jerusalem to complete the destruction. If you read the book of Jeremiah, you will discover that repeatedly God refers to Nebuchadnezzar as "My servant."

Why was Nebuchadnezzar God's servant? Because Judah was a wicked kingdom. God had been showing the kingdom of Judah mercy for a long time, and finally God said in effect, "Enough is enough. Nebuchadnezzar is My servant. Nebuchadnezzar will discipline the kingdom of Judah because of their sin." That tells me an important truth about our God. Our God wants holiness. Yes, He is a merciful God, but He will not show us mercy forever. We may think we are getting away with our sin, but we cannot get away with it forever, and Judah did not get away with their sins. God is looking for spiritual maturity in believers. We have a holy God. We have a patient God. We have a loving God, but He is no fool. We have a great God.