

God's Design in the Hebrew Scriptures: Daniel

Introduction and Chapter I

"If" Daniel was about 16 when taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, 605 B.C., and he served at a minimum to Cyrus' 3rd year, 536 B.C., then he may well have been in his mid-eighties at death.

Daniel is unique in that it is written in two languages, Hebrew and Aramaic. Chapters 1.1—2.4a are in Hebrew. Chapters 2.4b—7.28 are in Aramaic. Chapters 8.1—12.13 return to Hebrew. This language variation is instructive as God brings a message to His covenant people in the Hebrew language about their present discipline under Gentile domination and a message to His covenant people in the Gentile trade language, Aramaic, about His design for the Gentile nations themselves. As such Daniel brings God's design for "The Times of the Gentiles" and God's program for Israel.

- I. Devastation in life (1–7)

- II. Devastation in life can only be met by devotion to the Lord (8–16)

- III. Devotion to the Lord leads to discernment in life (17–21)
V21 does not contradict an upcoming statement in 10.1 of Daniel receiving a message in the 3rd year of Cyrus. This isn't saying that Daniel died in the first year of Cyrus. Cyrus was the end of Babylonian rule. This verse tells us Daniel was sustained by God through the entire Babylonian rule in spite of all that will unfold! As we sing today it was true for Daniel, "Our God Reigns"!

"In the third year of Jehoiakim"

Critics point to a seeming conflict between this statement by Daniel regarding the third year of Jehoiakim's reign, and the statement by Jeremiah in which he says that the event occurred in the fourth year of Jehoiakim (Je 25:1; 46:2). They use this kind of argument to show that the book of Daniel is spurious in its historicity. However, Daniel used Babylonian calculation rather than Hebrew. It was customary in the Babylonian system to reckon the second year as the first year of a king's reign and the first year as the year of his accession. Daniel spent most of his life in Babylon and was indoctrinated into Babylonian culture as a captive. It was natural that Daniel used a Babylonian form of calculation.

Daniel himself studied the prophecies of Jeremiah (Da 9:2). He would not have contradicted Jeremiah, because he studied it firsthand. He also writes independently from personal knowledge. Jeremiah uses the Hebrew form of reckoning but Daniel the Babylonian.

Grant Richison, Verse by Verse Through the Book of Daniel (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2006), Da 1:1.

The secret of the LORD is for those who fear Him, And He will make them know His covenant.

Ps 25.14