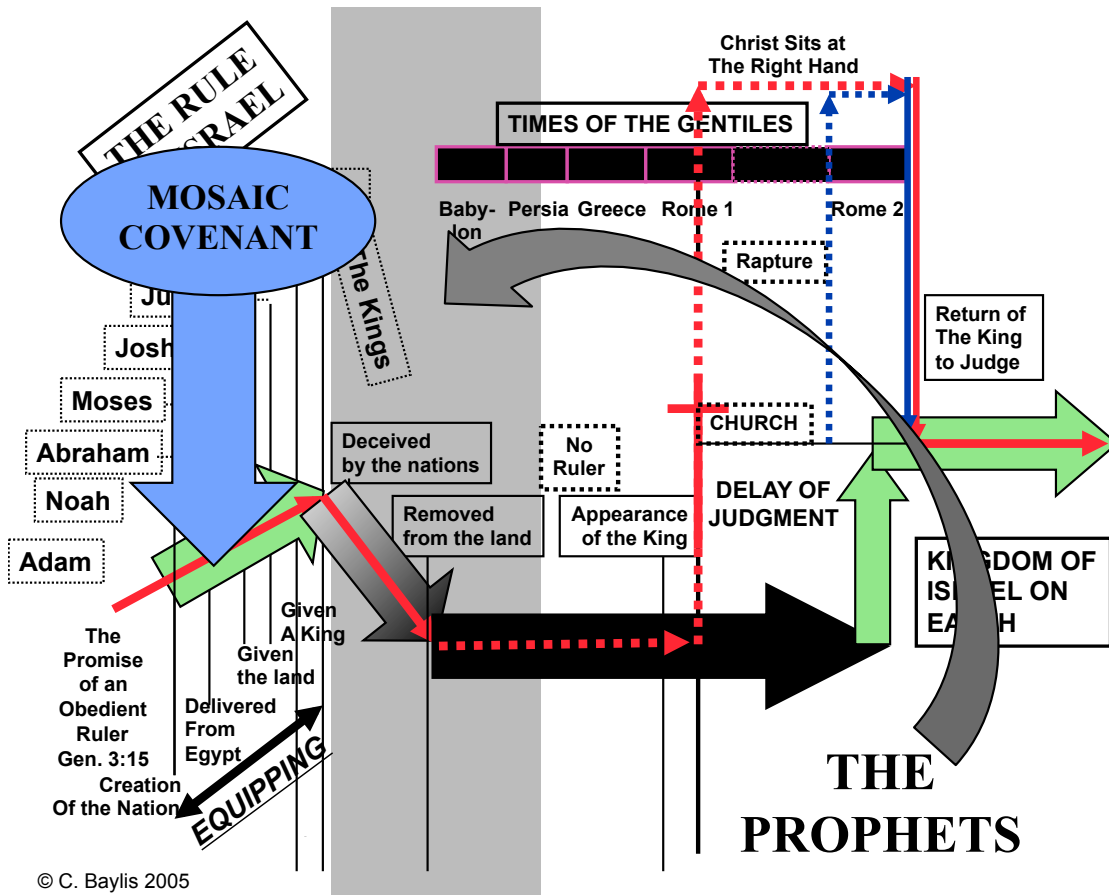


Daniel¹

NOTE: The Book of Daniel is in the “Prophets,” and as such is part of the Biblical Story. It is recommended that The Biblical Story be accessed at www.TheBiblicalStory.org for viewing the videos there to place Daniel and the Prophets in their part in that.

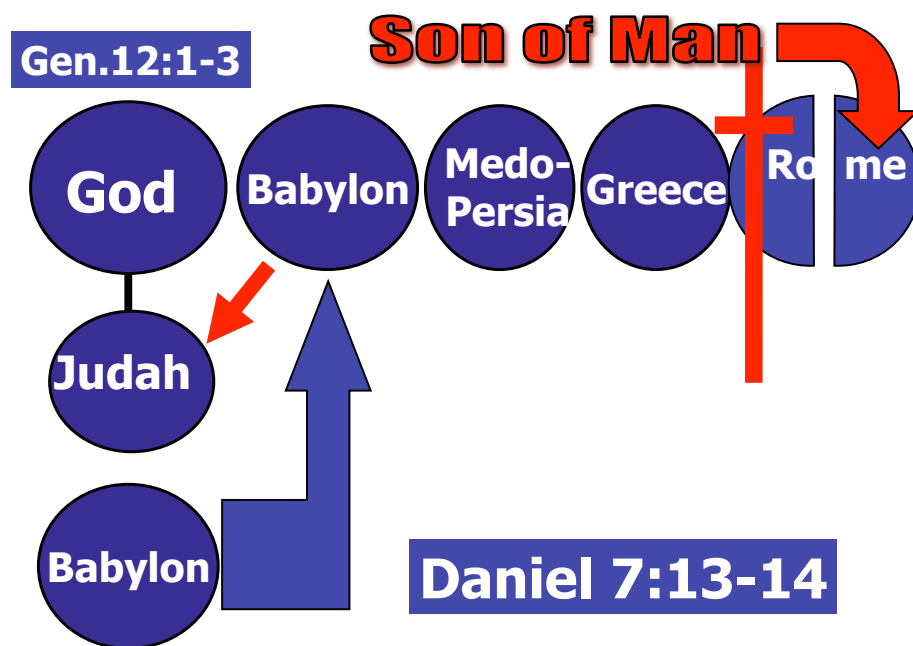


¹ A note of credit is given for these notes to Dr. Elliott E. Johnson and his notes, as well as Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost and his notes from “Daniel and Revelation.” Formal sources used are *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, “Old Testament Edition,” Edited by John Walvoord and Roy Zuck, as well as Dr. Thomas Constable’s notes at www.sonlight.com. While these notes are my own work in the text, their influence cannot be dismissed and may be represented throughout, particularly in the identification of historical dates, nations, rulers, etc..

PART I

Introduction to Daniel

Israel, as God's mediatorial nation to the Gentiles, was to take the message of Messiah. Yet Israel, like Jonah, rejected the message of mercy that they were to carry, and as such came under the judgment of God. They were sent into Babylon in 586 B.C. and thus began "The Times of the Gentiles," where Israel would be dominated by Gentile rule until the Son of Man came (Daniel 7:13) and restored the rule of Israel. Thus, Daniel prophesied at the beginning of the "Times of the Gentiles" to give Israel hope that eventually they would return to the land and Jerusalem, even though they would have to be resurrected to be there (Daniel 12:2). Thus Daniel talks about the Gentile rule and how God preserves the remnant of Israel through all these Gentile Kingdoms, until the Son of Man comes and dies (Daniel 9:26) for their sins and then returns to conquer (Daniel 7:13).



I. Background of Daniel

A. The Biblical history and the time of Daniel.²

626 BC: Nabopolassar becomes king of Babylon, removes domination of Assyria.

614 BC: Ninevah is conquered and Babylon continues its conquest of Assyria until 610 BC

608 BC Josiah slain by Pharaoh-Neco and Babylonians defeated at Carchemish. Jehoiakim was placed on throne instead of Jehoahaz.

605 BC: Death of Nabopolassar, assumption of reign by Nebuchadnezzar

605 BC: Jehoiakim of Judah under Nebuchadnezzar's rule.

605 BC: First exile of Jerusalem. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego taken.

603 BC: Daniel interprets the Kings dream regarding the image.

597 BC Second exile of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. Ezekiel taken. Zedekiah appointed to succeed Jehoiakin.

586 BC: Destruction of Jerusalem

562 BC: Death of Nebuchadnezzar. Succeeded by Evil-Merodach.

560 BC: Neriglissar (son-in-law of Nebuchadnezzar) succeeds Evil-Merodach. Followed by son, then a usurper, Nabonidus.

550 BC: Belshazzar's reign begins, son of Nabonidus. Nabonidus was the titular head, while Belshazzar had the power over the army.³

539 BC: Belshazzar's reign ends in his death. Darius the Mede (Gubaru)⁴ assumes reign.

² These dates are mostly agreed on dates from various commonly available sources. One of which is the unauthorized lecture notes of Dr. J.D. Pentecost, Bible 347 lectures, Dallas Theological Seminary. Other sources for these and other dates are Dr. Thomas Constables notes at www.soniclight.com. See also *Word Biblical Commentary*, "Daniel." Also see Ronald Allen, *The Nelson Study Bible* and Leon Wood, *A Survey of Israel's History*.

³ This would be why Daniel became "the third" in the kingdom.

⁴ This Darius the Mede has been a difficult identity historically. The most likely possibility is that he is the one recorded in Persian texts as Gubaru, the one who conquered on behalf of Cyrus the Persian (Allen, Whitcomb). Another view is that Darius the Mede was actually Cyrus the Persian himself (D. J. Wiseman). Sources: Ron

538 BC: First return to Jerusalem (Sheshbazzar, Zerrubbabel, Jeshua), the proclamation by Cyrus.

536 BC: Daniel's last vision (10:1).

458 BC: Second Return to Jerusalem (Ezra).

444 BC: Third Return to Jerusalem (Nehemiah)

- B. The controversy surrounding the authenticity of Daniel.
1. Problem: Daniel's detailed prophecy extends at least 400 years beyond the proposed date of the writing of Daniel.
 2. Solution: Text is inspired by God supernaturally, and fulfilled prophecy is a validation of the message of the text, as well as the assurance of the implementation of God's promises in the future.
 - a. Prophecies were made which were fulfilled beyond the proposed late date of critics. So moving date later only eliminates part of their problem.
 - 1) Execution of Messiah (9:25-26)
 - 2) Destruction of Jerusalem (9:26).
 - b. Jewish attestation of its canonicity lends credibility to its being written by Daniel, and thus of a date during his lifetime as stated in the book. (Refer to *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* for a review of objections to the genuine authorship of Daniel).
 - c. The Lord asserted that Daniel was the author in Matt. 24:15.
- C. The Babylonian situation.
1. The Exiles:
 - a. 626 BC: Babylonian dominion from Assyria under Nabopolassar.

Allen, *The Nelson Study Bible*; Leon Wood, *A Survey of Israel's History*. Also refer *The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament Edition*, "Daniel", p. 1346 for a summary of views by Dr. J.D. Pentecost.

- b. 606 BC: Nabopolassar's son Nebuchadnezzar took over at his death and subsequently conquered Jerusalem.
- c. 606 BC: During the first exile Nebuchadnezzar returned with Daniel and the three boys.
- d. 597 BC: The second exile, bringing Ezekiel
- e. 586 BC: Jerusalem was destroyed.

2. The Returns:

- a. 538 BC: The first returns did not begin until 538 BC a year after the kingdom had been lost to Cyrus the Persian through the conquest of Darius the Mede (Gubaru). This Cyrus is the one mentioned at the end of the Book of 2 Chronicles, the beginning of the Book of Ezra and also in Isaiah 44:28 and 45:21 prophetically. It is apparent that he was sympathetic to the return of the Jews to their land almost immediately.

II. The Purpose of Daniel within the history of Israel and the canon.

A. The place of Israel within the revelation of God.

- 1. Israel is the national mediator for God on earth.
 - a. Israel's creation (Genesis - Deuteronomy)
 - b. Failure (Joshua - Acts),
 - c. Regeneration (Revelation 11 - 19)
 - d. Resurrection to rule (Rev. 20--22).
 - e. Summary: Israel's function is to mediate God's blessings to the nations (Gentiles) according to Genesis 12:1--3.

B. Israel's Old Testament apostasy.

From the time of her inception the nation Israel was turned inward toward self-righteousness instead of reflecting the righteousness of God. She continually worsened as God continued to provide her more and more of His promise. She was given a land, a constitution, God's dwelling, deliverance, and finally a King in David. Yet she continued to fail as well as the king, and finally was taken off into exile to Babylon in a fulfillment of Deut. 28-29. It was then that the situation was reversed. Israel was now under the dominion of Gentiles, and not only Gentiles but their gods.

C. Israel's lesson in exile (hope).

Was the judgment permanent? No, it was chastisement, and still under a Gentile king, God returned the nation to its land. All the prophets spoke of a time when they would not only return to the land, but a time when justice and equity would flourish under the Great King over Israel who would rule over the Gentiles..

But following the return in Ezra and Nehemiah, depression struck again, for not only was the return not full (they were still under Gentile oppression), but they had not changed, intermarrying with pagans in violation of the Law. They were no different than Solomon who lived before the exile.

D. Israel's judgment / vindication.

Yet God had promised that they would be a national mediator forever. The promise is reconfirmed in the Book of Daniel, and the Gentiles who oppressed them will come to their doom while the Kingdom of God in Israel is reestablished.

E. Gentile judgment / submission to Israel.

In the final kingdom God's plan will be accomplished. Israel will be on top and the Gentiles below (Deut. 28). Of course, when one reviews the Book of Revelation it is apparent that this is the case. The nations stream into the City of Jerusalem to see the King (Rev. 20--22). Israel has become the star she was designed to be, shining forth the revelation of God to the nations.

E. The Basic Theme

1. The ultimate deliverance of the remnant to the Kingdom of God in Israel.
2. The three boys (remnant)
3. Daniel (the prophet of Israel - Deut. 13)
4. The Gentile Kings as attempts to be God's representative (cf. Babel, Gen. 11).
5. The Nations as attempting to rule in Israel's stead.

III. The Authorship

Daniel is the historical name given the book due to the tradition that it was written by the main character of the book. He was a young man when taken

captive into Babylon in 605 B.C. as one of the 'young men.' Daniel was known in Ezekiel (14:14,20) as righteous and (28:3) wise.⁵

In the New Testament he is referred to as the author of the book by Jesus' reference in Matthew 24:15.⁶

The knowledge of Daniel as a character is important to the book, as he is established as a prophet within the book, thus the verification historically of his authority to write. Should he not be validated as the author (note the use of the first person) then the validity of the message fails.

IV. Literary Markers

A. Languages

- a. Hebrew in 1:1--2:4, 8:1--12:13 and
- b. Aramaic in 2:5--7:28

B. Dates of reign.

1. 1:1 the third **year** of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah
2. 1:21 Daniel continued until the first **year** of Cyrus the king.
3. 2:1 in the second **year** of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar
4. 7:1 the first **year** of Belshazzar king of Babylon
5. 8:1 the third **year** of the reign of Belshazzar the king
6. 9:1-2 the first **year** of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans--in the first **year** of his reign
7. 10:1 the third **year** of Cyrus king of Persia
8. 11:1 And in the first **year** of Darius the Mede

C. Arrangement by dates of narrative

- 1 The test of unclean foods: 3rd **year** of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah

⁵ While Job and Noah were ancients to Ezekiel, Daniel was still relatively young, and a contemporary during the time of Ezekiel's prophecy. Not only were they contemporaries, Ezekiel was living only about 50 miles from Babylon. If Daniel ministered from 605 BC (the origination of the captivity) to 536 BC (the third year of Cyrus 10:1), then he was in Babylon for at least 69 years. He therefore must have been quite young when captured.

⁶ "Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through **Daniel** the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand)"

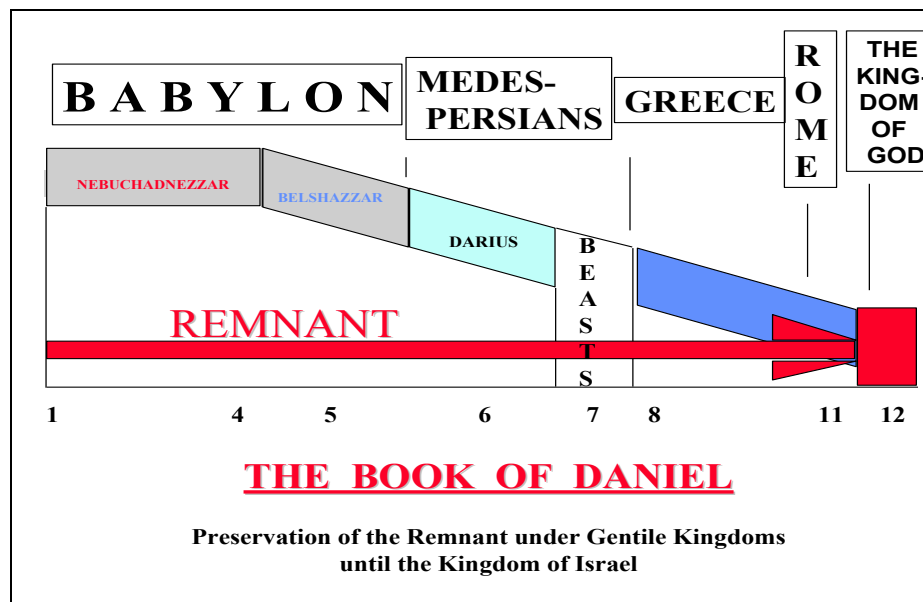
- 2 The dream of the statue: 2nd **year** of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar
 3 The 3 boys and the furnace: Reign of Nebuchadnezzar
 4 Nebuchadnezzar turned out to the field: Reign of Nebuchadnezzar
 7 Dream of animals out of sea: the first **year** of Belshazzar king of Babylon
 8 Vision of goats/rams: the third **year** of the reign of Belshazzar the king
 5 Belshazzar's feast: At end of reign of Belshazzar
 9--11 Prayer and Gabriel's revelation: the first **year** of Darius the Mede
 6 Daniel in lion's den: during the reign of Darius the Mede.
 10 Vision of spiritual realm: the third **year** of Cyrus king of Persia

D. Similarity of prophecies

- a. Chapters 2 and 7 (progression of rule in a vision)

The most striking of the similarities is chapter 2 (the progression of rulership in the image) and chapter 7 (the progression of rulership in physical beings: animals/man).

V. The Literary Purpose of the Book



A. Historic/Prophetic Purpose

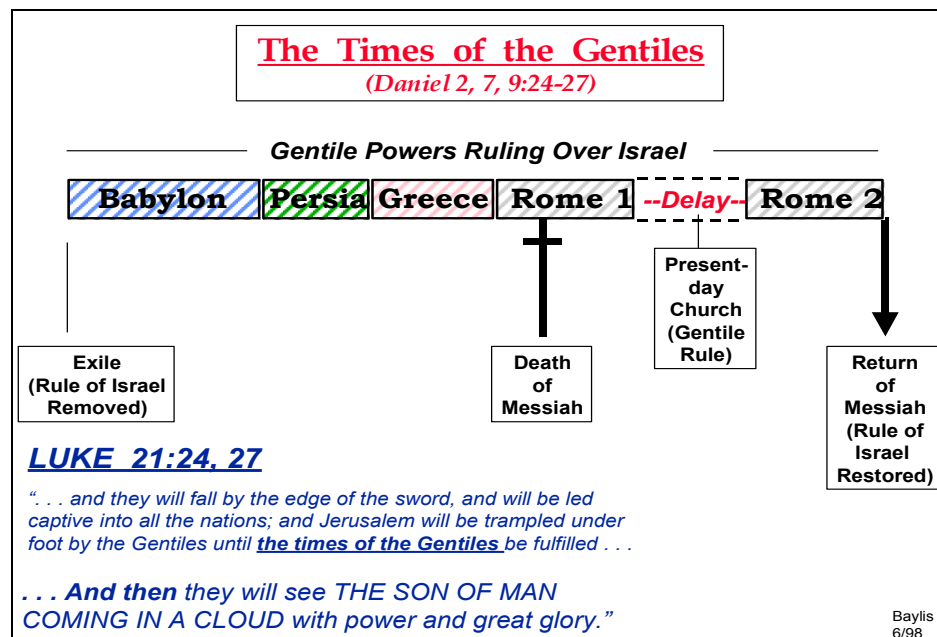
1. The times of the events and times of the prophetic events.

The historical time of the book is very important. It begins in theological time instigated by the captivity of Israel in Babylon.

While Israel had been oppressed and partially dominated prior to this date, she had never been chastised positionally according to Deuteronomy 28 as she was now. The book ends only with the restoration of the kingdom of Israel and the doom of these Gentile powers. Only then does the restoration of Israel take place, even though a partial physical restoration is declared, though still under the control of Gentiles.⁷

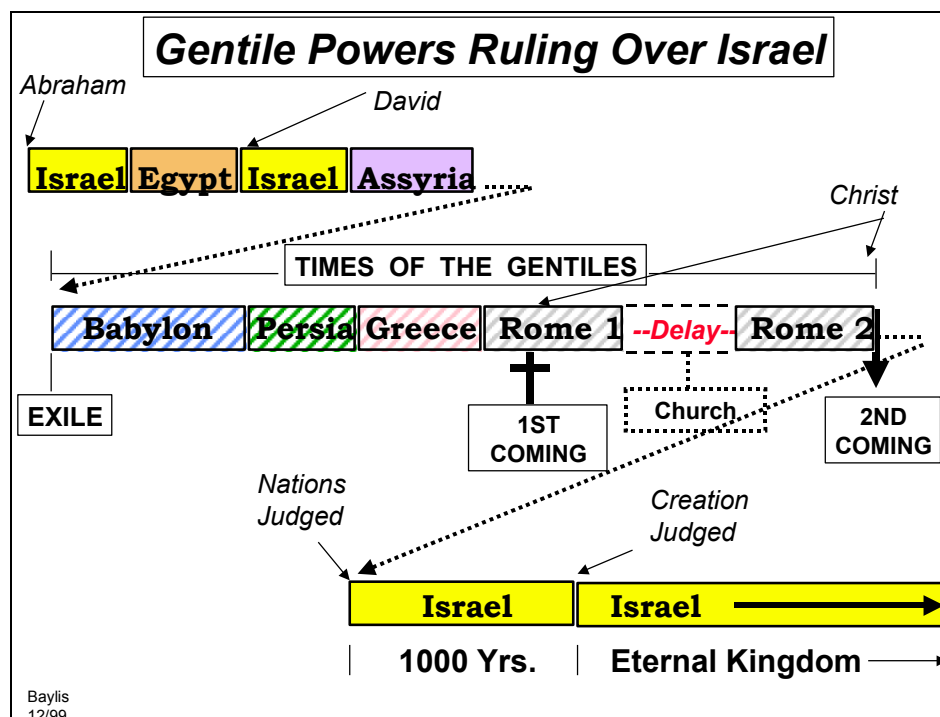
2. The “Times of the Gentiles”

Thus the major revelation of physical chronology in the book deals with the “Times of the Gentiles”⁸ Thus the book documents historically (1--7) Israel’s submission to the Gentile powers (Babylon and the Medes) and prophetically (8--13) looks at the future Gentile dominion (Babylon and Rome).



⁷ Refer to Daniel 9:24-27 when the temple and the city are referred to as being restored yet in difficult times, referring to Gentile opposition and domination.

⁸ Gentile rule was not an acceptable theological position. While many today see the United States as an acceptable Godly national mediator, at best it is a deviation from God’s program only for a time, and in fact is the fulfillment of a *curse* on Israel, that is, where Israel is submissive to a Gentile nation. Thus it is not the fullness of God’s plan, and should the United States theoretically continue it would necessarily have to take a submissive role to the Nation Israel. Note that since Israel is placed under Gentile rule, that a nation should respect YHWH’s judgment and care for that nation while under judgment and seek its protection as one ministers Christ to them.



B. Theological Purpose

Yet, while documenting history (both present and future), the book's major message is not simply what is happening and what will happen. There is always a message to the reader by which he may alter his behavior. This message is clearly what is happening historically and prophetically to the major characters. While the characters change, the categories are the same. There are Israelite characters and Gentile leaders who dominate the Israelites. In each of the historical (Daniel's experience) stories the faithful Jews are preserved supernaturally (demonstrating God's intervention in history) under the maximum oppression of a Gentile leader. Thus the mediatorial role of the Israelite promised to Abraham is preserved. The Gentile must always submit to the Jewish God and operate by preserving and utilizing God's mediator Israel. If he does not, then he will be broken, not the promise.

C. Applicational Purpose

The response (application) then to the reader is to remain faithful to God and His promise (covenant) even though things seem to be reversed and Gentiles seem to be victorious over the Jewish God.⁹ For as

⁹ Paul will refer to this very argument in Ephesians and 2 Thessalonians to validate his own suppression and persecution under Gentile powers (prison-Ephesians, persecution-2 Thessalonians). To his readers it would seem that his ministry of apostolic revelation was being crushed by the Gentile powers (and so also His understanding of His

God is able to deliver Daniel and the three boys He is able to deliver the reader. It may not necessarily be in the present tense, but is able to deliver into the Kingdom through resurrection¹⁰ (cf. 12:1ff.).

D. Message:

Gentile rule over Israel is established and controlled by God to protect and chastise Israel (while simultaneously delivering and judging Gentiles through the remnant) until God establishes His final Rulership in Israel and the Son of Man.

E. Goal:

The reader needs to be faithful to God (His revelation; i.e., covenant) regardless of the seeming superiority of Gentiles and their gods, for God will deliver the faithful ultimately to His final Israelite Kingdom through resurrection.

VI. The Main Characters

A. Chapters 1--6

1. Israelites

a. Faithful remnant in exile

- 1) Daniel
- 2) Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego
 - a) Hebrew Names:
 Daniel: "God is my Judge"
 Hananiah: YHWH is gracious
 Mishael: Who is what God is?"
 Azariah: "YHWH has helped"
 - b) Babylonian names

Jewish God). Thus the validity of his revelation was questioned. Yet Paul points out to them the very doctrine of Daniel, that is, Gentile supremacy over Israel will continue until the return of Christ.

¹⁰ Note that this was the hope of the three boys in front of Nebuchadnezzar in Chapter 3. They were willing to die if they were not delivered presently, recognizing that their God, the Jewish God was supreme.

Belteshazzar: “Lady protect the king”
 Shadrach: “I am very fearful (of God)”
 Meshach: “I am of little account”
 Abed-nego: “Servant of (the god) Nebo”¹¹

- b. Prophet
 - 1) Daniel
- 2. Gentile Rulers
 - a. Nebuchadnezzar: Babylonian
 - b. Belshazzar: Babylonian following Nebuchadnezzar
 - c. Darius the Mede: Persian rule begins following Belshazzar

VII. The outline of Daniel

A. Based on Means of Revelation

- 1 The Introduction: Prophet and Remnant delivered due to covenant faithfulness in exile [NO REVELATION]

This story introduces the characters and their basic interaction. The Israelite God preserves his remnant in the exile.

- 2--6 Historical to Daniel and the three boys: The deliverance of the remnant (Daniel and the three boys) during Daniel’s time in Babylon.
 - 2--3: Receiver – Dream, Nebuchadnezzar (Gentile Ruler)
 Interpreter: Daniel (Jewish prophet)¹²
 - 4: Receiver - Vision, Nebuchadnezzar (Gentile Ruler)
 Interpreter: Daniel (Jewish prophet)¹³
 - 5 Receiver – Phys. Action, Belshazzar (Gentile Ruler)
 Interpreter: Daniel (Jewish prophet)¹⁴

¹¹ Names are referenced from Yamauchi in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Jan – Mar., 1980, p. 4).

¹² Note that Daniel is a contrast to the Gentile Wise men who could not interpret it.

¹³ Note again that Daniel is a contrast to failing Babylonian wise men.

¹⁴ Note the repetition of the attempts by Babylonian wise men to interpret.

While these chapters are historical to Daniel and the three boys they are also characterized by the fact that the revelation is always given to the Gentile King, and it requires the Jewish prophet to interpret it. It is not until chapter 7 that Daniel has the prophetic vision himself.

Prophecy: Gentile/Jewish kingdoms, Babylon–Rome/Israel: Ch. 2
 Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar: chapters 3—4
 Babylon under Belshazzar: chapter 5
 Babylon under Darius the Mede: chapter 6
 Prophecy: Gentile/Jewish kingdoms, Babylon–Rome/Israel: Ch. 7

7--12 Prophetic to Daniel's day: The future decline of the Gentile kings, the protection of the remnant and the ultimate kingdom of Israel.

[Revelations are all to Daniel, the Jewish Prophet]

Chapter 7 is similar to chapter 2, which introduces the historical period. Chapter 7 introduces the prophetic period, or the description of times yet future to Daniel. However, it is characterized following 7:1 by the fact that Daniel is now getting direct revelation and not receiving it through the means of a Gentile King.

Prophecy: Gentile/Jewish kingdoms, Babylon–Rome/Israel: Ch. 7
 Prophecy of Persia – Greece Chapter 8
 Prophecy of Times: Return of kingdom to Israel during Rome:
 Chap. 9
 Revelation of Spiritual battle transition from Persia to Greece:
 Chap. 10
 Prophecy of Greece – Rome of end times: Chapter 11
 Prophecy of Restoration of Israel: Chapter 12

Summary: Here, following the introduction which sets up God as sovereign to the Gentile Kings in the deliverance of the remnant, there is a very event filled demonstration which the writer experienced while under Babylonian and Medo-Persian rule. The later chapters then comprise prophecy, most of it insignificant to the rulers of Daniel's day.

B. Based on Languages

1. Hebrew: 1:1--2:4, 8:1--12:13
2. Aramaic: 2:5--7:28

Summary: While the preceding difference (means of revelation) seems the more contextually significant, the language markers cannot be ignored. Most have suggested that these languages are for the ministry to the Gentiles in their common languages. The problem with that is that the Gentiles by and large did not read this book. Thus, what would Aramaic have to do with Jews who did read this book?

In their situation, they were in Babylon, mourning over their fate. The Book of Daniel would have answered the question, “Has God abandoned us for the Gentile nations?” The answer is no! For God demonstrates that His covenant is still with them. As the remnant are faithful, God honors them, even in the exile.

In essence, Chapters 2--7 form an inclusio, bordered on both ends by a summary prophecy of the four major gentile nations followed by God’s kingdom of Israel. In between are simply the stories of how Gentile Kings had to honor Israel and their God. In fact, in two of the chapters (4,5), the gentile kings are subjected to the Israelite God without any intervention from an Israelite. In chapters 3,6, the Jewish remnant is delivered out of the hand of a gentile king’s judgment. Thus, there is a message to Gentiles, but in actuality it is likely to the Jew who is gradually being oriented to the Babylonian language. Regarding the future (8--12) the language is Hebrew, for the focus is returning to the Hebrews as they return to their land and watch the events taking place.

3. Based on person of narrator.
 - 1) Third person (1--3, 4:19--6:28).
 - 2) First person (4): Nebuchadnezzar
 - 3) First person (7--12): Daniel