

Date of Daniel's Writing

As we navigate through Daniel's writings, skeptics of Christianity reject that such prediction of the future is possible. They deny that God could reveal the future and so the book of Daniel must have been written after the events it so vividly describes (the terror of Antiochus Epiphanes around 165 BC). Here is one such quote: *"We need to assume that the vision [of Daniel 8] as a whole is a prophecy after the fact. Why? Because human beings are unable accurately to predict future events centuries in advance and to say that Daniel could do so, even on the basis of a symbolic revelation vouchsafed to him by God and interpreted by an angel, is to fly in the face of the certainties of human nature. So what we have here is in fact not a road map of the future laid down in the sixth century B.C. but an interpretation of the events of the author's own time, 167-164 B.C..."*

So can we demonstrate that Daniel's visions were written before they took place? Yes, a number of reasons can be marshalled to defend the historicity of Daniel's writing.

First, the language of Daniel vouches for its authenticity. The book of Daniel was written in ancient Aramaic. Scholars have studied the words and grammar and found it to be consistent the writings of ancient Babylon and not a time when Greek had been the dominate cultural influence for almost 200 years.

Second, the content of Daniel vouches for its authenticity. Only from the book of Daniel and books deriving from it did we have any record of the Babylonian king Belshazzar. In fact, many concluded he was a



work of fiction until discoveries in the late 1800s verified Daniel's historicity. Scholars who deny the biblical account cannot explain how someone living around 160 BC would have known such details about Babylon.

Third, the other writings Scripture vouch for its authenticity. Ezekiel 14:14, 20 and 28:3 mention Daniel. If skeptics are right that Daniel was written around 160 BC, then how would Ezekiel (even acknowledge to be written during the time of exile) know of this Daniel and his wisdom? Daniel would have been famous to the exiled people, as is seen in Ezekiel's writings.

Fourth, we have many copies of the book of Daniel found in the Qumran caves, also known as the Dead Sea Scrolls (the dates of these scrolls are dated to around 150-130 BC). The Dead Sea Scrolls are the oldest copies we currently have of the Old Testament. Among the scrolls, the book of Daniel is widely distributed (many copies exist) and was regarded as authoritative Scripture to that ancient Jewish community. The book of Daniel is also included in an ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament called the Septuagint or LXX. This translation was completed no later than 130 BC. If critical scholars are right that Daniel was written after the events of 164 BC, then we're left believing that the Jewish people adopted this fake book as Scripture and included it the Septuagint in the lifetime of its author. To contend that a fictional book, written to deceive, would be widely distributed, accepted as Scripture, and included in the LXX in just a few years after it is written is not believable.

Fifth, Jesus himself uses the language of Daniel and makes reference to the book of Daniel. The Son of God, Creator of heaven and earth, regarded Daniel, not as a spurious piece of fiction written after the fact, but God-breathed Scripture foretelling his own ministry and kingdom.

The real issue is the presupposition that denies an historical Daniel and prophecy. When we embrace God who has made himself known, so to can we accept that he chose to make known to Daniel what will happen in Israel.