

TYNDALE OLD TESTAMENT COMMENTARIES

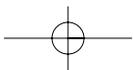
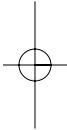
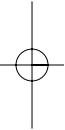
VOLUME 23

TOTC

DANIEL



TO MY PARENTS
whose ready co-operation enabled me
to find time to write this book



TYNDALE OLD TESTAMENT COMMENTARIES

VOLUME 23

GENERAL EDITOR: DONALD J. WISEMAN

DANIEL

AN INTRODUCTION AND COMMENTARY

JOYCE G. BALDWIN



Inter-Varsity Press

 **IVP Academic**
An imprint of InterVarsity Press
Downers Grove, Illinois

Inter-Varsity Press, England
Norton Street
Nottingham NG7 3HR, England
Website: www.ivpbooks.com
Email: iup@ivpbooks.com

InterVarsity Press, USA
P.O. Box 1400
Downers Grove, IL 60515-1426, USA
World Wide Web: www.ivpress.com
Email: email@ivpress.com

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Inter-Varsity Press, England, is closely linked with the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship, a student movement connecting Christian Unions in universities and colleges throughout Great Britain, and a member movement of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students. Website: www.uccf.org.uk.

InterVarsity Press®, USA, is the book-publishing division of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA® <www.intervarsity.org> and a member movement of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students.

First published 1978

Reprinted in this format 2009

USA ISBN 978-0-8308-4223-0

UK ISBN 978-1-84474-357-5

Set in Garamond 11/13pt

Typeset in Great Britain by Avocet Typeset, Chilton, Aylesbury, Bucks

Printed and bound in the United States of America ∞



InterVarsity Press/USA is committed to protecting the environment and to the responsible use of natural resources. As a member of Green Press Initiative we use recycled paper whenever possible. To learn more about the Green Press Initiative, visit <www.greenpressinitiative.org>.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Baldwin, Joyce G.

Daniel: an introduction and commentary / Joyce G. Baldwin.

p. cm.—(Tyndale Old Testament commentaries; v. 23)

Originally published: 1978.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-0-8308-4223-0 (paper (USA): alk. paper)—ISBN

978-1-84474-357-5 (paper (UK): alk. paper)

1. Bible. O.T. Daniel—Commentaries. I. Title.

BS1555.53.B36 2009

224'.507—dc22

2009018174

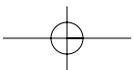
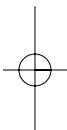
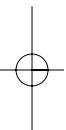
British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

P	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2
Y	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11		

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GENERAL PREFACE

The aim of this series of Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, as it was in the companion volumes on the New Testament, is to provide the student of the Bible with a handy, up-to-date commentary on each book, with the primary emphasis on exegesis. Major critical questions are discussed in the introductions and additional notes, while undue technicalities have been avoided.

In this series individual authors are, of course, free to make their own distinct contributions and express their own point of view on all controversial issues. Within the necessary limits of space they frequently draw attention to interpretations which they themselves do not hold but which represent the stated conclusions of sincere fellow Christians. The book of Daniel more than most is the subject of diverse debates and interpretations, some of which seriously obscure the meaning and message for the church today or tend to lessen the impact of the book in a welter of critical detail. The author here aims to set out her own sincerely held and closely argued views on many aspects of the prophecy which, although it may remain a 'mystery' until that Final Day, demands further study now to show its relevance for our own troubled times.

In the Old Testament in particular no single English translation is adequate to reflect the original text. The authors of these commentaries freely quote various versions, therefore, or give their own translation, in the endeavour to make the more difficult passages or words meaningful today. Where necessary, words from the Hebrew (and Aramaic) Text underlying their studies are transliterated. This

will help the reader who may be unfamiliar with the Semitic languages to identify the word under discussion and thus to follow the argument. It is assumed throughout that the reader will have ready access to one, or more, reliable renderings of the Bible in English.

Interest in the meaning and message of the Old Testament continues undiminished and it is hoped that this series will thus further the systematic study of the revelation of God and his will and ways as seen in these records. It is the prayer of the editor and publisher, as of the authors, that these books will help many to understand, and to respond to, the Word of God today.

D. J. Wiseman

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Writing a commentary on the book of Daniel at the present time is like being deep in the crest of a swelling wave. There is surging movement; learned articles appear in spate, and radical thinking is calling in question the long-established maps by which scholars of the past have charted their course. There is bewilderment, a feeling of being 'at sea', not knowing for sure the direction in which one is being carried, and of having too little specialist knowledge to be able adequately to assess one's bearings. Nevertheless it is an exciting situation to be in, if only one can keep afloat. Too often, I fear, I have been submerged under a mass of ideas and have had to surface again and start afresh.

My dependence on many scholarly books and commentaries will be apparent to all. I have tried to acknowledge in footnotes the source of ideas and information whenever I have been conscious of them, but there could be unconscious debts which I have not acknowledged. My thanks are particularly due to Mr A. R. Millard, Rankin Senior Lecturer in Hebrew and Ancient Semitic Languages in the University of Liverpool, and to Dr L. C. Allen, Lecturer in Old Testament Language and Exegesis at London Bible College, who read the manuscript and brought their learning to bear on it. I am extremely grateful for their suggestions, most of which have been incorporated into the text. I also want to thank Professor D. J. Wiseman, Editor of the Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, for inviting me to contribute another volume, and for putting at my disposal his wisdom and specialist learning.

I am conscious that this book is going out before it is ready, but at some point a halt has to be called, or, to revert to the sea metaphor, one has to burn one's boats and face what comes. If Christians are encouraged to work at the book of Daniel afresh, so that together we come nearer to feeling its heartbeat, then any effort of mine will have been worth while.

Joyce Baldwin
September 1977

CHIEF ABBREVIATIONS

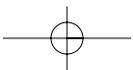
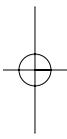
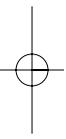
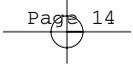
<i>ANEP</i>	<i>The Ancient Near East in Pictures</i> ² edited by J. B. Pritchard, 1969.
<i>ANET</i>	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> ² edited by J. B. Pritchard, 1955 (31969).
Aram.	Aramaic.
AV	English Authorized Version (King James), 1611.
<i>BA</i>	<i>The Bible Archaeologist</i> .
<i>BASOR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i> .
<i>CB</i>	<i>Cambridge Bible: The Book of Daniel</i> by S. R. Driver, 1900.
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i> .
Delcor	<i>Le Livre de Daniel</i> by M. Delcor, 1971.
<i>DNTT</i>	<i>The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology</i> edited by Colin Brown. Vol. 1, 1975. Vol. 2, 1976.
<i>DOTT</i>	<i>Documents from Old Testament Times</i> edited by D. Winton Thomas, 1958.
<i>EQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i> .
<i>ET</i>	<i>Expository Times</i> .
ET	English translation.
EVV	English Versions.
<i>FSAC</i>	<i>From the Stone Age to Christianity</i> ² by W. F. Albright, 1957.
<i>HDB</i>	<i>Dictionary of the Bible</i> edited by J. Hastings. 5 vols, 1911.

- Heb. Hebrew.
IB *The Interpreter's Bible* VI, 1956.
ICC *International Critical Commentary: The Book of Daniel* by J. A. Montgomery, 1927.
IDB *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. 4 vols, 1962.
IEJ *Israel Exploration Journal*.
IOT *Introduction to the Old Testament* by R. K. Harrison, 1970.
JB *The Jerusalem Bible*, Standard Edition, 1966.
JBL *Journal of Biblical Literature*.
JCS *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*.
JNES *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*.
JSJ *Journal of the Study of Judaism*.
JSS *Journal of Semitic Studies*.
JTC *Journal of Theology and the Church*.
JTS *Journal of Theological Studies*.
KB *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros* by L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, 1958.
 Lacocque *Le Livre de Daniel* by A. Lacocque, 1976.
LOT *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* by S. R. Driver, 1909.
 LXX The Septuagint (pre-Christian Greek version of the Old Testament).
 mg. margin.
 MT Massoretic Text.
NBD *The New Bible Dictionary* edited by J. D. Douglas, 1962.
 NEB The New English Bible: Old Testament, 1970.
 NIV The New International Version of Daniel, 1976.
NPOT *New Perspectives on the Old Testament* edited by J. Barton Payne, 1970.
NTS *New Testament Studies*.
PCB² *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (Revised Edition) edited by M. Black and H. H. Rowley, 1962.
 Porteous *Daniel. A Commentary* by N. W. Porteous, 1965.
POTT *Peoples of Old Testament Times* edited by D. J. Wiseman, 1973.
 IQp Hab *Commentary on Habakkuk* from Qumran.

CHIEF ABBREVIATIONS

13

IQ M	<i>The Rule of the War</i> from Qumran.
RB	<i>Revue Biblique</i> .
RQ	<i>Revue de Qumran</i> .
RSV	American Revised Standard Version, 1952.
RV	English Revised Version, 1881.
TBC	<i>Torch Bible Commentary: Daniel</i> by E. W. Heaton, 1956.
TDNT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> edited by R. Kittel. 10 vols., 1964–77.
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries.
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i> .
Vulg.	The Vulgate (Jerome's Latin version of the Bible).
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i> .



INTRODUCTION

The book of Daniel stands apart from the rest of the books which make up the Old Testament. This is apparent even to the reader without theological expertise. Though it is found in our English Bibles among the prophets, it does not contain proclamations in the name of the Lord after the manner of the prophets; nor is it historical in the sense that the books of Kings are historical, though it begins from a point in history and is clearly concerned with history. By the use of dreams and visions, signs, symbols and numbers it appears to be declaring the course of history, and to be drawing attention to the significance of history, by mapping out its course as it proceeds towards its end. In technical language the book is therefore eschatological (Gk. *eschaton*, end). Like the early chapters of Genesis it is universal in its scope, and in addition it takes a comprehensive view of historical time. This is made possible by a series of special visions which reveal to Daniel God's purpose for the world. Such an unveiling of history from a divine standpoint is a salient feature of apocalyptic (Gk. *apokalypsis*, revelation), a type of literature to which Daniel is usually assigned, and to which it will be

necessary to return for further consideration in the light of recent studies.

Different the book may be in its concepts and methods, but there is theological continuity with the law and the prophets, especially with their presupposition that the God who initiated human life controls history and will bring it to its appointed goal. Only in Israel of all the nations was such an understanding of history possible, because only to Israel had God made Himself known. Not that Israel's history was in some way a super-history; on the contrary it was quite ordinary history, verifiable with reference to that of the nations round her, but her knowledge of God, which accounted for her existence as a nation, and in particular her heritage of God's promises, gave her historical perspective and a means of interpreting events. 'The tension between promise and fulfilment makes history. The development of the Israelitic writing of history is distinguished by the fact that the horizon of this history becomes ever wider, the length of time spanned by promise and fulfilment ever more extensive.'¹ Thus the book of Daniel extends the course of history to its conclusion. Prophecy had looked towards a goal, but it was usually limited to the fulfilment within history of the promises to Israel. Daniel's wider perspective applied the promise-fulfilment theme to all nations, as indeed the writer of Genesis 12:3 had done, and looked on to the end-time and the completion of God's purpose for the world he created.

Sensing that this is so, it is not surprising that young Christians, and especially those who are aware of their minority in a hostile society, are particularly drawn to this book. 'Please finish the notes on Daniel first and then go on with Genesis,' wrote Lisu tribespeople in Thailand to one who was preparing literature in their language.² It was part of Israel's heritage to know for certain that God's purpose could not be thwarted, whatever the threat to her national life, and it is the Christian's privilege to know that the gates of hell will not in the end prevail against God's church. To be deprived of this

1. W. Pannenberg, *Basic Questions in Theology*, I (SCM Press, 1970), p. 19.

2. Article in *East Asia Millions*, bulletin of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship, December 1973.

knowledge is to be deprived indeed, as the Marxist government well knows when it forbids the preaching of the last things in church sermons. There is indeed a more subtle reason for cutting out reference to books such as Daniel, for they undermine confidence in human governments generally and in those which depend on the proud tyrant in particular. Would that the church took as seriously as the Communist the positive teaching of this book, and so benefited from the incentive it gives to courageous, confident service.

In fact the book of Daniel has been under eclipse in the world of academic theology for over a century. The reason is not far to seek, for 'the heritage of nineteenth-century biblical scholarship has burdened us with a mortgage in the apocalyptic sphere'.³ The literary-criticism school of Wellhausen and Duhm had laid down criteria of acceptability which ruled out the apocalyptic books and relegated post-exilic prophecy in general to a place of minor importance. Thus, in order to be approved, an Old Testament book had to be seen to speak in historical terms to a recognizable historical situation. The eighth-century prophets, for example, could be seen to be addressing the political, economic and religious practice of their day, and to the extent that they did so their message was accepted as authentic. When they appeared to deviate, as for example when they looked ahead to an era of prosperity and blessing, such passages were judged inauthentic, the additions of a later editor. By this canon much prophetic literature came to be undervalued, especially any that could not be dated with certainty because historical allusions were used as literary devices to convey the prophet's spiritual insights. This was the case with Zechariah 9 – 14, a much-neglected part of the prophetic literature, and sections of Isaiah, such as chapters 24 – 27, which did not seem to fit into the historical world of the eighth century BC. Between the exile and the New Testament it even became customary to postulate a great hiatus, all the prophecy that came between being regarded as of inferior status, lacking in originality and largely an imitation of earlier and better works. Apocalyptic fared even worse, being regarded as a desperate attempt to revive hope when all was lost; it was reckoned to be the result of human

3. K. Koch, *The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic* (SCM Press, 1972), p. 36.

speculation, written 'to satisfy human curiosity, without any interest in salvation'.⁴

Despite this blighting influence from the Continent there were scholars in Britain who devoted themselves to apocalyptic literature, notably R. H. Charles, whose *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (1913) made available the text of books which would otherwise have been inaccessible, together with a commentary, so providing a vast background for his commentary on Daniel. H. H. Rowley's *The Relevance of Apocalyptic* (1944), S. B. Frost's *Old Testament Apocalyptic* (1952) and D. S. Russell's *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* (1964) have continued to keep the subject to the fore, but without restoring confidence in the intrinsic value of biblical apocalyptic. Any such change would have to arise in the ranks of those who established the literary-criticism school in the first place, namely the theologians of the German universities.

Since the end of the Second World War such a change has been taking place, and evidence of it has been reaching the English-speaking world through translations of the writings of Wolfhart Pannenberg of Mainz University. It is at least true to say that the old entrenched position has been effectively challenged. In the opinion of Klaus Koch, 'With Wolfhart Pannenberg the renaissance of apocalyptic in post-war theology begins' ... 'It leads to an express acceptance, not only of apocalyptic ideas but of the total apocalyptic picture.'⁵ The reason for such a complete about-turn is that Pannenberg has challenged the various presuppositions regarding history which underpinned the old view. These include the 'critical-historical investigation as the scientific verification of events' which did not seem to leave any room for redemptive events; existential theology which dissolves history into the 'historicity of existence' and the idea that the real content of faith is supra-historical.⁶

4. O. Cullmann, *Salvation in History* (SCM Press, 1967), p. 80. Cullmann dissociates himself from this view, and is arguing for a neutral as opposed to a derogatory use of the term 'apocalyptic'.

5. K. Koch, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

6. For a full outworking of this thesis see W. Pannenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 69ff.

He contends that history as reality is accessible through the biblical revelation and that history needs a universal horizon if individual events are to be appreciated in their full significance. 'Without world history there is no meaning of history.' 'Only a world-historical viewpoint can provide an adequate basis for the division of the course of history into periods.'⁷ Though Pannenberg is referring not to such divisions of time as occur in Daniel but to the more general divisions that create the sections of a history book, what he is saying has an important bearing on all the literature in the Bible that we call apocalyptic. Thus, on his understanding of history, Daniel, far from being relegated to a minor role, is seen to stand at the intersection between the Testaments, and at the crossroads of history. It is part of the considerable literature that bridges the gulf between the Old Testament and the New, and so provides a necessary preparation for an understanding of the ministry of Jesus.

It remains to be seen whether the movement centred on Pannenberg will so shift theological thinking in Germany that the prejudices of more than a century are replaced by a positive appreciation of the apocalyptic literature of the Bible. Klaus Koch is optimistic: 'Through the attempts to grasp anew the obscure power of apocalyptic, a new movement has unmistakably entered theology, a movement which can be salutary if it brings a careful working out and evaluation of the material in its train.'⁸ The return to a study of Daniel is therefore timely, but not only on account of current thinking in the scholarly world. The whole church needs the kind of reassurance that a study of this book can bring, not least in view of Marxist claims to hold the key to history and to be able by human strategy to introduce a utopian world government. No wonder the church becomes defeatist if it sets on one side an important part of the Bible's understanding of history. Moreover its evangelism becomes ineffective without the message of the apocalyptic books. When the church lets part of its message go by default people look elsewhere for a substitute. The church has only itself to blame if, in

7. Ibid., p. 69.

8. K. Koch, *The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic*, p. 131.

the minds of many, faith in an impersonal dialectic has superseded faith in the Mighty God as the controller of history. Secularism denies the supernatural. All the more reason, then, why the church needs to be counting on the certainties proclaimed in Daniel, namely that God is constantly overruling and judging in the affairs of men, putting down the mighty from their seats, overthrowing unjust regimes and effectively bringing in his kingdom, which is to embrace all nations. Full, confident proclamation of God's purpose for the whole of history needs to be heard without delay.

To assert so much, however, is to appear naïve, as though it were an easy thing to expound a book which has, at least in certain key passages, defeated the most skilled expositors. Opinions are divided on almost every issue. The way ahead must therefore be to take account of these differences of opinion, to state them as objectively as possible, together with the reasons underlying them, and to indicate what seems to me to be the straight furrow that exposes the truth.

1. A preliminary look at the book

According to the dates given in the text the twelve chapters of Daniel span the exile. The book opens with information which translates into the year 605 BC, when Nebuchadrezzar was first setting foot in Syria-Palestine after defeating and pursuing the Egyptian army, and the last date mentioned is the third year of King Cyrus, 537 BC (10:1), just after the first company of exiles had returned to Judah to rebuild the ruins. The book divides into two equal parts: chapters 1 – 6, relating incidents which happened to Daniel and his friends, and chapters 7 – 12, which overlap chronologically and recount four visions which came to Daniel in his old age.

Another way of dividing the book is to take note of the use of two different languages, for though the book opens in Hebrew (1:1 – 2:4a), it then continues in Aramaic as far as the end of chapter 7, and finally reverts to Hebrew. The Aramaic 'core' of the book thus links the two halves and suggests its unity.⁹

9. For a discussion of the unity of the book see below, pp. 39–52.

With the contents dated in the sixth century it would be natural to look for a sixth-century background as the historical setting of the book, but here the student finds that most commentaries direct otherwise, for almost without exception it is taken for granted that the book was written in response to a religious and political threat upon Judea in the second century BC. The writer, using legendary material well known to his fellow Jews, and adding the visions to bridge the course of history between the exile and his own day, was encouraging opposition to the foreign oppressor and rallying the faithful to the fight. So firmly is this viewpoint maintained that many commentators do not explain the reasons for their statements asserting a second-century date. The task was well performed by S. R. Driver early in the century¹⁰ and the reader cannot do better than to look at the arguments through his eyes, keeping in mind, however, that, while he considered it *probable* that the book was written in 168 or 167 BC, he was convinced that internal evidence showed that it must have been written not earlier than c. 300 BC, and in Palestine. His reasons come under three headings, historical, linguistic and theological. Increased knowledge of the ancient languages has necessitated modification of the linguistic argument, and Aage Bentzen takes account of this,¹¹ but there has been little change in the standard presentation of the historical argument since Driver, despite the lapse of time and the growing volume of documents with a bearing on the period which have come to light.

2. Questions of history

It is a fact that the book of Daniel refers to people and events not otherwise known, either from the biblical books or from secular history. This could be because the writer had particular reason to mention them whereas others overlooked them as irrelevant to their purpose; it could be that the writer of Daniel had his own sources

10. *LOT*, pp. 497–515; *CB*, pp. xlvi–lxxvi.

11. A. Bentzen, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, II (Copenhagen, 1957), pp. 199–200.

of information which have not yet, and maybe never will, come to light; or it could be that the writer lived so long after the events to which he referred that he had only a hazy knowledge of the relevant historical data and so made mistakes. The majority of scholars have assumed that the last is the most likely explanation, even though the author could have avoided some of the alleged errors by referring to the historical books of the Old Testament and the prophets, which must have been accessible in Jerusalem by the second century BC.

a. The siege of Jerusalem in the third year of Jehoiakim (Dan. 1:1)

With his characteristically scholarly accuracy S. R. Driver admits that the statement in the opening verse ‘cannot, strictly speaking, be disproved’ but is ‘highly improbable: not only is the Book of Kings silent, but Jeremiah, in the following year (c. 25, &c. ...), speaks of the Chaldeans in a manner which appears distinctly to imply that their arms had not yet been seen in Judah’.¹²

It is true that there is no mention of a siege of Jerusalem at this time in 2 Kings, though it does say that in the days of Jehoiakim ‘Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years’ (2 Kgs 24:1), and Chronicles adds, ‘Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and bound him in fetters to take him to Babylon’ (2 Chr. 36:6). The presence of Nebuchadnezzar in Jerusalem is thus doubly attested prior to the siege of 597 BC, which was in Nebuchadnezzar’s seventh year, just after the death of Jehoiakim in his eleventh year (2 Kgs 24:6–10).

The publication of the Babylonian Chronicles in the British Museum¹³ made available an independent source of precise information relating to the events of Nebuchadnezzar’s accession. The following table sets out the details as they can be reconstructed from the Babylonian data for 605 BC:

12. *LOT*, p. 498.

13. D. J. Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings (626–556 BC)* (London, 1956). Cf. A. K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles, Texts from Cuneiform Sources*, V (New York, 1975).

January/February	}	Army returned from a campaign to Babylon.
April/August		Battle of Carchemish, after which
(probably May/ June)		Nebuchadrezzar pursued the Egyptians south and conquered the whole of Hatti-land (i.e. Syria-Palestine).
August 15		Death of Nabopolassar, father of Nabuchadrezzar.
September 7		Accession of Nebuchadrezzar.

In the light of this information the biblical statements begin to look probable. Jehoiakim had been put on the throne by the Egyptian Pharaoh Neco (2 Kgs 23:34) and therefore Nebuchadrezzar, in taking all that belonged to the king of Egypt (2 Kgs 24:7), would need to include the king of Judah. This would be the occasion when Jehoiakim became his servant and was bound in fetters to be taken to Babylon. Whether he actually made the journey or not we cannot know. The Bible is consistent in asserting that Nebuchadrezzar put pressure on Jerusalem and its king; the Babylonian evidence allows time for him to do so. It is also clear why the outcome is left vague. The death of his father made the return of the crown prince imperative (he had been called king proleptically, as in Jer. 46:2); he would need to leave the army in the command of his generals and travel light with all speed back to Babylon, as Berossus recounted.¹⁴

The second, though much smaller, difficulty in Daniel 1:1 arises out of the biblical evidence, for whereas Daniel dates the intervention of Nebuchadrezzar in the third year of Jehoiakim, Jeremiah 46:2 gives the fourth year of Jehoiakim as the date of the battle of Carchemish (cf. Jer. 25:1, where the fourth year of Jehoiakim is said to be the first year of Nebuchadrezzar's reign). It is now well known that two methods of reckoning the years of a reign were in use in the Ancient Near East: the one most usual in the history books of

14. In Josephus, *Contra Apionem* 1:19. See also D. J. Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, pp. 25–27; and ‘Some Historical Problems in the Book of Daniel’ in *Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel* (Tyndale Press, 1965), pp. 16–18.

the Old Testament counts the months between the king's accession and the new year as a complete year, whereas the method most usual in Babylon called those months the accession year and began to count the years of the king's reign from the first new year. The date in Daniel would appear to have come from a source compiled in Babylon and those in Jeremiah from a Palestinian source, but rightly understood there is no discrepancy.¹⁵

Whether or not the invasion of Nebuchadrezzar could be described as taking place in the third year of Jehoiakim depends on the period of the year when the New Year was celebrated, and on the time of year when Jehoiakim came to the throne. 'On the accession year system and with an autumnal New Year, his first year would run from September 608 to September 607, his second 607–606, his third September 606–October 605. This last would just accommodate the statement of Daniel 1:1 in chronological terms.'¹⁶ The statement, while not without its uncertainties, can nevertheless be envisaged as a possibility, and while that is so it should not be dismissed as inaccurate.

b. King Belshazzar

Three chapters of Daniel are dated by reference to this ruler, and yet, as any king-list of Babylon shows, there was no king of this name in the Neo-Babylonian period. Bēl-šar-ušur, as his name transliterates from cuneiform, was the eldest son of the last king of Babylon, Nabonidus, and is frequently named on the contract tablets because as crown prince he acted as regent in the absence of his father.¹⁷ Since Nabonidus was campaigning in Arabia for as long as ten years, and did not return until after the fall of Babylon, Belshazzar was in effect king there for more than half of the seventeen-year

15. Application of so-called 'post-dating' and 'accession year' systems to the date of Jehoiachin's release, and therefore quite unbiased with regard to Daniel 1:1, is to be found in R. H. Sack, *Amēl-Marduk 562–560 BC* (*Alter Orient und Altes Testament*, 4, 1972), p. 28.

16. A. R. Millard, 'Daniel 1–6 and History', *EQ*, XLIX, 2, 1977, p. 69.

17. See, for example, Yale Babylonian Collection, No. 39, published by A. T. Clay (1915) and quoted in *ANET*, pp. 309, 310, n.5.

reign. Moreover his father 'entrusted the kingship to him',¹⁸ and Belshazzar's name appears associated with that of the king in the oath formulae of that reign.¹⁹ Since this happened to no other king's son in all Babylonian history, Belshazzar is shown to have been king in all but name. There is evidence that he received royal dues and exercised kingly prerogatives, but he could not bear the title king in the official records because, while his father lived, he could not perform the New Year Festival rite of 'taking the hands of Bel', an act carried out only by the king.

Since Belshazzar was to all intents and purposes king, it is pedantic to accuse the writer of the book of Daniel of inaccuracy in calling him 'Belshazzar the king'. This is especially out of place in the light of Daniel 5:7, 16, 29, where the reward for reading the mysterious writing was to be made third ruler in the kingdom. Evidently the writer knew that Belshazzar was second to his father Nabonidus.²⁰

A second objection which is raised in connection with the historicity of Belshazzar is his lineage. Five times in chapter 5 Nebuchadrezzar is referred to as his father, and Belshazzar is called his son (5:22). The assumption has often been made that the author's knowledge of the period was so defective that he thought Belshazzar was literally son of Nebuchadrezzar, whereas we know that his father was Nabonidus, son of a Babylonian nobleman, Nabû-balaṣṣu-iqbi. It needs to be borne in mind that the terms 'father' and

18. R. P. Dougherty, *Nabonidus and Belshazzar* (Yale Oriental Series, XV, 1929), pp. 105–111; Sidney Smith, *Babylonian Historical Texts* (London, 1924), pp. 84, 88.

19. Dougherty, op. cit., pp. 96–97.

20. J. V. Kinnier Wilson (*The Nimrud Wine Lists* [London, 1972], p. 7) has produced evidence for a kind of triumvirate in the Assyrian capitals and certain provincial capitals. There is, for example, a text from Assur which refers to *bazannus* (mayors) of the Ashur Gate, the Shamash Gate and the Tigris Gate, so making three. Another speaks of the second and third *bazannu*. Though this information may have a bearing on the text of Daniel 5, its application to Babylon must remain tentative.

'son' are used figuratively in the Old Testament. Elisha called Elijah 'my father' (2 Kgs 2:12); 'sons of the prophets' were their disciples, and there is some evidence that outstanding kings gave their name to successors who were not of their dynasty.²¹ There is in 1 Esdras 3:7; 4:42 an interesting example of a king bestowing as a prize the honour of being called his kinsman, or cousin. Nevertheless the constant repetition of the father-son theme in Daniel 5 appears to imply more, as though the legitimacy of the king might have been under attack.

The possibility that Nabonidus married a daughter of Nebuchadrezzar and that Belshazzar was grandson of the great king was explored by R. P. Dougherty.²² It now seems that it was Neriglissar who married Kaššā, daughter of Nebuchadrezzar, and that Neriglissar himself was born of a line with royal connections. The son of the union was Labashi-Marduk, who was deposed in favour of Nabonidus, whose powerful and dominant mother was Adad-Guppi, but whose paternity is unknown. The insistence of the text of Daniel on 'King Nebuchadnezzar, your father' (grandfather) may be the literal truth.²³

In short the chapter contains circumstantial details. Considering that within a few decades of Babylon's fall Belshazzar was practically forgotten to history, there is important evidence here for a contemporary witness.²⁴

c. Darius the Mede

After the assassination of Belshazzar which marked the end of the Babylonian empire, the author says that Darius the Mede received the kingdom (5:30), and 6:28 appears to imply that this Darius

21. E.g. Shalmaneser's Black Obelisk, engraved c. 830 BC, calls the revolutionary Jehu 'son of Omri'. It is most unlikely that Shalmaneser III, who conducted many campaigns in Syria-Palestine between 859 and 841, did not know that Jehu slaughtered the descendants of Omri in 841 BC.

22. *Nabonidus and Belshazzar*, pp. 63–80.

23. A. R. Millard, 'Daniel 1–6 and History', *EQ*, XLIX, 2, 1977, p. 72.

24. Cf. R. P. Dougherty, *op. cit.*, pp. 199f.

preceded Cyrus. Considering that Cyrus was well known from the biblical books as the liberator of the Jews from Babylon, this was an extraordinary mistake to make (2 Chr. 36:22–23; Ezra 1:1–8; 3:7; 4:5; 5:13 – 6:14; Isa. 45:1). Since there was a Darius on the Persian throne from 522 to 486, Darius I Hystaspes, it has commonly been assumed that the writer so confused the history that he thought this Darius preceded Cyrus (king in Babylon 539–530 BC). It is claimed that he was writing ‘consoling history from what you can remember’, after the manner of *1066 And All That*.²⁵

At this point it will be useful to review what is said about Darius in the book of Daniel. First of all he is called Darius the Mede (5:31), perhaps to distinguish him from Darius Hystaspes, and his age is given, ‘about sixty-two years old’. To judge by the length of his reign (36 years) Darius Hystaspes is not likely to have been sixty-two years old when he ascended the throne. He ‘received the kingdom’, an expression which H. H. Rowley has shown to mean no more than that he succeeded to the throne.²⁶ In chapter 6 Darius is called king twenty-eight times, and, at the instigation of the satraps he had appointed, he passed a decree which he was powerless to repeal. The chapter ends with the statement that Daniel ‘prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian’, which could be taken to imply that these kings were reigning at the same time or that one followed the other. Compare Daniel 1:21, where Daniel is said to have continued until the first year of King Cyrus. Of the two remaining references, 11:1 merely reiterates that Darius was a Mede, but 9:1 gives specific detail. He was son of Ahasuerus, by birth a Mede, who became king (lit. ‘was made king’) over the realm of the Chaldeans.

In the light of all this information it becomes clear that the writer was not short of facts about this ruler. Indeed, as J. C. Whitcomb writes, ‘the Book of Daniel gives far more information concerning

25. *TBC*, p. 56. The Dean of Durham is surely less than generous, however, to suggest that ‘In our day its author, would certainly have been a Doctor of Divinity and would, in all probability, have occupied a professorial Chair of Biblical Exegesis’ (p. 19)!

26. H. H. Rowley, *Darius the Mede and the Four World Empires in the Book of Daniel* (Cardiff, 1935), p. 52.

the personal background of Darius the Mede than of Belshazzar or even of Nebuchadnezzar. For he is the only monarch in the book whose age, parentage, and nationality are recorded'.²⁷ To assume that Darius the Mede did not exist, and so to dismiss the evidence provided by this book, is high-handed and unwise, especially in the light of its vindication in connection with Belshazzar, who at one time was reckoned to be a fictional character. Due consideration must be given to possible explanations of the apparent discrepancy before charges are made of mistaken identity.

The cuneiform historical texts which revealed the identity of Belshazzar also shed light on the events surrounding the fall of the Babylonian empire in 539 BC. Two previously unknown figures featured in the fall of the city of Babylon, Ugbaru, who died three weeks later, and Gubaru, who is frequently mentioned in different texts as governor of Babylon and the District beyond the River.²⁸ Olmstead, writing of Gubaru under the Greek form Gobryas, made this assessment of his powers: 'In his dealings with the Babylonian subjects, Cyrus was "king of Babylon, king of lands" ... But it was Gobryas the satrap who represented the royal authority after the king's departure ... Over the whole vast stretch of fertile territory (i.e. Babylon and the District beyond the River), Gobryas ruled almost as an independent monarch.'²⁹ Whitcomb's thesis is that

27. J. C. Whitcomb, *Darius the Mede* (Eerdmans, 1959), p. 8.

28. *Ibid.*, pp. 10–16. Unfortunately when the Nabonidus Chronicle was first published in 1880 the distinction was not made between the two names Ugbaru and Gubaru. The resulting confusion, unrecognized even after the correction made by Sidney Smith, in *Babylonian Historical Texts*, rendered invalid much scholarly work, including the argument of H. H. Rowley in *Darius the Mede and the Four World Empires in the Book of Daniel*; cf. J. C. Whitcomb, *op. cit.*, pp. 26ff. The Nabonidus Chronicle is now re-edited in A. K. Grayson's *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, pp. 104–111. On p. 109 he says, 'Whether Ugbaru is identical with the Gubaru of iii 20 is uncertain. Certainly neither can be identified with Gobryas, governor of Babylon, as Smith, BHT, pp. 121f. suggested.'

29. A. T. Olmstead, *The History of the Persian Empire* (Chicago, 1948), pp. 71 and 56. Quoted by Whitcomb, p. 24.

Darius the Mede was an alternative name for Gubaru, and that the details of the incidents in Daniel would be fully satisfied by the person of this governor. Cyrus did not remain long in Babylon, but long enough, presumably, to commission the return of exiles to their own lands, and in particular the Jews to Jerusalem (Ezra 1), but after a few months he returned to Ecbatana, leaving Gobryas to represent him.³⁰ If it be objected that in that case he should not have been called 'king', as he is twenty-eight times in Daniel 6, Whitcomb argues that in Aramaic the fine distinction between such Babylonian terms as *pīhatu* (district governor), and Persian *kbshathrapāva* (satrap) could not be expressed except by using the foreign word. The fact is that the writer of Daniel did make these distinctions. This is a weakness in Whitcomb's case. The Aramaic *malakā*, used also of Belshazzar, was capable of wider application than strictly 'king', and was appropriate for Gubaru, who was the effective ruler in the absence of Cyrus.

In the course of his closely-reasoned monograph Whitcomb clarifies several issues that are relevant to the history of the period, one of the most important being the situation in Media during the Neo-Babylonian empire. This was the country to which some Israelites had been deported after the fall of Samaria, for Media was at that time part of the Assyrian empire, but the Medes were prominent in the wars which brought the Assyrian empire to an end, and they succeeded in establishing an empire of their own. It was out of fear of the Medes that Nebuchadrezzar built a great chain of fortifications to make his kingdom impregnable. In 559 BC the vassal king Cyrus II, wishing to assert himself over his Median overlord, entered into an alliance with Nabonidus of Babylon. In 550 'Media ceased to be a separate nation and became the first satrapy, Mada. Nevertheless, the close relationship between Persians and Medes was never forgotten ... Medes were honoured equally with Persians ... Foreigners spoke regularly of the Medes and Persians; when they used a single term it was "the Mede".'³¹ From this time on it was

30. Olmstead, *op. cit.*, p. 71. Gobryas, governor of Babylon and Beyond the River, seems to have taken office in Cyrus's fourth year.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

therefore a joint empire, though headed up by Cyrus. Important contemporary evidence is provided by the Harran stele, in which Nabonidus gives an account of the events of his reign. Writing in his tenth year (546 BC) he refers to 'the kings of Egypt, of the Medes and of the Arabs'. Professor D. J. Wiseman points out that the king of the Medes at this time, four years after his conquest of Media, can be none other than Cyrus, and concludes that 'in Babylonia Cyrus used the title "King of the Medes" in addition to the more usual King of Persia ...'.³²

This last quotation is part of Professor Wiseman's argument for his own theory concerning Darius the Mede, first put forward in 1957, which identifies Darius the Mede as Cyrus the Persian.³³ Whereas there is no evidence that Gubaru was a Mede, called king, named Darius, a son of Ahasuerus, or aged about sixty, Cyrus is known to have been related to the Medes, to have been called 'king of the Medes' and to have been about sixty years old on becoming king of Babylon. The suggestion requires that 6:28 be translated, 'So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, that is, in the reign of Cyrus the Persian'. This is frequently the sense of the Hebrew particle which is usually the conjunction 'and', and indeed examples of it can be found elsewhere in this book: 'certain of the children of Israel, even of the seed royal' (1:3, RV); 'the document and interdict' (6:9) becomes simply 'the document' (verse 10), so proving that the writer regards these two words as synonymous. J. Barr, commenting on 7:1, notes, 'Some think *and* here is explicative, "he saw a dream, that is, visions of his head"'.³⁴ Thus the usage is common, not only

32. *Christianity Today*, II, 4, 25 November 1957, p. 10. Quoted by J. C. Whitcomb, op. cit., p. 47.

33. See also *NBD*, article 'Darius', p. 293.

34. *IB*, p. 451. These examples and the suggestions that follow have been pointed out by D. L. Emery in correspondence with Professor Wiseman, which the latter has kindly shared with me. Cf. David W. Baker, '“And” Makes all the Difference: Pleonasm in the Old Testament', a lecture given at the Tyndale Old Testament Study Group, Cambridge, 1978, and part of a forthcoming doctoral thesis. He cites several biblical texts in which recognition of an explicative *waw* would

in Hebrew generally, but also in the style of the writer of Daniel.

While it is true that secular evidence has not yet verified the identification of Darius with Cyrus, there is some corroboration of it in the Greek Bible. In 11:1 the LXX and Theodotion have 'Cyrus' instead of Darius the Mede. This suggests that the Greek translator knew of the double name, and preferred to use the one that was better known to avoid confusing his readers. A second line of evidence is found in 1 Esdras 3:1 – 5:6, the story of the Three Guardsmen who were challenged by the king, Darius, to a competition, which Zerubbabel won. As part of his reward he asked that the king should remember his vow to build Jerusalem and to restore the temple vessels. Zerubbabel was thereupon sent to fulfil this mission. Yet according to Ezra 4:1–5 Zerubbabel was certainly in Jerusalem before the reign of Darius Hystaspes. It is therefore probable that this story rightly preserves the name Darius, though 1 Esdras fails to distinguish between the two Dariuses, and also fails to recognize that Cyrus and the earlier Darius are one and the same person. The confusion in the Esdras account is generally recognized. J. Barr is of the opinion that the Darius of the Guardsmen story was originally Cyrus.³⁵ Just so if the two names belonged to the same person. This understanding of the situation also avoids the absurdity that the same man authorized the temple rebuilding, sent 1,000 horsemen and musicians to escort the builders (1 Esdras 5:1–3), presumably in his first year, and in his second year (1 Esdras 6:23) needed to send to search the archives to verify the alleged permission to rebuild. It is in the light of such misunderstandings that the careful documentation of the writer of the book of Daniel is fully appreciated. It was important for him to clarify that the Darius to whom he referred was 'the Mede'. D. J. Wiseman also points out that 'the description of the

solve a textual problem. He concludes: 'The examples adduced range in date from the Ugaritic cases from the fourteenth century BC, Hebrew examples ranging from texts attributed to the tenth century (Gen. 4:4; 13:8) to those from the post-exilic period (e.g. Neh. 1:10; 2 Chr. 29:27), as well as fifth-century Aramaic (AP 11).' There is therefore no chronological reason why Daniel 6:28 should not be so interpreted.

35. *PCB*². p. 373.

later Darius (II) as “the Persian” (Neh. 12:22) could imply the need to distinguish the king of that name from one who was already known in Babylonia as Darius the Mede”.³⁶

While it is true that the identity of Darius cannot be established for sure on the present state of our knowledge, there is too much evidence of him as a person in history for its total rejection. It will no longer do to dismiss him as a fiction and to build on this fiction the theory that the writer believed that there was a separate Median empire.³⁷

d. Use of the term ‘Chaldean’

The word ‘Chaldean’ is used in two senses in the book of Daniel: i. to designate the peoples of southern Babylonia, Semitic in origin, who settled round the Persian Gulf in the twelfth and eleventh centuries BC, and were called by the Babylonians ‘Chaldeans’ (Dan. 5:30; 9:1); ii. with reference to the astrology for which these people were famous (2:2, 4, 5, etc.), but this is not a Babylonian use of the term. Since Nebuchadrezzar was a Chaldean by race the ethnic use of the term in the book of Daniel is not surprising; its use by Herodotus³⁸ as a technical term for the priests of Bel in the fifth century BC shows it had already by then a secondary sense. There is nothing incongruous about the use of the term in both meanings, nor need it cause confusion, any more than our use in English of the word ‘Morocco’ to designate both the country and the leather for which it is famous. Needless to say the Moroccan would not use the name in both these senses.

Though the term ‘Chaldean’ was used in an ethnic sense in Assyrian records of the eighth and seventh centuries, there is a complete absence of the word from Babylonian records of the sixth century in either of its senses, at least so far as available texts are concerned. The biblical usage is, therefore, up to the present unsupported,³⁹ but it is unwarranted to argue from silence that the word is anachronistic.

36. In *Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel*, p. 14.

37. See below, on chapter 8, p. 68.

38. *History* i. 181, 183. For further information on the significance of the evidence of Herodotus see R. K. Harrison, *IOT*, p. 1113.

39. A. R. Millard, ‘Daniel 1–6 and History’, *EQ*, XLIX, 2, 1977, pp. 69–71.

The difference between the Hebrew form of the word *kašdīm* and the Greek, which transliterates the Babylonian *kaldāyu* and becomes in English ‘Chaldean’, can now be accounted for on philological grounds. The Hebrew seems likely to preserve an earlier form of the word,⁴⁰ and not to be less accurate than the Greek form, as some commentators have assumed.⁴¹

In concluding this section on the historical assumptions of the writer of the book of Daniel I strongly assert that there is no reason to question his historical knowledge. The indications are that he had access to information which has not yet become available to the present-day historian, and that where conclusive proof is still lacking he should be given the credit for reliability.

3. The original languages

Like the book of Ezra, Daniel is partly in Hebrew (1:1 – 2:4a; 8:1 – 12:13) and partly in Aramaic (2:4b – 7:28), a close cognate language to Hebrew, using the same script. There are two Aramaic words in Genesis 31:47, which may indicate that the two languages had existed from early times side by side, and a short inscription on the Milqart Stele provides evidence of Aramaic belonging to the middle of the ninth century BC.⁴² The Bible testifies to the use of Aramaic as an international language in the eighth century BC (2 Kgs 18:26), and it was the official language of the Persian empire.

Various suggestions have been made to account for the change of language in the book of Daniel. The most cogent of these points out that chapters 2 – 7 contain the part of the book of interest to non-Jews, for whom it may have been published separately. H. H. Rowley also thought of this section as having circulated separately, but he postulated that a Maccabean author used it to encourage resistance

40. A. R. Millard, *ibid.* He refers to W. von Soden, ‘Grundriss der Akkadischen Grammatik’, *Analecta Orientalia*, 33, 47 (Rome, 1969), para. 30 g.

41. E.g. Porteous, p. 28.

42. *DOTT*, p. 239.