

Daniel Introduction. (Notes from Anchor Bible Dictionary Vo.2)

The first 6 chapters are narrative in the third person. Daniel is one of the Jewish youths deported to Babylon in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah.

In chapter 7 the narrative switches to the first person and begins a series of revelations he received given to him by an angel.

Daniel is an interpreter of dreams and mysterious signs.

The book is both in Hebrew and Aramaic. The book does not proceed in a historical sequence.

Fragments of the Hebrew and Aramaic text have been discovered in Qumran. The Qumran fragments date from the late 2d century BCE to the end of the occupation of Qumran. They generally are the same as the texts we have in our OT Scripture. It is interesting that the switch from Hebrew to Aramaic at chapter 2 vs 4 is in the same place in all manuscripts and switches back at chapter 8.

Apart from the book that bears his name, Daniel does not appear as a historical personality of the exilic period in any biblical book. The name appears twice in Ezekiel, one time in conjunction with Noah and Job and once as a prototype of wisdom (are you wiser than Daniel).

Daniel is normally classified with the Major Prophets in the LXX and was regarded as a prophet already in antiquity. But in the Hebrew Bible Daniel is placed with the minor prophets in the Writings.

As a whole the book is considered an Apocalypse. A genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human.

The ostensible setting of the book of Daniel is in the Babylonian exile.

The book affirms a God who “does according to his will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth” and whose kingdom is everlasting. This God is hidden and mysterious and is known through special revelations to the wise. His control of human affairs may not be immediately obvious but is a matter of a long-term plan.

Daniel calls for a fidelity to Mosaic Law.

It is noted that the Greek text (LXX) includes four extensive passages not found in the original Hebrew and Aramaic. Chapter 3's fiery furnace story, the prayer of Azaria, the story of Susanna, the story of Bell and the Dragon.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes was a [Greek](#) king of the Seleucid Empire who reigned over Syria from 175 BC until 164 BC. He is famous for almost conquering Egypt and for his brutal persecution of the Jews, which precipitated the Maccabean revolt. Antiochus Epiphanes was a ruthless and often capricious ruler. He is properly Antiochus IV, but he took upon himself the title "Epiphanes," which means "illustrious one" or "god manifest." However, his bizarre and blasphemous behavior earned him another nickname among the Jews: "Epimanes," which means "mad one."

An altercation between Antiochus Epiphanes and a Roman ambassador by the name of Gaius Popillius Laenas is the origin of the saying "to draw a line in the sand." When Antiochus brought his army against Egypt in 168 BC, Popillius stood in his way and gave him a message from the Roman Senate ordering him to stop the attack. Antiochus responded that he would think it over and discuss it with his council, at which point Popillius drew a circle in the sand around Antiochus and told him that, if he did not give the Roman Senate an answer before crossing over the line in the sand, Rome would declare war. Antiochus decided to withdraw as Rome had requested.

But the most famous conflict connected to Antiochus Epiphanes is the Maccabean revolt. During that time of history, there were two factions within Judaism: the Hellenists, who had accepted pagan practices and the Greek culture; and the Traditionalists, who were faithful to the Mosaic Law and the old ways. Supposedly to avoid a civil war between these two factions, Antiochus made a decree outlawing Jewish rites and worship, ordering the Jews to worship Zeus rather than Yahweh. He wasn't just trying to [Hellenize](#) the Jews but to totally eliminate all traces of Jewish culture. Of course, the Jews rebelled against his decrees.

In an act of brazen disrespect, Antiochus raided the temple in Jerusalem, stealing its treasures, setting up an altar to Zeus, and sacrificing swine on the altar. When the Jews expressed their outrage over the profaning of the temple, Antiochus responded by slaughtering a great number of the Jews and selling others into slavery. He issued even more draconian decrees: performing the rite of circumcision was punishable by death, and Jews everywhere were ordered to sacrifice to pagan gods and eat pig flesh.

The Jewish response was to take up arms and fight. In 167–166 BC, [Judas Maccabeus](#) led the Jews in a series of victories over the military forces of the Syrian-Greeks. After vanquishing Antiochus and the Seleucids, the Jews cleaned and restored the temple in 165.

Antiochus Epiphanes is a tyrannical figure in Jewish history, and he is also a foreshadowing of the coming Antichrist.