

# Synopsis of the of daniel

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## BOOK OF DANIEL: SYNOPSIS

### Book of Daniel: Synopsis

The Book of Daniel is a book of the Old Testament, and is in fact one of the more complicated books in terms of where and when and why it was written. The book usually has 12 chapters in translation, although these are split up differently depending on the version of the Bible and some translations include extra material. In content, the book discusses a series of events which took place during the exile of the Jews in Babylon during the Sixth century BC, and how Daniel, a Jew who refused to give up worship of God, was saved by prayer to God and who had revealed to him that God would continue to save the Jewish peoples in the future, including in the afterlife. In terms of its dating and authorship, Sumney notes that the Bible was likely written in the second century BC, making it " probably the last book of the Hebrew Bible to be written" (Sumney 164). DiTommaso is less convinced of such a succinct, specific time period of authorship, and argues that the final received version of Daniel is likely instead to be " a composite work, the result of a complicated process of composition and redaction ... [of] contemporary and older materials" (DiTommaso 3). This makes it difficult to lay authorship on a single individual figure. As evidence, DiTommaso points to the book's being written in both Hebrew and Aramaic, which was the language used in later times than in most of the Hebrew Bible (DiTommaso 2). While Sumney also points out these multiple languages he does not further comment on them. DiTommaso, again unlike Sumney, puts a much more specific date on the final completion of the book as we know it today, saying that it was likely around 164BC (DiTommaso 3).

The audience for the Book, as made fairly clear by the subject matter of a <https://assignbuster.com/synopsis-of-the-of-daniel/>

young Jew who refuses to give up worship of God, was likely to be Jewish peoples suffering under some outside influence to renounce their religious practices and convert to others. As Sumney puts it, the book was "put together" during the Maccabean revolt to "encourage the people suffering persecution and death to remain faithful to God and God's law" (Sumney 166). This explanation makes sense given the focus of the stories in the Book of Daniel, as shall be seen in the summary of its content later. Sumney further notes that the book is one of the few books in the Hebrew Bible which is apocalyptic in nature, as it suggests that God will save the Jews even after and because they are persecuted in life (Sumney 164). This would have been a message that resonated well with Jews who were being persecuted in Israel in the second century BC, as they might otherwise feel that their God had abandoned them, and give up their faith.

In terms of its content, as explained earlier the book is set in 6th century BC Babylon, when the Jews were in exile there from their homeland. The first six chapters detail how Daniel and his companions ended up in the service of King Nebuchadnezzar, and goes on to show his rise to a high position under that king because of his ability to interpret dreams so well. They also show him refusing to give up his faith in such things as the dietary restrictions and prayer, such as in the well-known lion's den scene, where God spares Daniel from being eaten by lions due to his refusal to stop praying to God. The remaining chapters of the Book are mostly visions Daniel is said to have received, and they take place from the time of the reign of Belshazzar, Nebuchadnezzar's successor, through to the reign of Cyrus. These visions, while supposedly being set in 6th century BC, are directly relevant to those in second century BC Israel, lending weight to Sumney's and DiTommaso's <https://assignbuster.com/synopsis-of-the-of-daniel/>

arguments for that being its time of authorship.

#### Bibliography

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DiTommaso, Lorenzo. Book of Daniel and the Apocryphal Daniel Literature. Leiden, NLD: Brill Academic Publishers, 2005.