

## Chapter 32: Daniel

### Key Terms

- pseudonymity: the literary device of writing under a false or assumed name; commonly recognized as a feature of apocalyptic literature
- Babylonian Empire: major power in the ancient Near East ca. 612–539 BC
- Persian Empire: major power in the ancient Near East ca. 539–332 BC
- Cyrus: Medo-Persian king who defeated the Babylonian Empire
- *vaticinium ex eventu*: lit. “prophecy from the event,” this term refers to “prophecies” that purport to be prophetic but were in fact written after the event occurred
- eschatology: the branch of theology concerned with end-time events (i.e., the doctrine of last things)

### Key Ideas

- Living a life of faith in an increasingly hostile world.
- Sovereignty of God to deliver and prosper people of faith.
- Sovereignty of God in international political affairs.

### Chapter Summary

Though the events of Daniel are set during the sixth century BC, many scholars believe that the book was written during the second century BC. Those supporting this view argue that Daniel should be classified as apocalyptic literature. However, both internal and external evidence could support an earlier date.

King Nabopolassar oversaw the overthrow of the Assyrian empire; his son Nebuchadnezzar oversaw the establishment of the Babylonians as the dominant world power. The kingdom of Judah experienced constant conflict with the Babylonians, escalating in the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 586 BC. Daniel was part of the first deportation of the Jews in 605 BC. After Nebuchadnezzar's death, the Babylonian Empire declined until it was finally taken over by Cyrus in 539 BC. Cyrus allowed many of the deported peoples, including the Jews, to return to their homes and sanctuaries.

The first six chapters of Daniel address events, while the remainder of the book contains visions. Each half of the book is ordered chronologically. Viewed differently, the book could be divided between chapters five and six, with the first section illustrating a deteriorating opinion of Jewish worship, and the latter section an increasing persecution of Jewish worship. Whichever scheme we adopt, God's sovereign control over the spiritual and political aspects of life stands as one of Daniel's key themes. The book demonstrates that the climax of God's agenda for Israel is the kingdom of God, a kingdom that would never be destroyed. Human empires, in contrast, are only temporary and exercise limited dominion. The downfall of the earthly kings is their pride, while the downfall of Israel was her rebellion against God.