

Dr. Wendy L. Widder, Daniel, Session 1, Introduction to Daniel

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This is Dr. Wendy Widder in her teaching on the book of Daniel. This is session 1, Introduction to Daniel.

My name is Wendy Widder, and I'll be teaching this course on the Old Testament book of Daniel. I have a Ph.D. in Ancient Near Eastern Studies from the University of the Free State in South Africa, a Master of Arts from the University of Wisconsin in Madison, and a Master of Divinity from Grand Rapids Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan. I've been teaching and writing on the book of Daniel for about the last decade.

And if I'm honest with you, I would tell you I landed in the book, not by choice. Daniel was really low on the list of books that I wanted to study in depth in the Old Testament. It was right down there with maybe Job.

It was not a favorite book and part of that is I grew up in a tradition that approached the book of Daniel in many ways as if it were a way to chart the end times. And so, there were predictions, and the second half of the book provided, you could line it up with news stories. And honestly in some ways it was terrifying to me and it also was discouraging because it seemed like those predictions would get outdated.

And so, then everyone would have to update their understanding of the book of Daniel and change things. I had spent enough time in the book to know that there were some really confusing things in it, and I did not want to have to sort out all of the different scholarships. So, I tried to stay away from it.

But at a time in my life when I needed things on my resume and I needed a little bit of cash, I was offered the opportunity to teach a two-week intensive course on Daniel. So, of course, I said I'd love to. I dug into the commentaries and spent several very intense weeks preparing to teach that course.

What I discovered, to my delight, is that the book is not what I thought. Rather than a map for the future, the book offers encouragement for today. And it was encouragement that I found I needed and I found encouragement that was much more relevant to people I taught, whether they be in a classroom or in the pew.

It was a book that mattered for today. And to me, that was very exciting. So, I'm excited about this book.

I spent a lot of time on it, and I'm excited to share with you some of the things that I think it is bringing to us when we come to the book: words of encouragement. So, in the coming lectures, we're going to be working through the book of Daniel chapter by chapter. Our goal is first to understand how the original audience of Daniel would have understood it as best we can.

Obviously, we're removed thousands of years and a couple continents many of us and languages from the original context. So we have to do a whole lot of work to try to put ourselves in the original audience. But we first want to try to do that.

Because it's only when we understand what the author was saying to the original audience that we can have an understanding of how that applies or what that means for us today. When I teach, I like to give some resources, recommendations. If you're coming at this study for the first time, first I'd encourage you to read the book as you get to each lecture.

Read the chapter before you jump in, and listen to what I have to say about it. But also, if you're looking for some additional resources, especially for some of the difficult issues, there are lots of things I can recommend. Let me just give you a quick survey of some things that I found particularly helpful, resources that I've used or written.

So, I'll start with one I've written. This is in the Story of God Bible Commentary series from Zondervan. It's a fairly new series as of 2015-ish.

So, this is one that's really written for pastors and teachers, for lay people even, who are interested in studying with a little bit of depth but not with language precision or all of the details that you might get lost in if you're not familiar with ancient Near Eastern studies. So, I'd recommend that. And then within the next couple of years, I'll have another book on Daniel in this series from Zondervan.

This is what the covers look like. Exegetical Commentary on the Old Testament. This one will be a little more helpful if you've studied Hebrew or Aramaic.

If you haven't, there's some benefit to be had, but it really would be most beneficial if you studied the languages a little bit. So, hopefully, this will come out in 2020. That's the hope.

Another really usable resource is the NIVAC, the NIV Application Commentary. This is also by Zondervan and it's written by Tremper Longman. Tremper Longman has done a lot of work in the Old Testament, and he does a really fabulous job of speaking a language that people understand.

And so, he takes some really complicated issues and lays them out in ways that are helpful. He can kind of clear away the stuff that really doesn't matter for how we apply the book today. So, I would recommend this.

It's a really popular series and this book has held up over time. If you want to go a little bit deeper and still stay evangelical, I would recommend the Apollos Old Testament Commentary Series. This is by Ernest Lucas.

This is an InterVarsity Press publication and Lucas will take you a little deeper into the issues and lay them out. He does a good job of laying out what all the options are and then telling you which one he favors, but allowing that some other options are also possible. So, this is a little higher on the academic level, but I think it's still really usable.

Another really popular series that a lot of people have the whole set is the Word Biblical Commentary. This is Daniel and it's by John Goldingay. Word does a good job of, again, laying out the issues.

Goldingay takes a lot of literary approaches, so if that's something that interests you, he does a fine job of that. I like this commentary, but I find Word commentaries hard to find my way around. Not everybody has that experience.

The information's great, but sometimes it's a little hard for me to find it, which is probably more for me than the book. If you move into more critical scholarship or mainline scholarship, scholars who wouldn't identify themselves as evangelicals, then there are really two standards that are fairly modern. The classic, I say classic, it's from 1993, but it is a classic, Hermeneia.

This is John Collins. John Collins has done a whole lot of work on apocalyptic literature. It's certainly one of his specialties.

He's got books on just that topic. But this is the finest critical modern or up-to-date critical scholarship available. One last one for commentaries is the Old Testament Library, Daniel, by Carol Newsome.

So, there is an Old Testament Library, an older version, by I think Norm Porteus. This one came out in 2014, so it's updated with different authors, and this is a really helpful resource, too, but again, it's more of the critical approach, a different view of scripture than I would have and that evangelicals would have, but very helpful for the scholarship on Daniel. If you are a pastor or a teacher and you really just want to get through all the details, how do I apply this? How do I teach this to people? There are some excellent resources for that, too.

Brian Chappell does fabulous books for pastors, and he has a series. This is The Gospel According to Daniel, a Christ-centered approach. This is Baker, and he goes through the book, but he does his homework, but he also helps you really see how to apply it, how to preach it.

More explicitly about preaching is Sidney Griedanus, Foundations for Expository Sermons, Preaching Christ from Daniel. This is an Erdman's, and it also is very helpful for, I have to preach Daniel, what do I do? Just knowing all the scholarship and all the options doesn't help me. How do I preach it? One last book, when we get to the second half of Daniel, we are going to enter some very difficult foreign waters, apocalyptic literature.

It is hard. One of the hardest things about it, I think, in Daniel is that the last two chapters especially take us through a time in Israel's history that is unfamiliar to a lot of us, so the Second Temple period. We'll talk a lot more about that later, but it's a really convoluted, confusing history full of names of people we don't know, we don't remember, places we're not familiar with, and you get lost.

So, the best resource, most readable resource I've found for just getting through the history of the Intertestamental or the Second Temple period, whatever you want to call it, is by Anthony Tomasino. It's called Judaism Before Jesus, the Events and Ideas that Shaped the New Testament World. This was by IVP, InterVarsity Press.

Once upon a time, it was out of print. I'm not sure if it's back, but you can find anything on the internet, so I'm sure it's out there. This is just a really readable, wonderful resource on the history.

So, I will try to refer to authors and books that I've used as I go, but that just gives you some other places to study if you're interested in going further and deeper in the Book of Daniel. In the rest of this first lecture, what I'd like to do is overview the issues that are related to studying the book, and then I also want to look at how the Book of Daniel fits in the Old Testament timeline, the chronology of the Jews, and the overall story of the Bible. So, we'll be looking at a timeline, and we'll be looking at issues.

So, Daniel is really a unique book in the Old Testament. In English Bibles, it falls after Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. It's one of the major prophets.

It's 12 chapters long, but it's really unique. It's not a prophetic book like the other prophets. It has narrative stories in it.

Daniel and the lion's den, that doesn't sound like a prophecy. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that doesn't sound like a prophecy either. So, it has these really

unique stories that are very memorable and even entertaining, but yet it's supposed to be a prophetic book.

So, it has two really distinct sections. The first half are these narrative stories. The second half are these wild and wacky visions.

And trying to understand how those two things fit together into one book is a challenge. So it has two different genres. Another thing that's really unique about the Book of Daniel is it appears in two languages.

So, most of the Old Testament is written in Hebrew. And there are a couple of books that have little pieces of Aramaic, which is a sister language that we'll talk a little bit more about. But Daniel has six chapters in Hebrew, and it has six chapters in Aramaic.

The only other book in the Old Testament with a significant amount of Aramaic is Ezra. So, Ezra was written after the exile to the community that was returning to their land. And they were a Persian province at that time.

And the lingua franca, the commercial language of the day, was Aramaic. So, there's some correspondence recorded in the Book of Ezra. And it's not unusual for us to come to a Hebrew book but have the correspondence written in Aramaic because that's what the letters would have actually been written in.

So, when the Persian governors and kings are writing back and forth, it's in Aramaic. So, we can explain that in Ezra. When we get to Daniel, we go through the first chapter, which is a story about Daniel and his friends being taken into captivity.

They make the choice not to eat the king's food. Chapter one. Chapter two tells the story of Nebuchadnezzar having a dream of this magnificent statue.

He doesn't know what it means. But before you even get into that story, the language changes to Aramaic. And it stays Aramaic through all of chapter two from verse four, chapter three, chapter four, chapter five, chapter six, and it's still Aramaic in chapter seven.

And then it goes back to Hebrew. And there's not really any sense of why. Why did it change? What's the purpose of having a different language? So that makes it unique in the Old Testament.

It's unique because of that second half and that apocalyptic section. There really is not a whole lot of apocalyptic literature in the Old Testament. Most familiar to us in the Bible is the New Testament, the Book of Revelation, which means apocalypses, the revelation.

That's clearly an apocalypse. And sometimes, when we come to revelation, we see the imagery, and it's wild and weird, and we're not quite sure how to interpret it. That's apocalyptic literature.

In the Old Testament, the only place that sort of thing appears isn't Daniel. So it's a little tricky to know how to understand it in the context of the Old Testament. One other thing about the languages and the genres is that it makes Daniel difficult.

So, I've told you it's got two genres. It's got Hebrew and Aramaic. Sorry, two genres.

It's got narrative, and it has apocalyptic. And the narrative is chapters 1 through 6. The apocalyptic is chapters 7 through 12. Okay, pretty neat and clean division, right? It has two languages.

It has Hebrew and Aramaic. Well, Hebrew is chapter 1. The first four verses of chapter 2, actually the first four and a half verses, if you want to be technical, and then chapters 8 through 12 are Hebrew. Aramaic starts in chapter 2, 4b, and goes all the way through the end of chapter 7, which I think is 27 verses long.

So, you have two genres, two languages, but it doesn't really coincide. There's no tidy way to divide this book. You can't say, well, the narrative is all Hebrew. The apocalyptic is all Aramaic.

Easy enough. It's a mess. So, what do we do with that? It's just a challenging book.

It's an oddity in the Old Testament, which makes it a whole lot more fun. So, what's difficult is that when we come to the Bible to study it, we want to ask a number of questions of the text. It's not like picking up the newspaper, which is our time, our place.

We understand the culture. We can understand the point of the article. It's not like picking up a novel, where it's probably set in a place that we're familiar with.

We can easily understand what the author means. The Bible is an ancient book. It was written at different times, in different places, different people.

It wasn't written to us. John Walton, Old Testament scholar at Wheaton, loves to say the Bible wasn't written to us, but it was written for us. So, the trick, or the task, of studying the Bible is to understand what it said to its original audience, but what is that relevance for us today? So, when we come to this ancient literature, there are a number of questions you want to ask, and this is true no matter what you're studying in the Bible.

You want to ask, who wrote it? So, who's the author? And for some books in the Bible, that's really clear. I, Paul, to the church at whatever. Paul wrote it.

And we could, there are arguments about whether that's credible, whether that's true, but that's beside the point. The book claims to have been written by Paul. In the Old Testament, we have some, a bunch of prophets.

Isaiah, these are the visions that appear to Isaiah, son of Amos. So, lots of times, the author's clear, and lots of times, it's not. And that's actually very true in the Old Testament, where the books are, for all purposes, anonymous.

There might be tradition about who wrote it, but the book itself never claims that. So who's the author? Well, Daniel, maybe? In the second half of the book, that's fairly easy to defend. It says, I, Daniel, had visions and said, saw this, so it's written as if Daniel's telling you the story.

The first half of the book makes no claim for authorship. There are stories about Daniel, but it doesn't say that Daniel wrote them. So, author, we don't really know.

Date, when was the book written? In the book of Daniel, this is a huge issue, and I'm going to make you wait until the next lecture to tell you what kind of huge issue that is. Sometimes, in biblical books, we have a good sense of when a book was written based on events it foretells or things that have already happened, so you, well, it didn't happen back here because they talk about this event, so it has to at least be here. So, you can sort of situate it historically based on what the book says, and that's how you date a biblical book, although you can't always do it.

So, author, date, genre. Genre is a really important question. Genre just means kind of writing.

What kind of writing is this? Is it narrative? Is it a story? Well, we understand stories differently. Is it prophecy? We understand prophecy differently. Is it genealogy? Genre dictates how we read something and how we understand it.

Well, the book of Daniel has two different ones, and one of them is really strange, so we're not always sure how to interpret that. Who was the audience? Who was the original recipient of this book, and what was their setting? What's the historical context that maybe this author is addressing through the writing, and what's the purpose? Why did they write this book? Those are all questions that when you come to a biblical passage or biblical book, you want to at least ask. You may not be able to answer all of them, but you want to ask the question.

See how close you can get to an answer. Daniel is one of the most debated books with respect to almost all of these categories. If you pick up any of these

commentaries, some of them will give you the issue very concisely, and some of them, like the critical scholarship, John Collins and Carol Newsome, they'll give you the details.

Why is this particular view taken? Why is this particular view taken? Well, then, there's one over here. It's a very complicated book in terms of all of these questions. So, in the next lecture, we're going to look at these questions in a little more detail, specifically for Daniel, but just know that as we approach this book to study it, we have lots of questions that we can't answer.

We can do our best, and we can see what the options are, but there are Bible-believing Christians who will take different views on all of these things. There are critical scholars who will even take different views on some of them. So, it's a problem with Daniel.

It makes Daniel a challenge to study. So that's all I want to do in terms of those questions. What I want to spend the rest of this class doing is situating the book of Daniel in the story of the Bible, in the story of the Old Testament, in Israel's story, and even going a little beyond where the Old Testament ends.

So, let's see the best way to do this. I like to use a timeline. I tend to be a visual learner.

My marker will hold out. So, what we have here is the story of the Bible, and a little beyond, and a little interlude that's not recorded in the Bible. So, the Bible starts in the book of Genesis with the story of creation, and I'm not going to try to put a date on that.

We'll just let the arrow go that way, and whatever your view on creation is, you just fill the date in. So it starts in Genesis, the creation of the world, and then it takes us through the story of how the world becomes so corrupt and so evil that God gets to a point where he starts over, and that's the story of the flood. Well, things go downhill after the flood, and Noah's descendants do know better than Noah did, and his predecessors.

So, when we come to Genesis 12, we have a really pivotal point in Old Testament history and in the story of the Bible. In Genesis 12, we have the introduction of the character Abraham, and Abraham is chosen by God and called out of his home in Mesopotamia to go to a land that God's going to show him and ultimately give to him and his descendants. So, the call of Abraham sets the course of the rest of the Bible.

This is God's choice of Abraham and the promise of his chosen people through whom he's going to work his redemption plan to the world. Well, Abraham's descendants don't really occupy this land. They don't own the land.

It's not theirs. A few bits and pieces here and there, but they don't own the land, and ultimately, by the end of the book of Genesis, they're not even in the land. They've been taken down to Egypt because there's a famine in the land, and there's food in Egypt, and God was gracious enough to prepare the way for them to Egypt.

A few years earlier, he sent Joseph down—not the best way to get sent down. He went down in shekels sold by his brothers, but God used Joseph's situation to raise him to a place of power in Egypt, so that when his people back in the land of Israel were hungry, they could come to Egypt, and God had provided for their salvation.

Well, things turned badly. It turned bad in Egypt, and the people were made slaves, and Pharaoh, who did not know Joseph, did not know the whole story of how they got there and what they were doing, didn't like the Jews. He didn't like the Hebrews at that point.

He was threatened by them, and so he made them captive, and they are captive in Egypt, and they suffer oppression and slavery, and they cry out for a deliverer, and God raises up Moses, and Moses ultimately brings the people out of Egypt in what is called the Exodus. The event of the Exodus is the bringing out, and it's recounted in the book of Exodus, and there are different views on the date for that, anywhere from about 1400 BC to 1200, a little beyond BC. We're not going to go into that.

We'll just put those roughly as the dates for the Exodus. God brings his people out, takes them to the wilderness, and ultimately brings them to the promised land. They come to the promised land under Joshua, and God gives them the land.

In the book of Joshua, you have the story of how they are; I'd say how they take the land, but it's really how they are given the land because God does it. They are not powerful enough to do it. God is the one who gives them the land, and the people settle in the land, and they get a little too comfortable in the land, and they had not gotten, they had not destroyed all the people that God had told them to destroy.

They had not totally occupied the land, so they still had some neighbors with idolatrous practices, and so they got a little too comfortable, and rather than living the way God wanted them to live in the land, they really became more like the Canaanites in the land. Some authors have called this the Canaanization of the Israelites. Rather than setting themselves apart as God's unique people, living under the covenant he had given them through Moses, they become more like the Canaanites.

And when you get to the book of Judges, you have the really sordid account of how God's people became more like the Canaanites than God's people. They see all the

practices of their neighbors, and they adopt them as their own. They're worshipping other gods and making sacrifices to other gods.

There are some really horrible stories in the book of Judges that you can go read another time and see how they really did not live according to the covenant. By the end of the book of Judges, things in Israel are a moral mess. It's just a chaotic mess, and they cry out for a king.

They want a king like their neighbors had, and so in the book of Samuel, God raises up for them a king. The first king is Saul, who does not do well, and he's rejected by God. The second king is David, and David becomes the example of what God wants in a king.

He's a man after God's own heart, and God promises David a dynasty that will live forever. Everlasting righteousness will ultimately be brought in through the line of David. David's son Solomon is famous for a number of things.

The one we care about most in this class is that he built the temple. So, Solomon is king; well, let's put David on here first. David's king about a thousand BC, I'm just going with round numbers here.

His son Solomon succeeds him, built first temple, which was a dwelling place for God, but God made it very clear he didn't need a place to dwell. It really was the place where the people could come meet with God, where they could worship God in a place that was holy and set apart for him. Solomon did lots of good in his reign, but he also did lots of bad.

More sordid stories you can find in the Bible. When he dies, his kingdom passes to his son Rehoboam. Rehoboam was young and foolish, and he inherited the practices of his father. Solomon had heavily oppressed the people, in part to pay for the temple and to pay for his palace.

They were quite oppressed under Solomon. So, when Rehoboam takes the throne, he asks his advisors, what should I do? Because the people said, lighten our load; your father was very hard on us; lighten the load. Rehoboam says, should I lighten their load or should I not? His father's advisors, the older ones among his advisors, said, definitely lighten the load.

And his buddies said, no, you can prove yourself better than your father. You're stronger than your father. Rehoboam listened to his peers, people who were closer in age to him, and he said, all right, you think my father was bad? I'm way worse. And so, under Rehoboam in 922, oops, this is not the right spot. It actually goes here.

922, the kingdom splits. You'll find a couple of different dates for that. I stick with 922, but the kingdom splits.

The northern kingdom, which had 10 tribes, appointed Jeroboam as their king. This is the northern kingdom. It's also technically Israel.

In the southern kingdom, there are 10 tribes. The southern kingdom is the southern kingdom, created names, but you can remember them geographically. Technically it's Judah.

The southern kingdom includes Jerusalem, which is the temple that Solomon built. And their first king is Rehoboam. So now we have split kingdom, divided kingdom, it's sometimes referred to.

We have the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom. The northern kingdom, if you read the accounts in Kings and Chronicles, has no good kings. They all follow the ways of Jeroboam; they're all evil, and they do evil in the sight of the Lord.

Ultimately, in 722, the northern kingdom falls to the nation of Assyria. At that point, they kind of disappear from the biblical story. The southern kingdom has a couple of good kings along the way.

So, you've heard perhaps of Hezekiah. Hezekiah was a good king. Asa, there are a couple of other ones in there.

Hezekiah's most famous, and Josiah. Two good kings. And on account of these kings who followed God, or as the Bible says, who followed in the way of their father David, God extended the life of the southern kingdom a little bit longer but recognized that there was a lot of rebellion still going on.

We have bad kings, good kings, bad kings, bad kings, good kings, and this alternation. And God speaks into that situation through his prophets. So, his prophets come to both the north and the south, and they are calling the people back to the covenant.

Be faithful and obey the covenant because if you don't, all sorts of stipulations that were put in the covenant will come to pass. Curses will come on us. We're going to go into exile.

These were set up when the covenant was made. If you don't come back to the covenant, those things are going to come to pass. So, you have names like Isaiah and Jeremiah.

Ezekiel's actually in exile. Lamentations isn't technically a prophet. Daniel, hang on to that one.

Hosea, Joel, and Amos, there are 12 more. And they all fall, for the most part, within this history. A couple of them are after.

But they're speaking to the people, trying to call them back to that covenant God made with them at Sinai. Call them to faithfulness so that their kingdom will endure. Josiah is king in 609 and a little before that.

He was a good king. All sorts of reforms he instituted, in a lot of ways, brought the people back to faithfulness to God. But in 609, oh, one more thing we have to put on here.

So, we're talking about life in Israel. But Israel is just a small little nation in a much bigger world. And so, while all this is happening in Israel, you sort of want to keep in mind that there are world empires on the big scene.

And there are power shifts going on with these empires. So let me try to get close to the right dates for you. So, we have Assyria as the world power in these early years of the divided monarchy.

Assyria is the one to whom the northern kingdom will fall. But in about 612, Assyria falls to Babylon. 612 is when the city of Nineveh, most famous because of Jonah, fell to Assyria as a capital of Assyria, it fell to Babylon.

So, Babylon becomes the world power at this point. And they stay in power until about 539, right about here. Then, the scene shifts to Persia as a world power.

And Persia will be succeeded by Greece, Alexander specifically, which is going to put us down at, get the right dates, 332. We're going to shift to Greece, the Hellenistic era. Rome shows up right about here.

And that will take us into the New Testament and beyond. So on the world scene, you have huge empires warring with each other. I need to put a map somewhere here.

I'll come back to that. And this power struggle that Israel, this tiny little nation with very little world power, often gets caught in the middle of these struggles. And they can't stand on their own, so they end up being a vassal, or they're subject to one of these greater powers.

So, they're paying tribute to them. Well, Josiah, down here in 609, was paying, he was, Judah was a vassal. In 609, Egypt, which is not up there, was still in the world, and it was a major player causing lots of conflict.

Pharaoh Necho from Egypt was headed north to meet up with the Babylonians. And Josiah went out to stop him because he didn't want that to happen. And Josiah was killed in battle in 609.

Then from 609 to about 587 here, there's this rolling over, like a revolving door almost, of kings in Judah. And I will not take you through the list, but there's three or four of them that just in rapid succession from Josiah, two of his sons, one of his nephews, it's just a mess. And they are vassals to Babylon, specifically Nebuchadnezzar.

And they don't necessarily like being vassals. And some of these kings will fight back and rebel a little more than others. Finally, Nebuchadnezzar had it in 587.

He'd had it with rebellious Judean kings. So, in 587, he comes, and Jerusalem falls. The temple is burned, and the people go into exile.

That's what this divot is. Daniel is among the people who are taken into exile. He was not taken in 587.

He was taken earlier, but remember I told you there were several uprisings against Nebuchadnezzar. So, he came a few times and took people with him every time. So Daniel is in exile.

Daniel's living in this time period as an exile. In the book of Daniel, the first six chapters are telling stories that happened during exile while Daniel and his friends are serving Babylonian kings. Those first six stories are set in this time period.

The visions that Daniel has in the second half of the book, the vision itself when he's seeing it, it's set in this time period. So, during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, during the reign of Cyrus. So, he's having this vision in this period, but the visions are looking forward to a time frame down here.

Specifically, they're looking at a period of history right about here, and a famous, at least famous to people who study the Bible, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, was a Seleucid king who made the restored Judah, made their life miserable. So, hang on to that. I'll come back to that in a minute.

539, the people in exile are allowed to return under Cyrus, Cyrus the Persian. He allows captive peoples to return to their lands. He even gives them some funds to rebuild temples.

So, the people return in 539, they rebuild their temple. In 515, there's a dedication of that new temple. So, we call that the second temple.

Hopefully, from the time of the second temple until 70 AD, we will have what's often called the second temple period. This is the period in which the second temple is standing. So, it was built and rededicated in 515, and it was destroyed in 70 AD by the Romans.

So, this period of time is called the second temple period. Another time frame that falls within here that's sometimes here thrown around is the intertestamental period. And what we mean by that is the period of time between when the Old Testament ends, the New Testament begins.

So, like I said, books are hard to date, but Malachi, which is the last book in the Old Testament, we're just going to say roughly 450. That's Malachi. The book of Matthew is recounting Jesus' birth and on.

So, we're just going to roughly say right about here, the book of Matthew. So this period of time is called the intertestamental period. It's a smaller piece of the second temple period.

Okay, Greece. Alexander the Great. Alexander the Great basically took over the known world of the ancient Near East and had a vast empire.

He's the one that defeats Persia. But Alexander died young with no viable heir. So, what happened to his massive kingdom? Well, it was split up among squabbling generals.

And so, there's at least four of them. Historians will argue about whether or not there were more. We only care about two of them.

The two that we care about are Seleucus and Ptolemy. The P is silent. Seleucus and Ptolemy were two of Alexander the Great's generals.

When he died without an heir, and his massive kingdom was parceled out among his generals, they were two of the recipients. Seleucus received the Syrian portion and beyond, but for our purposes, we just care. Now we need a map.

Get rid of this part. Very fancy ancient Near Eastern map. Persian Gulf over here.

Okay, you know what this is? Let me tell you. This is the Mediterranean Sea. This is the Nile River.

So now you also know that this is Egypt. This is the Persian Gulf, more or less. We have the Sinai Peninsula, which we're not going to bother with, but it's over here.

This is the Jordan River, which runs between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. That's that. So now you also know that this is the land of Israel.

If you haven't tracked down or Googled a map yet, you probably should. Egypt, the land of Israel. Over here, yeah, this really is out of proportion, but anyway.

Over here is Babylon and Persia, etc., and Seleucus was Alexander's successor.

We need a new color. Blue. Seleucus gets this territory.

Ptolemy gets this territory. Can you see the problem? These are two generals, two of at least four, who are forever sparring over territory. They all want more territory.

Seleucus is up here in Syria. Ptolemy is down here in Egypt. Well, good grief.

Who's right between them? Israel. So, Israel is often called the land between. This is why.

They are stuck between power struggles in the ancient Near East. Egypt, Babylon, Persia. Farther back in history, you have the Hittites.

You have all sorts of great empires struggling for territory and power. And they're always traipsing through Israel. Israel is the land between.

So, in the aftermath of Alexander the Great, we have Seleucus and Ptolemy. In this period of time, we've got a whole lot of fighting going on over this territory. And so, during this time period, Judah finds itself kind of tossed back and forth.

So sometimes they're subject to Seleucid kings. Sometimes, they're subject to Ptolemaic kings. It goes back and forth.

And things are never very good. They are never independent. They are always subject to one of these other kings.

So, this is Seleucus up here. Oops, Seleucus. His most famous success for our purposes in the study of Daniel is Antiochus IV.

So, Antiochus IV will be the Seleucid king in about 170 BC. And he wants Egypt. He wants Egyptian land.

So there are continual struggles between Antiochus IV trying to get more territory. He has to traipse through Israel. And there's power struggles.

There are people in Israel who are pro-Seleucid. And others say, no, pro-Ptolemy. So, you have factions in Israel.

And then you have these sparring nations. It's a mess. So, at one point in this history, Antiochus IV is defeated in Egypt.

We'll come back to this much later. If you're very interested, this is the book you care about. This will tell you all the details.

Antiochus IV goes down to Egypt. And he's humiliated in an embarrassing defeat. And on his way back, he vents his anger on the Jews in Jerusalem.

And in the course of those events, he has his troops desecrate the temple. They offer pigs on the altar. They set up statues of Greek gods.

Basically, they defile the temple to such a point that it can't be used anymore. And that happens in 167. So, in 167, the temple's defiled, can't be used.

And there's a series of messiahs, for lack of a better word, rising up in this time period, promising better days ahead. We can revolt. Follow me.

I've got the answers. We've got different sparring groups who are trying to make life better in Israel according to their philosophy of how it ought to go. The group that rises to the top in 164 are the Maccabees and Hasmoneans.

They go by several names. So, it's the Hasmonean dynasty. Eldest son, known as the hammer.

But Maccabees is the name you want to remember. Hasmoneans, Maccabees. And in 164, they've gained enough power to revolt, to claim the temple back, to rededicate it.

And in December of 164, they rededicate the purified temple in an eight-day festival that is still celebrated by Jews every year. It's Hanukkah. So that's what that event is tied back to.

It's restoration of the temple under the Maccabeans, or the Maccabees, the Maccabean revolt. That's 164. Okay.

This is a whole lot of history. And you're saying we're just studying the book of Daniel. How'd you get so lost? Well, Daniel's visions are seeing this.

Now, they might be seeing more, too, but for sure, they're seeing a lot of these events. And so, Daniel sees these visions and he writes them down. And we have this record of this horror that's ahead.

These are people just getting out of exile. They just left horror behind. And Daniel has visions of greater horror to come.

So that's a crash course in history of how the book of Daniel, which falls in this time period, tells events that happen in that time period but also casts visions of the future that primarily fall in this period. Okay. That was a lot of history, but I think it helps orient us to where the book of Daniel fits in terms of the Bible, in terms of that story, and even in terms of some ancient history.

So, I think we will end this lecture there and we'll come back and look at some of those interpretive questions with more detail.

This is Dr. Wendy Widder in her teaching on the book of Daniel. This is session 1, Introduction to Daniel.