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**THE BOOK OF DANIEL IN LIGHT OF THE  
ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN LITERARY  
AND MATERIAL FINDS: AN  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
PERSPECTIVE**

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This dissertation examines the text of the book of Daniel in light of some ancient Near Eastern archaeological discoveries. While chapter 1 of this research is introductory, chapter 2 begins by investigating personal place names mentioned in Daniel and making a comparative analysis between the claims of Daniel's text and related archaeological discoveries. Archaeological evidence shows that the place names mentioned in the book of Daniel were real geographical locations where historical events are claimed to have taken place. Archaeological materials not only help to clarify some words, phrases, and locations of places, but seem to show that at least some aspects of the book can be plausibly understood through material finds that have closer affinity to the Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, and Persian periods than to the later periods.

Chapter 3 concentrates on Nebuchadnezzar's administration over Judah. His political career led to the destruction of Jerusalem and the capture of part of its population and resources. The extant evidence indicates that the dreams/visions of Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel reported in the book of Daniel reflected the prevailing political situation in sixth-century B.C.E. Neo-Babylonia and onward. Archaeological finds discussed here also help to elucidate some enigmatic passages, such as the interpretation of dreams (Dan 2, 4, 7, 8, 11), the succession of the four kingdoms (Dan 2, 7, 8, 11), the animal representation of the ancient geopolitical world (Dan 7, 8), and the judgment scene (Dan 7).

The focus of chapter 4 is the fall of Neo-Babylonia in 539 B.C.E. to the Medes and Persians and the chronological and political succession of world empires to the time of the end. The expression "time of the end" in the book of Daniel must be viewed in light of the sequence of historical kingdoms. Archaeological evidence indicates that within this sequence, Medo-Persia was a single power.

Chapter 5 analyzes the relationship between Daniel and some parallel extrabiblical texts, including the Prayer of Nabonidus, as well as apocryphal and pseudepigraphal writings. There is basically no evidence of literary dependence between these texts and Daniel.

Chapter 6 presents the summary and conclusions to the entire research. Interpreters have raised serious problems with the text of Daniel, but this investigation shows that the historical setting of the book of Daniel and many of its words and expressions can be understood better in light of archaeological discoveries.