

carefully studied and compared with the related historical events, principles are discovered that are fundamental to the understanding of all Bible prophecy.

The Maccabean View

Practically all interpreters of the book of Daniel agree that much of chapters 8 and 11 is closely related to events that occurred in the first half of the second century B.C. when the Syrian Hellenistic king, Antiochus (IV) Epiphanes, instituted a severe persecution of all who professed belief in Judaism or continued to perform its ceremonies.

Those who resisted this persecution and eventually succeeded in gaining their freedom from the Syrian oppressors were led by a group of men called the Maccabees. The apocryphal book of 1 Maccabees describes these events.^{^1}

A number of commentaries on the book of Daniel have been written by men who claim that the whole book (and not just ch. 8 and part of ch. 11) was written in order to encourage believers who were suffering under Antiochus' persecution, and that the book did not originate at the time of Nebuchadnezzar but during the reign of Antiochus. They hold that at that time someone wrote a book which he represented as the work of a man who had lived at the court of Nebuchadnezzar four centuries earlier. This book would tell of imaginary incidents when God was supposed to have protected his faithful people and would represent its hero as having predicted the oppression under Antiochus, and as having declared that it would be followed by a supernatural deliverance that would introduce a time of peace and happiness.

Evangelical interpreters agree that much of Daniel 8 and 11 predicts this great crisis, but believe that the book was written at the time of Nebuchadnezzar and that God gave it to his people to prepare them, not only for the crisis brought on by Antiochus but also for many other events and situations.

The view that the book was not written until the time of the Maccabees was advanced as early as the third century