

# BEST COMMENTARIES ON DANIEL

**EXPLANATION** - The criterion used for this list to assess the best commentaries on the Book of Daniel is to determine which of the books interpret the Scripture literally. Daniel is a book of prophecy and failure to interpret the prophetic chapters 2 and 7-12 literally will result in inaccurate interpretation. The following resources are not selected because they are dispensational, although this approach tends to be more literal than other systematic approaches.

Sadly there are several listings of so-called "BEST" commentaries on the prophetic book of Daniel which take a predominantly non-literal approach to interpretation. They are assessed "best" in the opinion of those who seem to favor a non-literal interpretation, and as a result offer some questionable comments on Daniel 2 and Daniel 7-12. This is no small matter, for failure to accurately interpret the prophetic sections of Daniel will make it very difficult to accurately interpret the Revelation of Jesus Christ which has many parallel prophecies.

The goal of any commentary on a prophetic book like Daniel should be to follow the rule that if the plain sense of the text makes good sense in context, then seek to make no other sense or it may end up as nonsense!

Believers are called to be Acts 17:11+ Bereans on any commentary they read, but this warning is especially critical in books like Daniel that deal with eschatology.

In light of the previous explanation it is clear from reviewing the lists of "BEST" commentaries on Daniel that there is a definite bias away from commentaries that take a literal approach to interpretation. With that background let's first look at a few critiques of some of the books on the two most popular lists of "BEST" commentaries. As you will note in the following critiques most of the listings by Challies and Ligonier have questionable interpretations on prophetic passages which is notable in a book in which 7 of the 12 chapters have some of the most incredible prophetic texts in all of Scripture!

## CRITIQUE OF

### [Tim Challies' "BEST" Commentaries on Daniel](#)

**Goldingay, John E - Daniel. Word Biblical Commentary. Volume 30** (Dallas: Word Books, 1989)

**Rosscup** - The work has much to offer on literature and views in many cases but is **not of reliable value in handling prophecy**. ([Commentaries For Biblical Expositors](#))

**COMMENT** - For example on Daniel 9:24-27 Goldingay writes that "There is no reason to refer it exegetically to the first or second coming of Christ." (page 260). So here we have a book of Daniel filled with prophecy and a commentary that is **"not of reliable value in handling prophecy"** and yet it is listed among the **"BEST"** commentaries on the prophetic book of Daniel. You be the judge if this commentary should really be listed as one of the best commentaries on the book of Daniel!

**Longman, Tremper III. - Daniel (NIV Application Commentary).** Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999.

**Rosscup** - A Westmont College professor posits sixth century B. C. material in Daniel, but his work is soft toward late-daters, even toward one who denies the possibility of supernatural prophecy in Dan. 7-12 (23). Longman seeks to resolve alleged inaccuracies as in 1:1-2 (43), difficult phrases such as "ten times better" in 1:20 (54), usually meeting them head-on in a substantial commentary of 313 pp. He is of the opinion in Dan. 7 that the four beasts represent an unspecified number of evil kingdoms that will succeed one another from the exile to Christ's future coming (190). **Many principles help readers in application, but too often the comments on prophecy mislead or leave uncertainty, not help one have a sound view.** ([Commentaries For Biblical Expositors](#))

**COMMENT** - Challies quotes Ligonier's comments "*Longman's commentary on Daniel is an example of one of the better works in the series. Longman's strength is in his literary analysis, and this is a strength of this commentary. Highly recommended.*" Notice there is no questioning the comments on the important prophetic chapters of Daniel. One has to wonder how a book about which Rosscup says **"too often the comments on prophecy mislead or leave uncertainty"** could possibly be on a list of "BEST" commentaries on a prophetic book like Daniel! The upshot is if you are seeking to understand the prophetic chapters of Daniel (2, 7-12), this would not be the best choice.

Duguid, Iain M. – Daniel (Reformed Expository Commentary).

**COMMENT** - This is Challies' #1 recommendation, which warrants a few comments regarding Duguid's handling of prophetic passages. In Daniel 9:27 we read "'And **he** will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering...." Duguid interprets the "**he**" who will make the covenant as "*the Messiah who confirms the covenant with many and brings an end to sacrifice and offering.*" Such an interpretation simply does not do justice to a literal reading to the text and totally disregards the time phrases "one week" and "middle of the week." Duguid also fails to interpret the important prophetic passage in Daniel 12:1 that "there will be **a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time**"; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued." There is no mention of the possibility that Daniel 12:1 might be associated with the Great Tribulation Jesus mentions in Mt 24:21 where he gives a very similar description (compare **bolded text**) declaring "For then **there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.**" It is also notable that the Septuagint renders "tribulation" in Daniel 12:1 with the same word used by Jesus in Mt 24:21, the word [thlipsis](#). Given these parallels, it is surprising that Duguid offers no exposition of Daniel 12:1. This leaves the reader seeking an interpretation of this important prophecy regarding the nation of Israel ("your people" = Daniel's people = the Jews = nation of Israel) totally in the dark. And yet this is Challies top rated commentary on this book of prophecy!

## CRITIQUE OF [Ligonier's "BEST" Commentaries on Daniel](#)

**Daniel (1949) - E. J. Young** — This is Keith Mathison's #1 rated commentary on the prophetic book of Daniel.

**Rosscup** (in his critique of Young's "The Messianic Prophecies of Daniel") notes that Young "is **weak in eschatology**, as shown by his treatment of Daniel 9:24–27 and the "stone" in chapter 2." ([Commentaries For Biblical Expositors](#))

**COMMENT** - In a book filled with eschatology, it is difficult to see how a work that is "weak in eschatology" would be deserving of one of the best commentaries on the prophetic book of Daniel! On Daniel 12:1 Young does associate this event with Jeremiah 30:7 "the time of Jacob's distress." He also associates "This period of severe affliction (with) the time, times and half a time of Dan. 7:25." Young however makes no attempt to associate this event with Jesus' description of the "great tribulation" in Mt 24:21. He then goes on to quote Calvin who relates this prophecy to the church, despite the fact that Daniel 12:1 **literally** twice states "**your people**" in addressing Daniel! One has to completely jettison a literal reading of the text to spiritualize **your people** as the Church and not as what it clearly is in context, the nation of Israel. This is just one example of the "weak eschatology" to which Rosscup refers.

**Iain M. Duguid – Daniel** (Reformed Expository Commentary). - See [comments above](#).

**Longman, Tremper III. Daniel (NIV Application Commentary)**. - Mathison mentions this commentary in the runner up list. - See [comments above](#).

## LIST OF THE BEST COMMENTARIES ON THE BOOK OF DANIEL

From the preceding discussion, it should be clear that the Acts 17:11+ Berean reader will need to be very discerning when he or she consults a commentary on the book of Daniel. This caveat also applies to the books I have listed below! They are not listed in any particular order. They are not "scholarly" and filled with word studies, etc, but they tend to focus primarily on the meaning of the prophecies in Daniel. You will also note that there is clearly a bias toward works which take a more literal approach to prophetic passages in Daniel. Note that several of these works can be BORROWED from the library at archive.org.

[Daniel, the Man and His Visions](#) By: Charles L Feinberg - BORROW

**Rosscup** - A quick-moving, simple dispensational work aimed at laymen by an astute Hebrew Christian

scholar who has taught more than forty years, been Dean of Talbot Seminary, and authored many books. Usually the work does not take up problem areas in verses (except some aspects of more obvious ones, at times, as "Son of Man" in 7:13, 14, = Jesus Christ, using mostly New Testament evidence, and the first sixty-nine "weeks" in 9:25, 26 come to A. D. 32, he says). ([Commentaries For Biblical Expositors](#))

**Cyril Barber** - Written for laypeople, this study adequately expounds the purpose and prophecies of Daniel. Recommended

**[Daniel, Decoder of Dreams](#)** by Donald Campbell - BORROW

**Rosscup** - A popular, brief premillennial exposition of Daniel by an expositor who is a master of synthesis. Campbell taught Bible exposition at Dallas Seminary for many years. He illustrates vividly and gears the work for lay people. ([Commentaries For Biblical Expositors](#))

**Cyril Barber** - Thorough in interpretation and practical in application, this treatment of Daniel is ideal for use with laypeople. Premillennial.

**[Daniel and the Latter Days](#)** by Robert Duncan Culver - BORROW

**Rosscup** - In a very systematic and thorough way, the author delves into Daniel to compare the amillennial, premillennial and postmillennial interpretations. He defends the premillennial view and presents several arguments to show that it is superior. It is a penetrating work and very valuable to have. In an appendix, he gives seven arguments in support of his view that the new heavens and new earth will come at the beginning of the millennium and not at the end. Many will disagree that the Bible supports this idea (**ED: I STRONGLY DISAGREE WITH THIS INTERPRETATION**). ([Commentaries For Biblical Expositors](#))

**[The Prophecies of Daniel](#)** - Lehman Strauss (1969) - BORROW

**Cyril Barber** - Expository Messages on Daniel's prophecy. Thoroughly researched, premillennial, evangelical.

**[A Commentary on Daniel](#)** by Wood, Leon James - BORROW

**Cyril Barber** - This is a fascinating and enlightening commentary. It is also an accurate and reliable one. Wood expounds the historic setting of the book, unfolds its prophetic message, and provides his readers with fresh insights into the text. Recommended. Premillennial

**[Exploring the Book of Daniel](#)** - John Phillips and Jerry Vines - BORROW

**Cyril Barber** - Deals cogently with the life experiences of Daniel as well as "the times of the Gentiles." Focuses on Daniel's commitment to holiness, and treats fairly the risks as well as the rewards of righteous living. Pastors as well as lay persons will find this work helpful.

**Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation** - John F Walvoord (ONLINE)

**Cyril Barber** - Fully abreast of the latest archaeological material. Emphasizes the genuineness of the prophet and his writings, and provides a clear interpretation of the book. Thorough, well outlined and well documented. Premillennial.

**[The Handwriting on the Wall](#)** - David Jeremiah and C C Carlson - BORROW

**Cyril Barber** - A timely, relevant exposition of the Book of Daniel. Explains his prophecies in clear, understandable terms. From Daniel's example Jeremiah shows readers how to live faithfully each day in spite of the pressures exerted by one's pagan surroundings

**[Daniel: Standing firm for God](#)** - Gene Getz - BORROW

**John Walvoord** - "This exposition of the book of Daniel, more so than any other commentary which I have read, is distinguished by its practical application and the reduction of difficult doctrines to explanations that anyone can understand. The challenge to us to be completely obedient to God in the most difficult circumstances is the outstanding message of the book."

**Cyril Barber** - Thorough in interpretation and practical in application, this treatment of Daniel is ideal for use with laypeople. Premillennial.

**Expository Sermons on the Book of Daniel.** 4 volumes - W A Criswell

Click for his sermon series on Daniel

**Rosscup** - The volumes in this series involve Criswell's preaching through Daniel at the First Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas. The first volume is particularly helpful on introductory issues and provides a popular yet competent answer to critics who have dated Daniel late, denied certain statements of the book, etc. Unlike many Southern Baptists, he firmly teaches a premillennial, dispensational view (cf. also his works on Matthew and Revelation). Criswell has fairly normative dispensational views on most passages but leaves the impression that "Ancient of Days" and "Son of Man" in Chapter 7 are both the preincarnate Christ, rather than God the Father and Christ the Son as evangelicals typically hold. The volumes have many practically stimulating statements, but the exposition is sweeping, not detailed. ([Commentaries For Biblical Expositors](#))

**For multiple additional conservative resources** (generally literal) **see Daniel Commentaries.**