

## Daniel (November 17)

### Reading Daniel

He sits up suddenly, drenched with sweat. His heart pounds as he tries to catch his breath. The events of his dream seemed so real and yet so very strange. Though moats, walls, and hundreds of guards surround his bedchamber, they cannot secure him from his dreams.

The prophet Daniel recounts dreams of kings and kingdoms. He shows how no ruler on earth is out of reach of the God of heaven. The hand of the Most High measures, weights, and moves the hearts of men for the sake of his people. By grace, he establishes an everlasting kingdom through his Anointed One, Jesus, the Christ.

### Author and Date

The book mentions Daniel as its author in several passages. The widely-held view that the book of Daniel is largely fictional rests mainly on the modern philosophical assumption that long-rang predictive prophecy is impossible. Therefore all fulfilled predictions in Daniel, it is claimed, had to have been composed no earlier than the second century BC, after the fulfillments had taken place. But objective evidence excludes this hypothesis.

### Theme

The theological theme of the book is God's sovereignty: "The Most High God is sovereign over the kingdoms of men" (Daniel 5:21). Daniel's visions always show God as triumphant. The climax of his sovereignty will be found at the end of time: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign forever and ever" (Revelation 11:15).

### Literary Form

The book is made up primarily of historical narrative (found mainly in chapters 1-6) and apocalyptic (revelatory) material (found mainly in chapters 7-12). The latter may be defined as symbolic, visionary, prophetic literature, usually composed during oppressive conditions and being chiefly eschatological in theological content (dealing with the end times). Apocalyptic literature is primarily a literature of encouragement to the people of God.

### Blessings for Readers

As you read Daniel, take to heart the example of this great leader of God's people who devoted himself to God's word amid the disappointments and temptations of exile. Beware of over interpreting the symbolism of Daniel's prophecies, a mistake that has led many people into error. Instead, cling to this general message: your God reigns, and he works to deliver you from evil, especially in the gift of his Son, Jesus, the Anointed One.