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The Blessing of Dani'el
1: 17-21

The Blessing of Dani'el DIG: Why did Dani'el and his three friends end up passing their oral examination and deemed to be superior to all the other magi of the kingdom in "wisdom and understanding?" How did Dani'el end up showing his true loyalty to ADONAI, and to his three fellows Israelites?

REFLECT: How has God blessed you this year? When have you realized that God enabled you to achieve far more than you could have humanly expected? How has the Lord shown His faithfulness to you? How do you react when He does? Do you tend to give the credit to Him, or do you tend to take credit for it yourself?

The focus of this chapter is not simply the faithfulness of Dani'el and his friends to God,
it is also points to God's faithfulness to them.

God's special blessing (1:17): The unseen hand of **ADONAI** directed the whole course of events and not only gave physical health to **Dani'el** and **his three friends** (**to see link click Al – Dani'el's Devotion to God**), but also intellectual strength to **His** faithful **servants**. As **ADONAI** blessed **Dani'el** and **his friends'** obedience not to defile **themselves** with unkosher food, **He** also blessed the education **they** received in **Babylon**. **To these four young men God gave** (Hebrew: *nathan*, meaning *to give*) **knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Dani'el could understand visions and dreams of all kinds (1:17).** This verse summarizes the development of **the four Jewish captives** during **their three-year** training period. **Dani'el's** particular gift of **understanding visions and dreams** was especially appropriate to **his** need in a land where such was expected of **magi**, and the **God** who would be the **Source** of all knowledge would also give discernment to distinguish the true from the false. Thus, there was no need to fear that the study of the **Babylonian** or any other culture would result **their** conversion to an alien religion.

But far more was at stake than **their** personal reputation or even **their** personal faith. As representatives of **the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**, **they** needed to prove, in **Babylon's** highly competitive setting, that **the fear of ADONAI is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10)**. High intelligence and hard work alone did not account for **their** success, but **their wisdom** was a gift from **ADONAI (Colossians 1:9, 2:9-10)**. The specific gift given to **Dani'el** was to make **him** not only a trusted advisor to **king Nebuchadnezzar**, but also a channel of revelation, as the next chapter begins to prove.[33]

The king's examination (1:18-20): At the end of the three-year training period set by the king to bring them into his service, and Ashpenaz (1:3) presented them to Nebuchadnezzar (1:18). We don't know how many **students** went through the entire course of study, but it's interesting that **Nebuchadnezzar himself** took the time to examine **them**. Since the new graduates were to become **his** personal advisers, **the king** wanted to be sure **he** was getting the best. By adding exceptionally intelligent new men to **his** staff, **the king** would be assured of getting the best counsel available. **He** was familiar with **the** older **advisers** and possibly not too happy with all of **them (2:5-13)**. Was **he** suspicious of a palace intrigue? As we shall see later, the addition and the promotion of these four **Jewish young men** created jealousy and resentment among **the advisers** and **they** tried to get rid of **Dani'el** (see **Dm – The Conspiracy of the Royal Administrators**). As older **men**, **they** resented **their** youth; as **Babylonians**, **they** resented **their** race; and as experienced **servants**, they envied **their** great ability and knowledge.

The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Dani'el, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. The king not only questioned the graduates, but he also *compared* one with another, and in this way ended up with the very best. **So they entered the king's service. In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them. He found them ten times better than all the magi** (Hebrew: *chartom*, refers to a magician or wise man, often associated with the practice of interpreting dreams, or performing magic), **and enchanters** (Hebrew: *ashshaph*, refers to a class or wise men who were often consulted for their ability to interpret dreams, signs, and omens, and as such, were key figures in the king's advisory team) **in his whole kingdom (1:19-20).** Of course, both of these were forbidden by the Torah **(Deuteronomy 18:9-13)**. **Dani'el** and **his three friends** had to work alongside those **magi, enchanters, sorcerers** (Hebrew: *kashaph*, refers to the use of drugs, potions, or spells and is associated with "sorcery" or "witchcraft")**,** and yet **they** remained pure and gave a powerful testimony for **the LORD**.[34]

The extent of Dani'el's ministry (1:21): And Dani'el remained there until the first year of Cyrus king of Persia (see the commentary on **Dani'el Ag – Cyrus and Darius**)**.** It is important to note that **Dani'el** did not die or end **his** career at that time, but continued on until **the Medo-Persian Empire** was established. **The first year of Cyrus** was the **year** in which the decree was issued that enabled **the Jews** to return home (see the commentary on **Ezra-Nehamiah Ai – The Decree of Cyrus**), some **seventy years** after the time when **Dani'el** and **his friends** were taken into exile (see the commentary on **Jeremiah Gu – Seventy Years of Imperial Babylonian Rule**). Thus, we are remined that the faithfulness of **ADONAI** proved sufficient for **Dani'el** throughout the entire time of the exile. **Babylonian kings** came and went. Indeed, **the Babylonians themselves** were replaced as the ruling world power by **the Medo-Persians** in the person of **Cyrus** (see **Az – Second Empire: Chest and Arms of Silver**), yet **YHVH** sustained **His** faithful **servant** the whole time. In the same way, **He** is able to preserve us throughout the trials and tribulations that we face, no matter how intense they may be or how long they may last. When the world does its worst, **God** does **His** best, and **His** faithfulness is enough to see us through.

God's faithfulness in our own salvation: As Ian Duguid relates in his commentary on **Dani'el**, there is one final note that we must not miss in all of this. The reality for most of us is that when we look at our lives, we find we are *not* like **Dani'el** and **his three friends**. We are far more like the nameless multitude who

were deported along with **Dani'el**, who adopted foreign **names**, ate **the king's food**, and became thoroughly **Babylonian**. In many respects, we have been assimilated into the world system in which we live, and our futures are mortgaged to it. Therefore, if the message of this book is simply, "Be like **Dani'el** and all will turn out OK," then we might as well stop reading right now. The more we get to know **Dani'el**, the more we come to realize that we are not like **him** at all.

The good news of the Gospel, however, is not simply that **ADONAI** is faithful to those who are faithful to **Him**. It is that a **Savior** has come to deliver faithless and compromised people like us. Our salvation rests not on our ability to remain undefiled by the world, but rather on the pure and undefiled offering that **Yeshua** has provided in our place. **Messiah** came voluntarily into this world, with all of its pains and trials. **He** endured far greater temptations and sufferings than **Dani'el** did, or more than we ever will **(Hebrews 4:15)**. Yet **He** remained entirely faithful and pure until the very end, **without spot or blemish**, and has transferred *all* of **His righteousness** to the spiritual bank account of those who trust in **Him** by faith **(First Peter 1:19)**. What is more, **Yeshua** has already returned from **His** time in "exile" and now **sits at the right hand of the Father** in heaven **(Psalm 110:1)**. **He** has prepared a home for us there, and has given us **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** as a downpayment, **guaranteeing** that one day we will be with **Him** there as **His people** (see the commentary on **Second Corinthians An – God's Seal of Approval**). The cross is the *means* by which **Ha'Shem's** faithfulness redeems the unfaithful; the resurrection and ascension are the *guarantee* of our inheritance in heaven.

Remind yourself often of this Gospel. Fix your eyes on **Yeshua Messiah** crucified, raised, and exalted. **He** has not only prepared the route home; **He** *is* the route home. Trust in **Him** and ask **Him** to work in you a true faithfulness. Ask **Him** to put you in places where you can be a blessing to your community. Be a breath of heavenly wisdom in your home, your school, your workplace. Be constantly dependent upon **His** sanctifying work, looking to **Him** to keep you faithful, not to your best efforts to "Be a **Dani'el**." Finally, long for the day when **His** heavenly Kingdom will invade this earth and bring the fullness of your inheritance.[35]

*Dear heavenly **Father**, praise **You** that **You** are always faithful and **Your** steadfast love is always watching over me. **You** are with me, wherever I go **(Hebrews 13:5c)**. It is so comforting that **You** are never too busy to listen to me, for **You** abide within those who trust in **You (John 14:23).** Though sometimes close friends are busy, or sleeping and cannot talk, **You** are always right there to hear, listen and*

to guide me. ***Behold, the Keeper of Isra'el neither slumbers nor sleeps. (Psalms 121:4).*** *What a joy that you are always faithful to your promises! You have promised to live with those who love you.* ***Yeshua answered and said to him: If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our dwelling with him (John 14:23).***

To those who receive ***You*** *as their* ***Lord*** *and* ***Savior (Romans 10:9-11)****,* ***You*** *promise to give them eternal life.* ***The Father*** *always opens the door wide, and* ***You*** *promise to make those who trust you to be your child.* ***But whoever did receive Him, those trusting in His Name, to these He gave the right to become children of God (John 1:12).*** *What a secure and trustworthy hope it is, for me to look forward to living with* ***You*** *forever and ever in complete joy and peace in* ***Your*** *heavenly kingdom. Though there are many trials and problems here on this earth, someday soon the problems and tears will all be gone****. For I consider the sufferings of this present time not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed to us (Romans 8:18).***

Replacing earth's trials will be a life so perfect that I cannot really comprehend it. ***He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more. Nor shall there be mourning or crying or pain any longer, for the former things have passed away (Revelation 21:4).*** *Thank* ***You*** *so much for being such a wonderful* ***Father****, who promises an eternal life. When trials come, I can follow the example of* ***Dani'el and his three friends*** *and keep my eyes on the eternal and secure future of life in heaven with You. I love* ***You,*** *and* ***You*** *have blessed me so much. In* ***Messiah Yeshua's*** *holy* ***Name*** *and power of* ***His*** *resurrection. Amen*