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Dani'el's Prayer

2: 17-23

Dani'el prayer DIG: Does Dani'el's personal psalm in verses 2:19b-23 express personal faith? Group prayer? Or God's special revelation? Why do you think so? What personal gifts did Dani'el praise God for? What does that say about God? About Dani'el? Why did Dani'el particularly praise God's wisdom and might?

REFLECT: Prayer sustained Dani'el and his three friends while they were exiled in Babylon. In what ways has prayer sustained you when you were in a difficult situation? How does your prayer life reflect Dani'el's praise and thanksgiving? And His friend's powerful intercession? Who can you pray for and help this week?

ADONAI begins to reveal to Dani'el the initial revelation regarding the Times of the Gentiles (see [Ao](#) - The Times of the Gentiles). He provides an initial overview of the four empires that will govern this period. As the book progresses, God's revelation becomes increasingly specific, reaching their climax in Chapter 12.

The petition (2:17-18a): Then Dani'el returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah (meaning, *beloved of the LORD*), Mishael (meaning, *who is as God*) and Azariah (meaning, *ADONAI is my help*). Here they are given their Hebrew names, rather than the more familiar **Babylonian names: **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (2:17)**. Perhaps this is because they will need to remember the grace of **ADONAI**, uniqueness, and willingness to help **His people** in distress - attributes to which these names refer.**



He urged them to plead for **mercy** from the **God of heaven** that **they** might not be executed with the rest of **the Babylonian wise men (2:18a)**, who worshipped the stars (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ, to see link click [Av](#) - The Visit of the Magi). In making this request, **they** were echoing **Solomon's prayer** at the dedication of **the Temple** in **First Kings 8:50**, that in the times to come **ADONAI** would cause **their** captors to show **His** exiled **people mercy** (*rechem*, the Hebrew equivalent of the Aramaic word used here). In other words, in **their prayer they** pleaded with **God** to be faithful in **His Word** and to deliver **them** in **their** hour of need. If **He** didn't reveal **the dream** to **them**, then there was nowhere else for **them** to turn. No mere human wisdom could deliver **them** from **their** predicament. It is particularly amazing that they echoed **Solomon's prayer** at this point, for **the Temple** for which **Solomon prayed** was then in ruins, abandoned by **the LORD** and destroyed by **the Babylonians**. Yet even in the complete absence of earthly signs of **God's** favor, **they** nonetheless trusted in **His** bare word of promise to be **their God** in the midst of **their** distress, no matter where **they** might find **themselves**.**

Trusting in **ADONAI** alone like this is never a comfortable situation to be in, for by definition it means that all human means of support have been knocked away. It means that we can turn. Yet who could be better to turn to in the time of trial? Who

is like **Ha’Shem** as a **Helper** and a **Deliverer**. **God** is both faithful and able to support us in our hour of need and to deliver us from our great distress. As we will see as we go further in the book of **Dani’el**, **He** doesn’t always deliver us from our trials in the way that **He** delivers **Dani’el** and **his three friends** here. Sometimes **He** delivers us by walking through the fiery trial with us, rather than saving us out of it (**Hebrews 11**). Yet, **the LORD** is always faithful to **His Word**, and whenever we find ourselves at our wit’s end, it is always a good strategy to gather our friends and flee to **God**, pleading the promises of **His Word** and trusting in **His** faithfulness.⁵⁶

The revelation (2:18b-19): Matters that were hidden from **Babylon’s wise men** were revealed to **Dani’el and his three friends**, who continued to **pray** until **God** showed **them Nebuchadnezzar’s dream**. Throughout this book, **Dani’el and his friends** are seen as **men** of faith and **prayer**. **They** were far from home, but by faith **they** could “look toward” Jerusalem and the Temple to claim **Solomon’s** promise of **mercy**. **The God of heaven** would hear **their prayers** and answer **them concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon (2:18b)**. The word “secret” (*raz*, the Hebrew equivalent of the Aramaic word used here) is used eight times in this chapter and is the equivalent of the Greek word *mysterion*, or **mystery**, which is used twenty-eight times in the B’rit Chadashah. Generally, a **mystery** is something beyond human comprehension. **Dani’el** “saw” a vision of what **the king** had seen in **his dream**, and realized what it meant.⁵⁷

The mystery of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream and its interpretation were not revealed to **Dani’el** when **he prayed**, but sometime **during the night in a vision (2:19a)**. The verse draws a noteworthy contrast between **Nebuchadnezzar** and **Dani’el**. While **the Babylonian emperor** had **a dream**, **Dani’el** received a divine **vision**. **Rabbis like Rashi and the author of the Zohar (a group of books including commentary on the mystical aspects of the Torah) identify the revealer of the dream as Gabriel.**⁵⁸

The praise (2:19b-23): Then **Dani’el** praised the **God of heaven**. In this **prayer**, several things are revealed about **ADONAI**. **He said, “Praise be to the Name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are His. He changes times and seasons; he deposes kings and raises up others. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning. He reveals deep and hidden things; He knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with Him. I**

thank and praise you, God of my ancestors: You have given me wisdom and power, You have made known to me what we asked of You, You have made known to us the dream of the king.”

As Ian Duguid relates in his commentary on **Dani’el**, **ADONAI** alone possesses the power to control world events. The future does not rest in the hands of the **Babylonian gods**, to whom **the diviners** looked. **Their gods** were empty **idols**, with no more power to either bless or to curse **their** followers (see **Isaiah 19 - Bel Bows Down, Nebo Stoops Low**). **They** cannot affect the future, for **they themselves** are **blind, dumb, and impotent (Isaiah 44:18)**. For all the pomp and show of **the Babylonian diviners**, **their** claims to anticipate the future were empty and void. **YHVH** is the One who raises up **kings** and **deposes them. He** sets the **times** and **seasons** for **everything under the sun** (see **the Life of Solomon: Ecclesiastes 3 - All in Good Time**).

Yet, **Isra’el’s God** not only controls the future, **He reveals** the future to **His** faithful servants. **He** gives **wisdom** to the wise and reveals the mysteries of the future, as **He** has done in this case with **Dani’el**. This was exactly what **the Babylonian diviners** thought was impossible, because, as **they** put it: **the gods do not dwell with men (2:11)**. However, **Isra’el’s God**, even though **He** is superior in every way and exalted high above the heavens, **does dwell with the humble and contrite of spirit (Isaiah 57:15)**. **The One** who governs the future made it known to **Dani’el** by revealing both **the dream** and **its interpretation**.

This assertion that **the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob** is **the one** who possesses all power and **wisdom** was an important reminder for **Dani’el’s hearers**. As **exiles** in **Babylon**, **they** were surrounded by false religions that claimed to offer access to the hidden mysteries of the universe. The events of this chapter exposed the emptiness of these claims: there is only one **God** who reveals the future, because there is only one **God** who controls the future. However outwardly impressive the “wisdom” and “power” of the world may seem; it has no ultimate influence. **Babylon’s gods** were a façade and a lie.⁵⁹

The same message is important in our own day and time. We too are surrounded by the power and wisdom of the world. Sometimes it is seemingly “religious” and promises us enlightenment and deeper experience of life through New Age meditation or practices borrowed from Eastern religions. Sometimes it comes to us in pseudo “Christian” thinking like the “Word of Faith” Movement, which is really the belief in the “force of faith.” It is believed words can be used to manipulate the

faith-force, and thus actually create what they believe Scripture promises (health and wealth). Laws supposedly governing the faith-force are said to operate independently of **God’s** sovereign will and that **God Himself** is subject to these laws. This is nothing short of idolatry, turning our faith – and by extension ourselves – into god.⁶⁰

At other times, it comes to us in secular forms, promising power and success through applying its strategies in business and in personal relationships. It often presents impressive credentials and, like **the Babylonian diviners**, comes to us strongly endorsed by society in which we live. Outwardly, the wisdom of the world looks very impressive, with its qualifications and influence in high places in our society. Yet at the root, the wisdom of the world is always an illusion. It neither understands the true fallen nature of humanity, nor real presence of **the Ruach Ha’Kodesh** in this world. How can it, when it denies the existence or ignores the relevance of **the One true God** who created and controls all things? **His power works all things according to His will (Romans 8:28). His wisdom is the true source of insight and skillful living: The fear of ADONAI is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the holy One is understanding (Proverbs 9:10).**⁶¹

*Dear heavenly **Father**, praise **You** that **You** are always faithful. When I call **You** are always listening. **You** hear and **You** respond with the best answer. **You** see the whole situation and the desires of men’s hearts so **You** know how best to answer. Sometimes **You** say “Yes,” sometimes “No,” and sometimes **You** may say “Wait”, but **Your** answer is always the very best. In **Dani’el’s** life-or-death situation, you responded by revealing the answer to **Dani’el** in **a dream**.*

***You** see and understand things that I can’t see, nor can I understand the big picture of my own request; nevertheless, **Your** answer is the most loving and wisest answer to each prayer. **Your** love and wisdom gave a “no” to David’s prayer for the life of his and Bathsheba’s infant son (**Samuel 12:20**). His response is a good model for me to follow. David trusted in **God’s** great goodness and steadfast love and he worshiped (**Samuel 12:20**). He did not become bitter or turn away from **the LORD**. **His** response to “no” was deeper worship and surrender. But **You** answered “Yes,” to many prayers, including Hannah’s prayer for a child (**First Samuel 1-2:21**) and Joshua’s prayers to help in battles (**Joshua 11:16**). You always say “yes” when someone is truly sorry for their sin (**First John 1:9**) and comes humbly in repentance to you (**Second Peter 3:9**). Paul was given a “yes” when he prayed for forgiveness (**Acts 9:10-22**). How wonderful that **You** can always be trusted to*



*listen to me and to give the best and wisest answer. **You** are a wonderful heavenly **Father!** In **Messiah Yeshua's** holy **Name** and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*