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How to Wait for God

8: 27

Dani'el's vision had a profound impact on **him**, saying: **I was worn out and lay sick for several days. Then I got up and went about the king's business; but I was overwhelmed by the vision and still couldn't understand it.**



Dani'el 8 is a **vision** about waiting. It is a **vision** of an end that is not imminent, at least not for **Dani'el** and not for many generations of readers since then. But the very act of waiting is given meaning by the certainty that at the right time, the time of **God's** choosing, **Messiah** will come **on the clouds** to bring history to its conclusion (**to see link click [Ao](#) - The Times of the Gentiles**). Gentile believers have a variety of expectations of when that return will take place. Some teach that we will have to go through the Great Tribulation, some say **Yeshua** will come back in the middle of the Great Tribulation, while others think it won't be until after **the time of Jacob's trouble**. But when we approach the Scriptures from a Messianic perspective, and look at **God's appointed times**, it becomes clear to us.

Each of the festivals of **ADONAI** point to **Yeshua Messiah**. The first four festivals point to **His** First Coming. The **Passover** points to **Messiah's** death (see the commentary on **Leviticus [Dy](#) - Pesach**); **Unleavened Bread** points to the sinlessness of **His** sacrifice (see **Leviticus [Dz](#) - Hag ha'Matzot**); **the feast of**

Firstfruits points to **His** resurrection (see **Leviticus Ea - Rasheet**); and **Pentecost** points to the birth of **His** Church (see **Leviticus Ec - Hag Shavu'ot**). Then there is a four-month interval in **Leviticus 23:22** that pictures a time of labor in the fields in preparation for the final harvest of the summer and before the fall harvest. This verse is not related to any feast, but pictures the Dispensation of Grace that we now live (see my commentary on **Hebrews Bp - The Dispensation of Grace**).

The last three **festivals** in the second cycle of festivals also come close together, even closer than those of the first cycle of **feasts**. In fact, they all come within two weeks of each other. The last three **feasts** of the second cycle are to be fulfilled by the program of the Second Coming. As **Jesus** says **Himself** at the end of the Bible: **Yes, I am coming quickly (Revelation 22:20). Amen. Come, Lord Yeshua.** **The festival of Trumpets** points to **the Rapture** (see **Leviticus Ee - Rosh ha'Shanah**); then, after **the Rapture**, come **the Day of Atonement** (see **Leviticus Ef - Yom Kippur**), which points to the Great Tribulation; then, after the last three days of the Great Tribulation, **the Lord** returns (**Hosea 6:1-3**); finally, we celebrate **the festival of Booths** (see **Leviticus Eg - Sukkot**). Therefore, because **Rosh ha'Shanah** comes BEFORE **Yom Kippur**, we can be confident that we will not have to endure the wrath of the Great Tribulation. We will be in heaven with **the Lord** when that happens.

Dani'el tells us that he could not understand the vision, that he was overpowered and devastated by the vision, and that at the end of a period of sickness for several days he got up and went about the king's business. Each of these three aspects of Dani'el's response to his vision should help us shape our waiting for the times of Gentiles to end.

Living with partial understanding: Dani'el tells us that **he could not understand the vision**. This statement might not seem very surprising. After all, the historical events described in the dream were many years in the future in **Dani'el's** day, and interpreters still struggle to comprehend the intricacies of what **he** saw. Certainly a lack of comprehension is what most readers experience when they first encounter these **visions**.

However, when we think more deeply about it, it should strike us as noteworthy that **Dani'el** is unable to comprehend the meaning of **his** own **vision**. This is the same **Dani'el** who alone was able to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dreams in **Dani'el 2** and **4**, of whom Nebuchadnezzar said: **I know that the spirit of the gods [or**

God] is in you, and no mystery is too difficult for you (4:9a). In **Chapter 5**, when no one else could read **the handwriting on the wall**, the queen mother said confidently of **Dani’el**, “**He was found to have a keen mind and knowledge and understanding, and also the ability to interpret dreams, explain riddles and solve difficult problems. Call for Dani’el, and he will tell you what the writing means (5:12).** **Dani’el** read and interpreted without difficulty the mysterious writing that had troubled **Belshazzar** and **his nobles**. If anyone could understand those apocalyptic **visions**, surely it would have been **Dani’el!**

Yet, in these latter chapters of **Dani’el**, we are told twice that **he** was unable to understand **the visions (8:27 and 12:8)**. This is especially remarkable since **the visions** and their interpretations were explicitly given to **Dani’el** to understand (**7:16-17, 8:15, 9:22, and 10:4**). Indeed, we are told that what distinguishes **the wicked** from **the wise** is precisely the fact that **none of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand (12:10)**. Since **Dani’el** is **the wisest of the wise**, how could **he** not have **understood them?**

So which is it? Did **Dani’el** understand **the visions** or did **he** not **understand them?** I think the answer is “both.” Clearly, there were aspects of **the visions** that **he understood**; yet at the same time, no matter how hard **he** tried, there were also aspects of **the visions** that **he** didn’t **understand**. As **Peter** put it: **The prophets, who prophesied about this gift of deliverance that was meant for you, pondered and inquired diligently about it. They were trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of the Messiah in them was referring in predicting the Messiah’s sufferings and the glorious things to follow. It was revealed to them that their service when they spoke about these things was not for their own benefit, but for yours. And these same things have now been proclaimed to you by those who communicated the Good News to you through the Ruach Ha’Kodesh sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things” (1 Peter 1:10-12)! As **Peter** suggests, some of those things that were mysterious to **Dani’el** are now clearer to us. However, at the same time, there are aspects of **his visions** that we should expect to remain mysterious to us still. If, as **Peter** says, some of these things are mysterious **even to angels**, then perhaps it should not be surprising if they never become clear to ordinary mortals like us.**

This balance between what may confidently be understood and what must remain for now somewhat hazy is important to maintain. There are some things that

ADONAI has revealed clearly in **His Word**, and other things that remain concealed from us. **Things which are hidden belong to ADONAI our God. But the things that have been revealed belong to us and our children forever, so that we observe all of His Word (Deuteronomy 29:29).** We should take comfort in **God's** sure and certain control of each day of history, all the way to **His** return. Yet, we should be properly humble in our ability to predict when that will happen.

Overwhelmed by the coming judgment: Next, **Dani'el** said that **he was overwhelmed by the vision for several days.** This is similar to **his** response to the other **visions he** received (**7:15** and **28, 10:16**). Why did he feel so overwhelmed by **the visions he** received? It wasn't simply by their breathtaking scope and dizzying scale; rather, it was their message of coming judgment and destruction on **God's own people** by **Antiochus Epiphanes** in **the near historical future** and by **the antichrist** in **the far eschatological future.** The prophet identified with **his people** as well as with **ADONAI**, and even though the judgment that **Dani'el** saw lay many years in the future, **he** could not simply pronounce it upon them from a comfortable distance. On the contrary, **he** physically identified with **his people** in **their** future suffering so much so, that it actually made **him sick.**

The prophet's identification with those for whom **his** message was intended is an important model for us as we wait for the **Messiah's** return. In view of our expectation of the Second Coming, it can be easy for us to become isolated from the society around us. In fact, the more convinced we are of the imminence of our **Lord's** return, the more isolated we become. Our friends become a "holy huddle," excluding the lost. But **Dani'el** calls us not merely to condemn the lost world around us, but to be personally devastated by the prospect that they may spend all eternity in hell. Compassion for lost souls demands nothing less from us. If we have **Dani'el's** heart for **his people**, we can never be content with our own salvation. Instead, we need to have a passion that our unsaved family members, our neighbors, our friends, the prodigals and the wanderers, and indeed the whole world should come to know and worship **the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the King of kings and the Lord of lords.**

Busy about the King's business: Finally, **Dani'el** wasn't simply devastated at the prospect of the coming judgment of **his people.** At the end of **his** time of **sickness, he got up and went about the king's business.** This is a remarkable statement, given the fact that **the king** at the time was **Belshazzar.** In spite of the wickedness of the civil authorities of the day, **Dani'el** did not isolate **himself** from

the culture around **him**, but continued faithfully in **his** service to the pagan Babylonian society. **His vision** that the future belonged to the Kingdom of **God** (see [Cf - The Kingdom of Messiah](#)) did not send **him** off to hide in a corner, but continued to drive **him** out in the service of **his** community.

Dani'el's quiet commitment to do the work of **the king**, even in a pagan culture, shows the value of the work that we must do for our **King**, while we wait (**Matthew 25:14-30**). Here on earth we find ourselves perpetually in exile. This is not our ultimate home (**Hebrews 13:14-16**); nonetheless, this is the culture in which **God** has placed us, so that we can be **light and salt in a rotting, dark world** (**Matthew 5:13-16**). Perhaps we should recognize that even as **Dani'el** served **his** earthly master, **King Belshazzar**, **he** understood that at the same time **he** was **about the business** of **his** heavenly **Master, ADONAI Himself**. It is no coincidence that having warned **His apostles** that **the day and hour of His return were unknown**, **Yeshua** went on to tell a parable about **the master who went away for a long time and then returned unexpectedly, only to find his servants** slack in **their** duties (**Matthew 24:45-51**). We need to **be** busy **about the King's business**, which means serving our culture with all the gifts and abilities that **God** has given us.²⁴⁵

*Dear heavenly **Father**, praise you that you are so infinitinally wise and that your timing for events is always perfect! Waiting for humans often causes frustration and impatience; but that is not how you feel. You see the end from the beginning, you see things that are still future to humans, as if they have already happened. Becoming mature and growing in faith is very important in the life of a believer. Waiting is a tool you use (**Romans 5:4**) to perfect me to become more mature in **You**. **These trials are so that the true metal of your faith (far more valuable than gold, which perishes though refined by fire) may come to light in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Messiah Yeshua (1 Peter 1:7)**. What comfort it is to know that waiting is not because of **Your** inability, for **You** are always totally capable and always sovereign; waiting is due to **Your** wisdom to better prepare me for the circumstances that **You** have for me in the future.*

***You** know the future and **You** give me many choices, including learning to rely closely on **You** while waiting. Then I will be fully equipped and able to handle whatever lies ahead of me. **You** use **Your Word** to teach and to train me. **So that the person belonging to God may be capable, fully equipped for every good deed (Second Timothy 3:17)**. Help me to wait patiently for **Your** perfect*



*timing and grow in maturity. **Now may the God of shalom . . . make you complete in every good thing to do His will, accomplishing in us what is pleasing in His sight, through Messiah Yeshua. To Him be the glory forever and ever (Hebrews 13:20a-21). In Messiah Yeshua's holy Name and power of His resurrection. Amen***