

# Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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## Revelation and Understanding Come From God

by Dan Trygg

“God gave these four young men knowledge and understanding and intelligence in every kind of literature and skill.

And to Daniel also He gave understanding in every rhēma-word, in vision and dreams and in all wisdom.” Daniel 1:17 LXX

“This logos-word is through the decree of the angelic-watchers, and the rhēma-word is a command of the holy ones, in order that the living may know that the Most High is Lord over the kingdoms of mankind, and bestows it on whom He wishes, and sets over it the lowliest (‘out-from-nothingness’) of men.”

Daniel 4:17 LXX

“This is the interpretation of the rhēma-word: ‘MENE’ -- God measured your kingdom and finished it.” Daniel 5:26 LXX

“At this point the revelation ended. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts were greatly alarming me and my face grew pale, but I kept the rhēma-word to myself.”

Daniel 7:28 LXX

“At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued, and I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed; so consider the rhēma-word and gain understanding of the vision.”

Daniel 9:23 LXX

We have been looking at the phenomenon of rhēma-words, personal words or revelations from the Holy Spirit. Typically, these are specific direction, counsel or instruction from God for a particular situation. Logos-words tend to be more about the content, message or meaning, while the emphasis of a rhēma-word is the personal nature of the revelation in a given circumstance. Last time, we looked at some of the passages in the Greek Septuagint translation (LXX) of the OT. This is a significant resource for understanding the meaning of the NT Greek words, since the Septuagint was the commonly used scriptures of Jews outside of Judea in the first century, and served as the Bible of the first century church. The NT writings we have in our Bibles were written primarily in the last half of the first century, and were simply read alongside of and in addition to the LXX scriptures, as they became available. So, as is true for many NT Greek words, the LXX provides an important foundation for understanding the usage and meaning of the Greek word, rhēma. **The Greek word, rhēma, occurs 614 times in the LXX translation, and some 19 times in the book of Daniel.** Of these, a number are occasions where people were speaking to another person. I have selected five passages where the usage of rhēma can be instructive to us, in our understanding of the meaning of the word, and also how we are to respond to such communications.

**Daniel 1:17 provides an important introduction into who Daniel and his friends were.** They were Israeli youth, taken as hostages from the families of the nobles of Judah. They were young men of intelligence and ability, people who were good candidates for service or administrative positions in the service of the king of Babylon. They were trained and educated for three years in the literature and language of the Babylonians, and then they entered the service of King Nebuchadnezzar’s administration. Because *God gave them knowledge and intelligence* in every branch of language and wisdom, when they were interviewed by the king, no one was found that had excelled as much, or were as capable, as they were. They entered into the king’s personal service. The LXX adds, “And to Daniel also [God] gave understanding in every rhēma-word, in vision and dreams and in all wisdom.” This is the introduction to Daniel and his friends, and it is quite clear that a “rhēma-word, vision, or dream” could be a communication from God that would require His assistance in order to understand or “piece together”. *Daniel had a unique ability from God to do this very thing.*

**In Daniel 4, Nebuchadnezzar wrote a letter recounting how he had beheld a vision** while lying on his bed. He saw a great tree, which filled the earth, and provided fruit and protection for the animals and birds of the earth. He also saw an angelic-watcher come down, and command that the tree be cut down, its branches and leaves removed, its fruit scattered, until all the animals and birds fled away. The watcher commanded that the stump should remain, with a band of iron and bronze around it, and let his mind be turned from a man’s to an animal’s. Seven periods of time were decreed to pass over him. The language then says, “This logos-word is through the decree of the angelic-watchers, and the rhēma-word is a command of the holy ones, in order that the living may know that the Most High is Lord over the kingdoms of mankind, and bestows it on whom He wishes, and sets over it the lowliest (‘out-from-nothingness’) of men.” *Daniel was called in to interpret this rhēma-word*, and warned that this vision pertained to the king. He was the great tree. He warned the king to humble himself and change his ways, or this judgment would come upon him. *He did not.* The letter went on to describe how this was all fulfilled in detail. He went insane for seven years, until he realized that God was the One in charge, and He placed people in authority as He wished. Note that the message was *both* a logos-message *and* a rhēma-message. There was a truth that was important for everyone to know and understand, and there was also a very specific message for Nebuchadnezzar that applied to him, alone.

**In Daniel 5, Nebuchadnezzar’s grandson, Belshazzar, held a great feast, and brought out the vessels from the temple of Yahweh in Jerusalem to drink wine from. As they were drinking, a hand appeared, and wrote on**

the wall. **When no one else could interpret the words, Daniel was called in, and he gave the interpretation.** In verse 26, he referred to the writing as a rhēma-word. The message was that God had measured his kingdom, and had finished it. That night, Belshazzar was killed, and his kingdom was conquered by the Medes and the Persians.

**Less than two years earlier, Daniel had received an extensive vision in a dream** regarding four great beasts, a little horn making great boasts, and a Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, ...**an overview of world history.** Ultimately all these kingdoms will be destroyed, and the kingdom of the Son of Man will be everlasting, and all nations and peoples will serve Him. **Part of this had been interpreted for him by an angel.** Afterwards, Daniel wrote, “At this point the revelation ended. **As for me, Daniel, my thoughts were greatly alarming me and my face grew pale, but I kept the rhēma-word to myself.**” This was a personal word, spoken to Daniel, which he pondered and later recorded for us in Daniel 7. Note that he did not immediately share it with everyone. They may not have been open to hear what he might say. **Not all rhēma-words are to be acted on, or shared, ...some are just to be pondered and prayed over.** There may come a time to pass them down, ...or they may simply be a secret between me and God.

In Daniel 9, Belshazzar is gone, and a new ruler is in power, Darius the Mede, appointed as governor by Cyrus the Persian. During his first year (539 B.C.), Daniel came across Jeremiah’s prophecy that said that desolation of Jerusalem would last 70 years, so he began to focus on praying for the completion of that judgment (516 B.C – Ezr. 6:15). He gave himself to prayer, supplication, fasting and humbling himself with sackcloth and ashes. He confessed the sins of the Jewish people, that had brought the judgment upon their nation, and affirmed God’s righteousness. He began to ask God to turn away His anger, and show favor toward the desolated sanctuary. He asked God to forgive, to listen to his cries, and to take action, for His name’s sake. **In response to his petitions, God sent the angel Gabriel to declare to him future revelation** about the rebuilding of the city, the coming of Messiah, and of *another* destruction of the city, and further desolations to come. **Verse 23 in the LXX tells him to reflect on this rhēma-word.** Again, it was a personal message God gave to Daniel, ...but Daniel recorded it for us to benefit from, as well.

**These examples are not your run-of-the-mill promptings of the Holy Spirit. These are examples of very direct, specific communication from God to individuals.** We have two very specific, personal words of judgment to pagan kings, ...an unsolicited prophetic download of world history, ...and a personal response to Daniel’s prayer with another wide-angle view of world history, this time focused on Jerusalem and the Messiah. In the first two examples, **Daniel played a key role in understanding and interpreting these revelations.** In the last two, the expansiveness was so large that there was no easy way to break down any mystery. They were simply to be passed down for others to pray over, watch for, and consider. They were “past finding out” (Rom. 11:33).

We have another experience of Daniel’s which gives us important insight into this whole matter of obtaining and understanding rhēma-words. In Daniel 2, Nebuchadnezzar had a very troubling dream, and he called all the wise men of Babylon to give him the interpretation. In order to be sure that they actually *could* interpret dreams, he decided that he would not *tell them* what he had dreamed, ...they would have to *tell him* what he had dreamed, so that he could be sure that they were not just making things up. If they could not do *that*, then they would all be killed, as charlatans. **Daniel and his friends devoted themselves to seek God in prayer, and He revealed it in a dream to Daniel.** However, when Daniel presented his answers to the king, he made sure to say that the ability was not in him, or in any other man, ...but “there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries” (2:28). He also said, “this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have more wisdom than anyone living, but in order that the interpretation might be made known to the king” (2:30). **Daniel clearly pointed to the source of receiving revelation from God, as well as the wisdom to perceive, recognize and discern such revelation, ...it comes from God Himself.** That declaration agrees with the statement from 1:17, “God gave Daniel understanding in every rhēma-word, in vision and dreams and in all wisdom.” **Both revelation and correct interpretation come from God.**

In Matthew 13:14,15, Jesus mentions that people can listen and listen, yet never understand; and ...look and look, yet never perceive. Their hearts can become callous or insensitive; their ears can be hard of hearing. **We don’t start out with hearts that are sensitive and tuned in to God. We must develop our ability to see, hear and recognize the handiwork and revelation of God.** If the problem is insensitivity, then we must *ask God* for more sensitivity. If it is hard-heartedness or spiritual-dullness, we must *beseech God* for a softening and perceptiveness, ...and then *we must train ourselves to be watchful*, ...to be looking for what is “God at work” in our lives. John 8:31,32 and Hebrews 5:11-14 depict a process of growth, where **we study the logos-word**, and become “accustomed to it” by incorporating it into our lives, **so that we can deepen our experience of God’s truth and develop our faculties of perception.** The goal is not “Bible knowledge” as an end in itself. The goal is experiential growth and freedom, and a deepening intimacy with God and spiritual discernment. **We are to be watching for and discerning what God is doing in and around us** (cf. Jn. 5:19,20). **God gives the revelation, recognition, discernment and understanding. Ask Him to expand and develop your ability to notice, recognize, discern and understand the leading of the Holy Spirit.**