

# Daniel 2:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.

## Analysis

The Chaldeans conclude: "And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh." The word "rare" (Aramaic: yaqqira, יָקִיר) means difficult, precious, exceptional—acknowledging the request's extraordinary nature. Their theology correctly recognizes that only divine beings possess such knowledge, but wrongly assumes these gods remain distant from humanity—"whose dwelling is not with flesh" expresses pagan belief in divine transcendence without immanence.

This sets up the Old Testament's greatest theological corrective: Israel's God, unlike pagan deities, dwells among His people. He doesn't remain aloof but engages in covenant relationship, speaks to prophets, acts in history, and reveals hidden things. The Chaldeans are half right—only God knows hidden things—but completely wrong about divine distance. Immanuel means "God with us" (Matthew 1:23). God's presence with His people is Israel's distinctive treasure (Exodus 33:15-16).

This prefigures the incarnation most dramatically. The Chaldeans claim deity doesn't dwell with flesh; Christianity proclaims the Word became flesh (John 1:14). Christ is the ultimate answer to pagan theology's error—God not merely dwelling among humanity but becoming human. Through Christ, divine knowledge becomes accessible; through the Spirit, God dwells in believers. The Chaldeans couldn't

imagine what God would accomplish—complete union of divine and human natures in Christ, and indwelling presence in His church.

## Historical Context

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Pagan religion throughout the ancient Near East emphasized divine transcendence—gods inhabited heavenly realms, interacting with humans only occasionally through omens, dreams, and cultic rituals. Priests served as mediators, but genuine relationship with deity was inconceivable. Biblical faith radically contradicted this—Yahweh walked with Adam, spoke to Moses face-to-face, dwelt in the tabernacle/temple among His people. This distinctive doctrine—God both transcendent and immanent—set Israel apart. Christianity fully revealed this truth in Christ's incarnation and the Spirit's indwelling.

## Related Passages

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**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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1. How does the Chaldeans' belief that gods don't dwell with humans contrast with biblical truth about God's covenant presence among His people?
2. What does their partial truth (only God knows hidden things) combined with error (God remains distant) teach us about how false religion mixes truth with lies?
3. In what ways does Christ's incarnation and the Spirit's indwelling completely answer and correct the pagan theology expressed here?

## Interlinear Text

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וְמֵלֶט אָדָם	מֶלֶךְ אָדָם	שָׁאַל	יְקַרְבָּה	לֹא אָמַרְתִּי	לֹא אָמַרְתִּי
thing	H1768	that the king	requireth	And it is a rare	other
H4406		H4430	H7593	H3358	H321
וְאֵת הַיּוֹם	יְמִינְתְּךָ	בְּפִנְךָ	מֶלֶךְ אָדָם	לֹא לְהַלֵּל	אֱלֹהִים
and there is	H1768	that can shew	it before	that the king	the gods
H383		H2324	H6925	H4430	H426
בְּשֶׁבֶת אֶלְעָם	מִצְרָיִם	לֹא אִתְּהֹוּן			
whose dwelling	with	flesh	none	and there is	
H4070	H5974	H1321	H3809	H383	

## Additional Cross-References

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**Daniel 5:11** (Kingdom): There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers;

**Isaiah 57:15** (Parallel theme): For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

**Exodus 29:45** (References God): And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God.

**Matthew 19:26** (References God): But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

**John 1:14** (Parallel theme): And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

**Genesis 41:39** (References God): And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art:

