

Monday, November 25

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Daniel 1:1 - 2:23

1 **1** During the third year of King Jehoiakim's reign in Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. **2** The Lord gave him victory over King Jehoiakim of Judah and permitted him to take some of the sacred objects from the Temple of God. So Nebuchadnezzar took them back to the land of Babylonia and placed them in the treasure-house of his god. **3** Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, his chief of staff, to bring to the palace some of the young men of Judah's royal family and other noble families, who had been brought to Babylon as captives. **4** "Select only strong, healthy, and good-looking young men," he said. "Make sure they are well versed in every branch of learning, are gifted with knowledge and good judgment, and are suited to serve in the royal palace. Train these young men in the language and literature of Babylon." **5** The king assigned them a daily ration of food and wine from his own kitchens. They were to be trained for three years, and then they would enter the royal service. **6** Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were four of the young men chosen, all from the tribe of Judah. **7** The chief of staff renamed them with these Babylonian names: Daniel was called Belteshazzar. Hananiah was called Shadrach. Mishael was called Meshach. Azariah was called Abednego. **8** But Daniel was determined not to defile himself by eating the food and wine given to them by the king. He asked the chief of staff for permission not to eat these unacceptable foods. **9** Now God had given the chief of staff both respect and affection for Daniel. **10** But he responded, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has ordered that you eat this food and wine. If you become pale and thin compared to the other youths your age, I am afraid the king will have me beheaded." **11** Daniel spoke with the attendant who had been appointed by the chief of staff to look after Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. **12** "Please test us for ten days on a diet of vegetables and water," Daniel said. **13** "At the end of the ten days, see how we look compared to the other young men who are eating the king's food. Then make your decision in light of what you see." **14** The attendant agreed to Daniel's suggestion and tested them for ten days. **15** At the end of the ten days, Daniel and his three friends looked healthier and better nourished than the young men who had been eating the food assigned by the king. **16** So after that, the attendant fed them only vegetables instead of the food and wine provided for the others. **17** God gave these four young men an unusual aptitude for understanding every aspect of literature and wisdom. And God gave Daniel the special ability to interpret the meanings of visions and dreams. **18** When the training period ordered by the king

was completed, the chief of staff brought all the young men to King Nebuchadnezzar. **19** The king talked with them, and no one impressed him as much as Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. So they entered the royal service. **20** Whenever the king consulted them in any matter requiring wisdom and balanced judgment, he found them ten times more capable than any of the magicians and enchanters in his entire kingdom. **21** Daniel remained in the royal service until the first year of the reign of King Cyrus.

2 **1** One night during the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had such disturbing dreams that he couldn't sleep. **2** He called in his magicians, enchanters, sorcerers, and astrologers, and he demanded that they tell him what he had dreamed. As they stood before the king, **3** he said, "I have had a dream that deeply troubles me, and I must know what it means." **4** Then the astrologers answered the king in Aramaic, "Long live the king! Tell us the dream, and we will tell you what it means." **5** But the king said to the astrologers, "I am serious about this. If you don't tell me what my dream was and what it means, you will be torn limb from limb, and your houses will be turned into heaps of rubble! **6** But if you tell me what I dreamed and what the dream means, I will give you many wonderful gifts and honors. Just tell me the dream and what it means!" **7** They said again, "Please, Your Majesty. Tell us the dream, and we will tell you what it means." **8** The king replied, "I know what you are doing! You're stalling for time because you know I am serious when I say, **9** 'If you don't tell me the dream, you are doomed.' So you have conspired to tell me lies, hoping I will change my mind. But tell me the dream, and then I'll know that you can tell me what it means." **10** The astrologers replied to the king, "No one on earth can tell the king his dream! And no king, however great and powerful, has ever asked such a thing of any magician, enchanter, or astrologer! **11** The king's demand is impossible. No one except the gods can tell you your dream, and they do not live here among people." **12** The king was furious when he heard this, and he ordered that all the wise men of Babylon be executed. **13** And because of the king's decree, men were sent to find and kill Daniel and his friends. **14** When Arioch, the commander of the king's guard, came to kill them, Daniel handled the situation with wisdom and discretion. **15** He asked Arioch, "Why has the king issued such a harsh decree?" So Arioch told him all that had happened. **16** Daniel went at once to see the king and requested more time to tell the king what the dream meant. **17** Then Daniel went home and told his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah what had happened. **18** He urged them to ask the God of heaven to show them his mercy by telling them the secret, so they would not be executed along with the other wise men of Babylon. **19** That night the secret was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven. **20** He said, "Praise the name of God forever and ever, for he has all wisdom and power. **21** He controls the course of world events; he removes kings and sets up other kings. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the scholars. **22** He

reveals deep and mysterious things and knows what lies hidden in darkness, though he is surrounded by light. **23** I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors, for you have given me wisdom and strength. You have told me what we asked of you and revealed to us what the king demanded.”

1 Peter 3:8 - 4:6

3 8 Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude. **9** Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and he will grant you his blessing. **10** For the Scriptures say, “If you want to enjoy life and see many happy days, keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies. **11** Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it. **12** The eyes of the LORD watch over those who do right, and his ears are open to their prayers. But the LORD turns his face against those who do evil.” **13** Now, who will want to harm you if you are eager to do good? **14** But even if you suffer for doing what is right, God will reward you for it. So don't worry or be afraid of their threats. **15** Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. **16** But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ. **17** Remember, it is better to suffer for doing good, if that is what God wants, than to suffer for doing wrong! **18** Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners to bring you safely home to God. He suffered physical death, but he was raised to life in the Spirit. **19** So he went and preached to the spirits in prison — **20** those who disobeyed God long ago when God waited patiently while Noah was building his boat. Only eight people were saved from drowning in that terrible flood. **21** And that water is a picture of baptism, which now saves you, not by removing dirt from your body, but as a response to God from a clean conscience. It is effective because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. **22** Now Christ has gone to heaven. He is seated in the place of honor next to God, and all the angels and authorities and powers accept his authority.

4 1 So then, since Christ suffered physical pain, you must arm yourselves with the same attitude he had, and be ready to suffer, too. For if you have suffered physically for Christ, you have finished with sin. **2** You won't spend the rest of your lives chasing your own desires, but you will be anxious to do the will of God. **3** You have had enough in the past of the evil things

that godless people enjoy—their immorality and lust, their feasting and drunkenness and wild parties, and their terrible worship of idols. **4** Of course, your former friends are surprised when you no longer plunge into the flood of wild and destructive things they do. So they slander you. **5** But remember that they will have to face God, who stands ready to judge everyone, both the living and the dead. **6** That is why the Good News was preached to those who are now dead—so although they were destined to die like all people, they now live forever with God in the Spirit.

Psalm 119:65 - 80

119 65 You have done many good things for me, LORD, just as you promised. **66** I believe in your commands; now teach me good judgment and knowledge. **67** I used to wander off until you disciplined me; but now I closely follow your word. **68** You are good and do only good; teach me your decrees. **69** Arrogant people smear me with lies, but in truth I obey your commandments with all my heart. **70** Their hearts are dull and stupid, but I delight in your instructions. **71** My suffering was good for me, for it taught me to pay attention to your decrees. **72** Your instructions are more valuable to me than millions in gold and silver. **73** You made me; you created me. Now give me the sense to follow your commands. **74** May all who fear you find in me a cause for joy, for I have put my hope in your word. **75** I know, O LORD, that your regulations are fair; you disciplined me because I needed it. **76** Now let your unfailing love comfort me, just as you promised me, your servant. **77** Surround me with your tender mercies so I may live, for your instructions are my delight. **78** Bring disgrace upon the arrogant people who lied about me; meanwhile, I will concentrate on your commandments. **79** Let me be united with all who fear you, with those who know your laws. **80** May I be blameless in keeping your decrees; then I will never be ashamed.

Proverbs 28:14

27 14 Blessed are those who fear to do wrong, but the stubborn are headed for serious trouble.