

Tuesday, November 26

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Daniel 2:24 - 3:30

2 24 Then Daniel went in to see Arioch, whom the king had ordered to execute the wise men of Babylon. Daniel said to him, "Don't kill the wise men. Take me to the king, and I will tell him the meaning of his dream." **25** Arioch quickly took Daniel to the king and said, "I have found one of the captives from Judah who will tell the king the meaning of his dream!" **26** The king said to Daniel (also known as Beltshazzar), "Is this true? Can you tell me what my dream was and what it means?" **27** Daniel replied, "There are no wise men, enchanters, magicians, or fortune-tellers who can reveal the king's secret. **28** But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and he has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in the future. Now I will tell you your dream and the visions you saw as you lay on your bed. **29** "While Your Majesty was sleeping, you dreamed about coming events. He who reveals secrets has shown you what is going to happen. **30** And it is not because I am wiser than anyone else that I know the secret of your dream, but because God wants you to understand what was in your heart. **31** "In your vision, Your Majesty, you saw standing before you a huge, shining statue of a man. It was a frightening sight. **32** The head of the statue was made of fine gold. Its chest and arms were silver, its belly and thighs were bronze, **33** its legs were iron, and its feet were a combination of iron and baked clay. **34** As you watched, a rock was cut from a mountain, but not by human hands. It struck the feet of iron and clay, smashing them to bits. **35** The whole statue was crushed into small pieces of iron, clay, bronze, silver, and gold. Then the wind blew them away without a trace, like chaff on a threshing floor. But the rock that knocked the statue down became a great mountain that covered the whole earth. **36** "That was the dream. Now we will tell the king what it means. **37** Your Majesty, you are the greatest of kings. The God of heaven has given you sovereignty, power, strength, and honor. **38** He has made you the ruler over all the inhabited world and has put even the wild animals and birds under your control. You are the head of gold. **39** "But after your kingdom comes to an end, another kingdom, inferior to yours, will rise to take your place. After that kingdom has fallen, yet a third kingdom, represented by bronze, will rise to rule the world. **40** Following that kingdom, there will be a fourth one, as strong as iron. That kingdom will smash and crush all previous empires, just as iron smashes and crushes everything it strikes. **41** The feet and toes you saw were a combination of iron and baked clay, showing that this kingdom will be divided. Like iron mixed with clay, it will have some of the strength of iron. **42** But while some parts of it will be as strong as iron, other parts will be as

weak as clay. **43** This mixture of iron and clay also shows that these kingdoms will try to strengthen themselves by forming alliances with each other through intermarriage. But they will not hold together, just as iron and clay do not mix. **44** “During the reigns of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed or conquered. It will crush all these kingdoms into nothingness, and it will stand forever. **45** That is the meaning of the rock cut from the mountain, though not by human hands, that crushed to pieces the statue of iron, bronze, clay, silver, and gold. The great God was showing the king what will happen in the future. The dream is true, and its meaning is certain.” **46** Then King Nebuchadnezzar threw himself down before Daniel and worshiped him, and he commanded his people to offer sacrifices and burn sweet incense before him. **47** The king said to Daniel, “Truly, your God is the greatest of gods, the Lord over kings, a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this secret.” **48** Then the king appointed Daniel to a high position and gave him many valuable gifts. He made Daniel ruler over the whole province of Babylon, as well as chief over all his wise men. **49** At Daniel’s request, the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to be in charge of all the affairs of the province of Babylon, while Daniel remained in the king’s court.

3 1 King Nebuchadnezzar made a gold statue ninety feet tall and nine feet wide and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. **2** Then he sent messages to the high officers, officials, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates, and all the provincial officials to come to the dedication of the statue he had set up. **3** So all these officials came and stood before the statue King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. **4** Then a herald shouted out, “People of all races and nations and languages, listen to the king’s command! **5** When you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes, and other musical instruments, bow to the ground to worship King Nebuchadnezzar’s gold statue. **6** Anyone who refuses to obey will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.” **7** So at the sound of the musical instruments, all the people, whatever their race or nation or language, bowed to the ground and worshiped the gold statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. **8** But some of the astrologers went to the king and informed on the Jews. **9** They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “Long live the king! **10** You issued a decree requiring all the people to bow down and worship the gold statue when they hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes, and other musical instruments. **11** That decree also states that those who refuse to obey must be thrown into a blazing furnace. **12** But there are some Jews—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—whom you have put in charge of the province of Babylon. They pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They refuse to serve your gods and do not worship the gold statue you have set up.” **13** Then Nebuchadnezzar flew into a rage and ordered that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought before him. When they were brought in, **14** Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego,

that you refuse to serve my gods or to worship the gold statue I have set up? **15** I will give you one more chance to bow down and worship the statue I have made when you hear the sound of the musical instruments. But if you refuse, you will be thrown immediately into the blazing furnace. And then what god will be able to rescue you from my power?" **16** Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you. **17** If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty. **18** But even if he doesn't, we want to make it clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up." **19** Nebuchadnezzar was so furious with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that his face became distorted with rage. He commanded that the furnace be heated seven times hotter than usual. **20** Then he ordered some of the strongest men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. **21** So they tied them up and threw them into the furnace, fully dressed in their pants, turbans, robes, and other garments. **22** And because the king, in his anger, had demanded such a hot fire in the furnace, the flames killed the soldiers as they threw the three men in. **23** So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, securely tied, fell into the roaring flames. **24** But suddenly, Nebuchadnezzar jumped up in amazement and exclaimed to his advisers, "Didn't we tie up three men and throw them into the furnace?" "Yes, Your Majesty, we certainly did," they replied. **25** "Look!" Nebuchadnezzar shouted. "I see four men, unbound, walking around in the fire unharmed! And the fourth looks like a god!" **26** Then Nebuchadnezzar came as close as he could to the door of the flaming furnace and shouted: "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!" So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego stepped out of the fire. **27** Then the high officers, officials, governors, and advisers crowded around them and saw that the fire had not touched them. Not a hair on their heads was singed, and their clothing was not scorched. They didn't even smell of smoke! **28** Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise to the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! He sent his angel to rescue his servants who trusted in him. They defied the king's command and were willing to die rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. **29** Therefore, I make this decree: If any people, whatever their race or nation or language, speak a word against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, they will be torn limb from limb, and their houses will be turned into heaps of rubble. There is no other god who can rescue like this!" **30** Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to even higher positions in the province of Babylon.

1 Peter 4:7 - 5:14

4 7 The end of the world is coming soon. Therefore, be earnest and disciplined in your prayers. **8** Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins. **9** Cheerfully share your home with those who need a meal or a place to stay. **10** God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. **11** Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen. **12** Dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. **13** Instead, be very glad—for these trials make you partners with Christ in his suffering, so that you will have the wonderful joy of seeing his glory when it is revealed to all the world. **14** If you are insulted because you bear the name of Christ, you will be blessed, for the glorious Spirit of God rests upon you. **15** If you suffer, however, it must not be for murder, stealing, making trouble, or prying into other people's affairs. **16** But it is no shame to suffer for being a Christian. Praise God for the privilege of being called by his name! **17** For the time has come for judgment, and it must begin with God's household. And if judgment begins with us, what terrible fate awaits those who have never obeyed God's Good News? **18** And also, "If the righteous are barely saved, what will happen to godless sinners?" **19** So if you are suffering in a manner that pleases God, keep on doing what is right, and trust your lives to the God who created you, for he will never fail you.

5 1 And now, a word to you who are elders in the churches. I, too, am an elder and a witness to the sufferings of Christ. And I, too, will share in his glory when he is revealed to the whole world. As a fellow elder, I appeal to you: **2** Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly—not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. **3** Don't lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your own good example. **4** And when the Great Shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of never-ending glory and honor. **5** In the same way, you who are younger must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you, dress yourselves in humility as you relate to one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." **6** So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor. **7** Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you. **8** Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. **9** Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your family of believers all over the world is going

through the same kind of suffering you are. **10** In his kindness God called you to share in his eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus. So after you have suffered a little while, he will restore, support, and strengthen you, and he will place you on a firm foundation. **11** All power to him forever! Amen. **12** I have written and sent this short letter to you with the help of Silas, whom I commend to you as a faithful brother. My purpose in writing is to encourage you and assure you that what you are experiencing is truly part of God's grace for you. Stand firm in this grace. **13** Your sister church here in Babylon sends you greetings, and so does my son Mark. **14** Greet each other with a kiss of love. Peace be with all of you who are in Christ.

Psalm 119:81 - 96

119 81 I am worn out waiting for your rescue, but I have put my hope in your word. **82** My eyes are straining to see your promises come true. When will you comfort me? **83** I am shriveled like a wineskin in the smoke, but I have not forgotten to obey your decrees. **84** How long must I wait? When will you punish those who persecute me? **85** These arrogant people who hate your instructions have dug deep pits to trap me. **86** All your commands are trustworthy. Protect me from those who hunt me down without cause. **87** They almost finished me off, but I refused to abandon your commandments. **88** In your unfailing love, spare my life; then I can continue to obey your laws. **89** Your eternal word, O LORD, stands firm in heaven. **90** Your faithfulness extends to every generation, as enduring as the earth you created. **91** Your regulations remain true to this day, for everything serves your plans. **92** If your instructions hadn't sustained me with joy, I would have died in my misery. **93** I will never forget your commandments, for by them you give me life. **94** I am yours; rescue me! For I have worked hard at obeying your commandments. **95** Though the wicked hide along the way to kill me, I will quietly keep my mind on your laws. **96** Even perfection has its limits, but your commands have no limit.

Proverbs 28:15 - 16

27 15 A wicked ruler is as dangerous to the poor as a roaring lion or an attacking bear. **16** A ruler with no understanding will oppress his people, but one who hates corruption will have a long life.