

**Monday: The Book of Daniel directs us to a kingdom that will never be destroyed, never handed to another, and will stand forever.**

**Reading: 1 Peter 2:4-10**

The stone "cut out by no human hand" in Daniel's vision points us to Christ, the cornerstone of God's kingdom. Peter reminds us that while Jesus was rejected by many, He is precious in God's sight and the foundation of our faith. As living stones, we are being built into a spiritual house.

Today, reflect on how you are allowing God to shape and position you in His kingdom. Are there areas where you're resisting His work?

Ask God to help you embrace your identity as part of His chosen people, called to declare His praises.

**Tuesday: The Book of Daniel shows us hope and strength, even in the midst of weakness.**

**Reading: 2 Corinthians 12:7-10**

Daniel and his friends were in a position of weakness – young exiles in a foreign land. Yet God used their vulnerability to display His power. Paul echoes this theme, boasting in his weaknesses so that Christ's power may rest on him.

Where do you feel weak or inadequate today?

Instead of trying to hide or overcome these weaknesses through your own strength, bring them before God. Ask Him to demonstrate His power through your limitations.

How might your perceived weaknesses become opportunities for God's grace to shine?

**Wednesday: The Book of Daniel calls us to hope in God's eternal kingdom**

**Reading: Revelation 21:1-7**

Nebuchadnezzar's dream ultimately points to the final establishment of God's kingdom – a reality beautifully depicted in Revelation. This vision of the new heaven and earth reminds us that our current struggles are temporary, but God's promises are eternal.

Today, meditate on the hope we have in Christ. How does the promise of God dwelling with His people forever change how you view your current circumstances?

Ask God to fill you with joyful anticipation for His coming kingdom, and to empower you to live as a citizen of that kingdom even now.

**Unshaken: *Because He Reigns*** Use these days (Thursday - Saturday) to prepare for worship on Sunday, September 21.

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**Thursday: The King's Golden Image (Daniel 3:1–12, ESV)**

**Daniel 3:1–12 (ESV):**

1 King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its breadth six cubits. He set it up on the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. 2 Then King Nebuchadnezzar sent to gather the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. 3 Then the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. And they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. 4 And the herald proclaimed aloud, "You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, 5 that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. 6 And whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace."

7 Therefore, as soon as all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, all the peoples, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

8 Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and maliciously accused the Jews. 9 They declared to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever! 10 You, O king, have made a decree, that every man who hears the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image. 11 And whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into a burning fiery furnace. 12 There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These men, O king, pay no attention to you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

## Background: Daniel 3:1-12

- Likely overlaid with gold, the statue symbolized Nebuchadnezzar's total rule.
- Public bowing was a political as well as religious act.
- Music created a unifying spectacle of empire and worship.

1. What does Nebuchadnezzar's image reveal about human desires for control and worship? Where do you think Nebuchadnezzar got the idea for the statue? (See Daniel 2)
  2. In what ways are we pressured today to "bow down" to cultural idols?
  3. Why do you think the Chaldeans accused the Hebrews so quickly?
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## Friday: The Fiery Furnace (Daniel 3:13-23, ESV)

### Daniel 3:13-23 (ESV):

13 Then Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought. So they brought these men before the king. 14 Nebuchadnezzar answered and said to them, "Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up? 15 Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, well and good. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands?"

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. 17 If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. 18 But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

19 Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was usually heated. 20 And he ordered some of the mighty men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. 21 Then these men were bound in their cloaks, their tunics, their hats, and their other garments, and they were thrown into the burning fiery furnace. 22 Because the king's order was urgent and the furnace overheated, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. 23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell bound into the burning fiery furnace.

## **Background: Daniel 3:13-23**

- The furnace was likely a large kiln for smelting or brick-making, common in Babylon.
- Defying the king was a capital offense, viewed as treason.
- The “but if not” statement is a profound declaration of trust in God’s sovereignty.

1. How does their courage challenge us when obedience is costly?
  2. What does “but if not” reveal about trusting God regardless of outcomes?
  3. How should we respond when God doesn’t deliver us the way we expect?
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## **Saturday: God Delivers (Daniel 3:24–30, ESV)**

### **Daniel 3:24–30 (ESV):**

24 Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He declared to his counselors, “Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?” They answered and said to the king, “True, O king.” 25 He answered and said, “But I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods.” 26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the burning fiery furnace; he declared, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here!” Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire. 27 And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king’s counselors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men. The hair of their heads was not singed, their cloaks were not harmed, and no smell of fire had come upon them.

28 Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king’s command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God. 29 Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way.” 30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

## **Background: Daniel 3:24-30**

- Ancient kings issued decrees to enforce religious conformity. Nebuchadnezzar's change of decree shows God's supremacy.
- The "fourth man" is described as divine.
- The miracle shows that God's presence is not bound to Jerusalem's temple but extends even to the heart of Babylon.

1. What does God's presence in the fire reveal about His character?
2. How does this story point forward to Christ, who is with us in suffering?
3. When have you experienced God's sustaining presence in your own "fires"?