

GRACE *and Truth*



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For the law was given through Moses, but GRACE AND TRUTH came through Jesus Christ. (John 1:17)

March, 2015



The Three Hebrew Children

by Steve Agal

Years ago a gospel quartet sang a song about Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. It was titled *They Wouldn't Bend, They Wouldn't Bow, They Wouldn't Burn.*

I would like to center our thinking on those three young men and their stand for God.

These three were companions of Daniel. They were taken to Babylon in 605 B.C. and shared similar persecution because of their testimony. We see God's blessing on them for that testimony.

You may want to read Daniel, chapters one through three to get the context of our consideration.

I. THEY WOULDN'T BEND

A. To social pressure – Daniel 1:8: *“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.”*

Daniel's stand seemingly was also adapted by his friends. They wouldn't defile themselves by eating that which was forbidden by the law of Moses.

B. To economic pressure – Daniel 1:12: *“Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink.”*

No bacon nor ham for our heroes!

C. Their persistence was rewarded – Daniel 1:19-20: *“Then the king interviewed them, and among them all, none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore they served before the king. ²⁰And in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm.”*

II. THEY WOULDN'T BOW

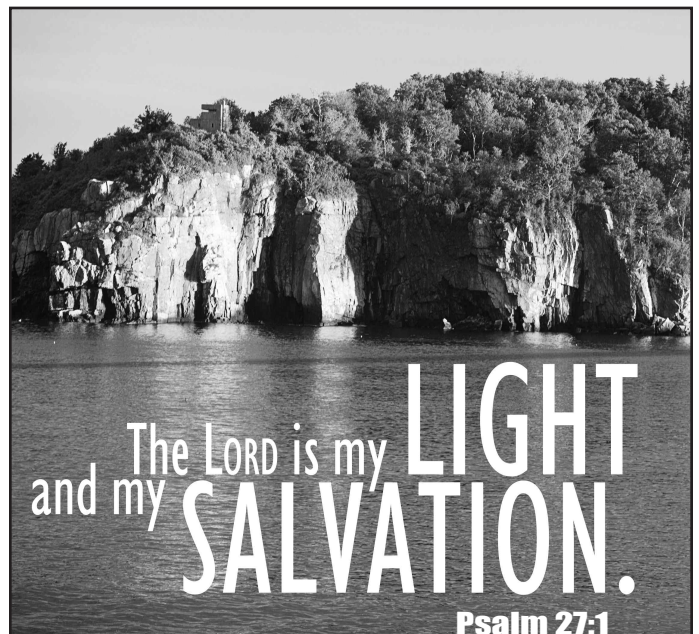
A. To religious pressure – Daniel 3:8-12: *“Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and ac-*

cused the Jews. ⁹They spoke and said to King Nebuchadnezzar, ‘O king, live forever! ¹⁰You, O king, have made a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the gold image; ¹¹and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. ¹²There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up.’”

Not only would they not bow down to the image, they did not serve the Babylonian gods.

B. To political pressure – Daniel 3:13-15: *“... so they brought these men before the king. ¹⁴Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, ‘Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, that you do not serve my*

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Daniel and Rachael Crosby

Missionaries Daniel and Rachael Crosby are home on furlough after spending time in Senegal, West Africa. They are living with Rachael's parents right now but plan to return to Senegal in the future. As the Crosbys are closing 2014 and beginning a new year, they would like to share some praises and highlights from this past year. Below is the first half of their year in review and was taken from their blog at <http://crosbeans.blogspot.com/2014/12/highlights-from-2014-part-1-senegal.html>.

SENEGAL

We had a pretty big year. From finishing up our first term overseas (including almost a year in Senegal, West Africa) to driving literally across and around the United States, it was a busy year with a lot of transition. The theme was definitely that God is faithful ... no matter what.

Ups and downs characterized this year in a major way, with wondering why we had been through so many changes and disappointments with our path to missions. And although our time in Senegal was rocky and challenging at times, it was marked with a distinct sense of PEACE. We felt God's hand in our being there and overall didn't struggle with major cultural shock in the way many people do when transitioning to life in Africa for the first time.

However, that didn't mean we didn't experience stress ... cultural, marriage and familial. In His faithfulness, God provided a godly woman right across the hall from our apartment in Senegal who also happened to be a counselor who helped us with many parenting strategies and just listened. Not only that, but Daniel and I both were able to meet on a regular basis for counsel and prayer with our Wycliffe friends (who also happened to be close ... right across the street). We were also blessed with friends ... both Senegalese friends we were sharing with, and expats as well.

During the first few months of 2014, Daniel worked at the Wycliffe/SIL Center in Dakar repairing motorcycles and other vehicles. He enjoyed the work for the most part and learned a lot, including the fact that everything takes SO much more time to get done in Africa! A wise missionary friend told us that if you get one thing accomplished each day, you should choose to feel good about your day, and we try to remind ourselves of that often.

One of the major highlights of our first term in Senegal was a visit from Daniel's parents, George and Karen Crosby! It was so encouraging and fun to introduce them to our life in Africa, plus they blessed us by bringing many care package type gifts from the US from our partners. Thank you!

Another fun trip was a family trip up to Beersheba

(farming God's way ... an SIL project in a nearby town). We avoided the pythons that live near the lake and met some fun people. We even got to see a pig escape out of her pen and saw firsthand how to recapture her! Just today Marianna was asking when we could go back there.

After a while we started to dream about possibilities outside of Dakar, so Daniel spent almost three weeks traveling first to the southern part of the Senegal, then to the north.

Later, our whole family took a short trip up north, to Richard Toll. That was a lot of fun and we could definitely see ourselves living there someday. We'll see what the future holds!

The next month we made the trip back to the USA for our first furlough. Our travels went smoothly (thanks to a lot of prayer!) and we spent a month adjusting in Washington state before starting two months of cross country travels to visit friends, family and partners. It was an exhausting trip, but worth it.

This fall we started homeschooling, celebrated my (Rachael's) dad's 60th birthday, attended a school psychology course, and expositional preaching conferences. Daniel completed a welding course and also half a dozen home improvement projects (pictures and details to come next post).

Although I am exhausted thinking about this past year, I (and our family) are thankful for the many ways God has provided for us and for the ways difficult things have caused growth and drawn us closer to Him!

The budget of the Missions Committee operates solely from designated giving, and not from the general offering. In order to support the Grace Evangelical Missions outreach, you need to mark your offering envelope with the specific amount you wish to go to MISSIONS. God has richly blessed our church and the missions giving has always been very good. Please join with us in making certain that you designate a portion of your giving to MISSIONS. Let's see where the Lord leads us and how we can expand the outreach of Grace Evangelical Church.



Daniel and Rachael, with their children Olivia, Louis and Marianna.

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Fellowship Group Spotlight

LEGACY

Rich Witmer is teaching from the Book of Hebrews. The author of Hebrews is unknown but tells of the way Jesus went through suffering into glory, making a way for others to follow. As high priest, Christ offered himself as the atoning sacrifice, bringing others into a new covenant relationship with God. Believers are therefore called to persevere in faith, knowing that God will be faithful. ***The Legacy Fellowship Group meets in the café at 9:00 a.m.***

OWLS

In the next two weeks, Steve Agal will be finishing up a study in the book of Galatians. Following this study, Steve will teach from Genesis 37-50, the life of Joseph, son of Jacob. The OWLS will be having their Spring Luncheon on March 15 at noon following the church service. There will be a guest speaker from Franciscan Senior Health and Wellness. ***The OWLS meet in room 112/113 at 9:00 a.m.***

WORD PROCESSORS

The Word Processors are studying the Book of Colossians. Paul wrote his letter to the Colossians to correct the false teachings and practices that had arisen in the church, showing them that true doctrine and practice are found in the Lord Jesus Christ. ***The Word Processors meet in Room 109/110 at 9:00 a.m.***

REFUGE

Mike Lawlis will be starting a study of the patriarchs this month. He will begin with Abraham followed by Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. The biblical patriarchs are the line of men God used to establish the nation of Israel. Perhaps the most well-known of the biblical patriarchs is Abraham, because from him all Israelites are descended. God made a covenant with him, promising that Abraham would be "the father of many nations." (Genesis 17:4) The Refuge has a time of fellowship which includes sharing praises and prayer requests. ***The Refuge class meets in room 115 at 9:00 a.m.***

YOUTH GROUP (Grades 6-12)

On Sunday mornings, the Youth Group is beginning the series called *The God Who Saves*, the most recent installment in the *The Gospel Project*, in which they will examine the truth of human sin and the beauty of God's salvation. On Sunday evenings, we are beginning the "Anchors Away" program taught by Elijah Smith. This is a college level course that explains the various world views with a focus on the biblical world view. Parents are welcome to monitor the class. The cost for the material is \$20. Brady New is teaching the Book of Acts on Wednesday nights. The youth will also be challenged to memorize John 1:1-18 this spring. ***The Youth Group meets in Room 117 at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings, and Sunday and Wednesday nights at 6:30 p.m.***

Youth Group Ladies Learn Self Defense

On February 4th, the girls in our Youth Group received instruction in self defense from Jack and Dawn Calvert. Fred and Rochelle Sudler also assisted in the instruction. At the conclusion of the class Dawn Calvert and Fred Sudler broke a concrete block. Photos by Mike Monfreda.



THE THREE HEBREW CHILDREN

(Continued from page 1)

gods or worship the gold image which I have set up? But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?"

- C. They gave a positive witness – Daniel 3:17-18: "... let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."

III. THEY WOULDN'T BURN

- A. Destruction was imminent – Daniel 3:19-20: "Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression on his face changed toward them ... He spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated ... and cast them into the burning fiery furnace."
- B. Death was inevitable – Daniel 3:22-23: "Therefore, because the king's command was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took them up and they fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace."
- C. Escape was decreed – Daniel 3:24-25 and 27: "Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, 'Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? Look!' he answered, 'I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the **Son of God.**' And the satraps (governors), administrators, governors, and the king's counselors gathered together, and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them."

What can we say in conclusion?

- Nebuchadnezzar saw the God they served – Daniel 3:26 (Most High God) and also the Son of God – verse 25.
- Nebuchadnezzar blessed the God they served – Daniel 3:28.
- Nebuchadnezzar decreed concerning the God they served – Daniel 3:29.
- Nebuchadnezzar promoted God's servants.

The lesson for us is that obedience to God is never easy and may be difficult, but it is God's desire for His people. May we learn that lesson.

They wouldn't **bend**, they wouldn't **bow**, they wouldn't **burn**.



MARCH

- 3/05 Melinda Moore
- 3/06 Larry Hartman
- 3/06 Sam Smith
- 3/06 Brooks Scott
- 3/08 Geri Weile
- 3/10 Betty Christopher
- 3/12 Victor Gayflor
- 3/14 Beverly West
- 3/15 Keli Handy
- 3/17 Allison Earley
- 3/18 Wanda Adams
- 3/19 Carolyn Raber
- 3/19 Elijah Smith
- 3/23 Victoria Fox
- 3/25 Olivia Raymann
- 3/26 Valerie Smith
- 3/30 Lindsey Hendricks

ANNIVERSARIES

- 3/25 Jim & Ann Bumb
- 3/28 Mike & Mary Monfreda

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

– Hebrews 11:1

News From the Children's Department

by **Cristi DeHoff**

The Children's Department had a very fun Valentines get together and service. We made Valentines, then went to visit the residents of Forest Creek Village Retirement Home. The kids read verses about love, and then played puzzles, games, and talked with residents who were very happy to have the young visitors!

Please congratulate Holly Phoenix on being our new Early Education Director, and Vickie Hovenstine on taking a new job with Noah's Ark Child Care Ministry!

We are excited to appreciate our volunteers with our Kudos Korner. Please make a special effort to write a note of thanks to these special people. The Kudos Korner is at the entry to the children's wing. Notes need to be dropped off by Friday, March 6th. You can also email a note of thanks to cristi@indygrace.org.



Our Eggstravaganza is coming up and we are in need of volunteers to help things run smoothly. We also need individually wrapped candy to stuff approximately 5,000 eggs! Every little bit helps! Volunteers can sign up at the Children's bulletin board. Candy can be dropped in the tub beneath the board.

Thank you so much for your continued prayers and support!

