

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

## BOOK OF DANIEL

### STATUE TO IDOL (DANIEL 3:1-7) DANIEL CHAPTER 3 HAS NO PROPHECIES

This is a simple story of the first time someone was executed by fire because of God. Hebrews had this story in mind in Heb. 11:34,39 "quenched the raging fire"

- Daniel doesn't come up in this chapter. He might've been away

### ONE MAY NOTICE THE QUICK REVERSAL

Nebuchadnezzar seems to have quickly forgotten the intervention and grace of God we read about in chapter 2, and reverts back to idol worship and brutality

- We tend to do this to don't we? God intervenes in our lives and then we go back to worldly comforts and we start to treat others maliciously

### THIS IS AN IDOL, NOT A STATUE

The statue in chapter 2 was not intended to be worshiped, but to bring a revelation by God. This gold statue was constructed for the purpose of worship and was built on the Mesopotamian plain so it could have been seen from over 15 miles away.

### THE IDOL WAS PROBABLY LOOKED LIKE NEBY

More than likely he took the head of the statue in his previous dream (which represented him) and in an attempt to show his reign would never end, makes an entire statue out of gold

### EVERYONE MUST HONOR THIS!

Essentially everyone on Babylon's payroll was required to come see the statue and worship it. The worship would be signaled by all kinds of musical instruments

- "People of every nation" was probably foreign dignitaries that served

### BUT IF YOU DON'T BOW DOWN...

Whoever refused to worship the idol was to be immediately immolated in a large furnace. Imagine large groups of people falling prostrate at the sound of the music

### 3 YOUNG MEN (DANIEL 3:8-15) THE CHALDEANS TOOK THIS AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO TRAP THE 3 JEWISH YOUNG MEN

How did Daniel know this? They could have made their case in front of the 3 men, the king may have told them, or the Holy Spirit might have let Daniel know

### EARLY ANTI-SEMITISM

There were 3 accusations brought against the Jews: They held no regard for the king, they did not serve the Babylonian gods, and the failed to bow down to the idol

- There is obvious jealousy and resentment in "Jews you have appointed to manage the province of Babylon..." towards the Jews, and the king

### THE REFUSAL WAS ALSO TREASON

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would have been committing treason because the idol was designed to be direct worship of Nebuchadnezzar himself

### HE PROBABLY DIDN'T LIKE THEM MUCH

Though Neby probably didn't care for the Chaldeans that would sell out 3 of their own, the offense was so great that he became furious with rage

- How could 3 men with so much potential in Babylon deny this edict and essentially choose suicide for no good reason?

### JUST IN CASE YOU DIDN'T UNDERSTAND...

Neby restated the edict, hoping the young men just misunderstood. This was reinforced with a challenge, "who is the god that can rescue you from my power?"

- The Assyrian king Sennacherib made a similar boast 150 years earlier and lost 185,000 men to the angel of death (2 Kings 19)

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, but fools despise wisdom and instruction." **Proverbs 1:7** There is a reverence of God that can easily be lost, but it is imperative to remember Who we serve!

### NO (DANIEL 3:16-23) STRAIGHT FORWARD

Instead of the formal (and safe) "O king live forever" that the Chaldeans use in v9, the Jews merely address the king by his name.

- This is not disrespect, but them leaving no room for doubt for where they stood. Contrary to Neby's thinking, he was not in control of their lives.

### "IF OUR GOD EXISTS..."

This does not mean they doubted the existence of their God, but that they know He is capable of saving them, but may choose not to

- We must distinguish God's power from God's will. He is capable of any feat, but in His wisdom chooses when to exercise that power

## TRUSTING GOD'S WILL AND JUDGMENT

When the young men say "But even if He does not rescue us, know we will not serve your gods" we see the heart of true followers of God

- Our prayers and lives should always be centered around "His will be done" (Matthew 6). Do we have a relationship like this with God?

## GOD BLESSING SHOULDN'T DETERMINE OUR WALK

Possibility of God not delivering did not deter them from standing firm in their faith

- The ultimate display of godly courage is not to die with desperate expectation that God will intervene, but rather to die in complete confidence that God will do what He sees best (Hebrews 13:5-6)

## ANOTHER FIT OF RAGE

He instructed the furnace to be heated up 7 times hotter than usual in order to instantly immolate the 3 young Jews

- There's no way to know if it really was 7 times hotter, but the point is made; it was as hot as it possibly could be
- The mention of their clothes meant that this happened without reservation

## THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN A LARGE ADOBE FURNACE WITH A VERY VISIBLE OPENING

It had a kind of pit in the middle where the embers would sit and not come out onto the ground. Imagine a large old school milk bottle with a huge door on the side

- Will we relent to the enticements of the world, pressures of culture, or the idols that are forced upon us? Will we follow Christ, even in tough, dry, or quiet seasons? Do we trust His will?

## DELIVERANCE (DANIEL 3:24-30) JUMPING UP IN ALARM

When Neby looks into the blazing furnace and sees not only the men unharmed, but there is a mysterious 4th man with them

- "Looks like a son of the gods" brings much speculation. Was this a Christophany, or an angel sent to protect the 3 men? I believe it was the preincarnate Christ

## GIVEN TO WILD MOOD SWINGS

We've seen Neby's moods change drastically and quickly, and here it goes again. He instantly wants the men pulled out

- Notice his tone of the Jewish God has changed from "who will save you?" to "you servants of the Most High God"
- The fourth man disappeared and the king's orders had no effect on Him

## NOT EVEN A SCORCHED ARTICLE OF CLOTHING

After all the officials gathered around the miraculous scene, they are flabbergasted by the fact the 3 men were unharmed and didn't even smell of smoke. **Only the bonds on their hands were missing!**

## A SECOND ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

Now Neby has had another encounter with God, but this time through the 3 friends of Daniel. Their testimony of **standing for God and being willing to die rather than worship false gods**, plus God's intervention, moved Neby.

## NOTICE HE DID NOT TURN AWAY FROM HIS GODS

Neby acknowledged God, but didn't completely turn from the worship of his gods.

- Here in lies **the most prominent issue of our day, not the complete denial of Christ, but the partial acceptance of other gods along with the True God. We want our feet in 2 worlds.**

## WE ARE GIVEN A TEMPLATE

The common excuses of moral compromise, especially blaming modern cultural influences, are contradicted by the men in this story!

- **In spite of absent parents, false religion, political pressure, and immoral culture, they did not waiver** in their relationship/trust in God

## A STORY WE TELL OUR CHILDREN (MATT. 18:3-4)

- We tell our children to stand for what's right, be honest, trust, persevere, to put forth effort, and to trust us.
- Sometimes we make it too complicated, but morality is not incomprehensible.

## AN HONEST INVENTORY

- Are we honest with ourselves, each other, about our struggles, insecurities, fears?
- Do we run to discipline, correction, and instruction, or away from it?
- Would we still follow Christ if He never answered another prayer?
- Do we trust His will over ours?

## FOR THOSE ON THE FENCE...

- God is a deliverer to those that trust Him