



FAITHFUL IN THE FACE OF LIONS

A STUDY ON DANIEL – CHAPTER 3

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, you are able to save. Remind me of this truth each day that when I see my own sin, I am comforted. Then, when I face the reality of a sinful world arrayed against me, I can rejoice that in this too, you are able to save. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

Luther on Daniel 3:

"Daniel again records a great miracle of faith. There the three men are preserved in the fiery furnace, so that God is confessed and praised by the king throughout the entire realm, even in writing. This, too, happened for the consolation of the Jews who, along with their God, were despised nobodies at Babylon under the tyrants and false gods. But now their God is highly honored above all gods, in order that they may firmly believe that at the proper time he can and will indeed save them, and meanwhile hold fast to and console themselves with this honor receives and this miracle he performs."

KEY VERSE

3:17 – "Since our God, whom we serve, does exist, he is able to save us from the blazing fiery furnace. So, he may save us from your hand, Your Majesty."

KEY THEMES

1. Resistance vs. Rebellion
2. God is in control

2 KEY PRINCIPLES TO WRESTLE WITH:

Key principle #1 – Jeremiah 29:7 "Seek the peace of the city where I have exiled you. Pray to the LORD for that city, because when it has peace and prosperity, you will have peace and prosperity." Essentially, **be a good citizen beyond reproach.**

Key principle #2 – Peter, on trial for preaching the gospel and after being told not to teach in Jesus' name, responded, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Essentially, **when civil government's laws and God's laws clash, God comes first.**

DANIEL 3

King Nebuchadnezzar made a golden statue. It was ninety feet tall and nine feet wide. He set it up in the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. ²King Nebuchadnezzar sent word to assemble the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all of the rulers of the provinces to come to the dedication of the statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. ³Then the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all of the rulers of the provinces assembled for the dedication of King Nebuchadnezzar's statue. They stood in front of the statue that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

⁴The herald called out loudly, "To you peoples, nations, and languages, this command is given: ⁵When you hear the sound of the horn, the flute, the lyre, the harp, the triangular harp, the drum, and all kinds of musical instruments, you will fall down and worship the gold statue that King Nebuchadnezzar set up. ⁶Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into the blazing fiery furnace."

⁷Therefore, when all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, the flute, the lyre, the harp, the triangular harp, and all kinds of musical instruments, all the peoples, nations, and languages fell down and worshipped the golden statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

1. Clearly, what sinful law did the King pass?

2. There have been many who have been upset at the possibility of nationwide vaccine mandates. Some Christians have been very vocal that such a mandate would be sinful and that they would not follow it. What similarities and what differences do you see between the king's decree and a potential federal vaccine mandate?

SIMILARITIES	DIFFERENCES

3. Some people seek religious exemptions for a vaccine with their employer. If a Christian is going to seek a religious exemption, what is the difference between seeking an exemption for a religious reason vs a political reason?

4. In the case of Nebuchadnezzar's statue, it is pretty clear cut that the law he passed went against God's law. In the case of a potential federal vaccine mandate, there is room for debate. What should guide the Christian in making their personal decision should a federal vaccine mandate go into effect?

5.

The Young Men Remain Faithful

⁸At that time, some Chaldeans approached the king and maliciously accused the Jews. ⁹They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "Your Majesty, may you live forever! ¹⁰You, Your Majesty, gave an order that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, the flute, the lyre, the harp, the triangular harp, the drum, and all kinds of musical instruments must fall down and worship the golden statue, ¹¹and whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into the blazing fiery furnace. ¹²There are Jews whom you appointed over the administration of the province of Babylon, namely, Shadrak, Meshak, and Abednego. These men do not pay attention to you, Your Majesty. They do not serve your gods, and they do not worship the gold statue that you set up."

¹³Then in a furious rage Nebuchadnezzar said to bring Shadrak, Meshak, and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king. ¹⁴Nebuchadnezzar said to them, "Is it true, Shadrak, Meshak, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods and that you do not worship the golden statue that I set up? ¹⁵Now, if you are ready, at the time when you hear the sound of the horn, the flute, the lyre, the harp, the triangular harp, the drum, and all kinds of musical instruments, you must fall down and worship the statue I made. But if you do not worship, you will immediately be thrown into the blazing fiery furnace. What god will be able to save you from my hands?"

¹⁶Shadrak, Meshak, and Abednego answered King Nebuchadnezzar, "We have no need to answer you about this matter. ¹⁷Since our God, whom we serve, does exist, he is able to save us from the blazing fiery furnace. So, he may save us from your hand, Your Majesty. ¹⁸But if he does not, you should know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods, and we will not worship the golden statue that you set up."

6. From Nebuchadnezzar's perspective, why was he so angry as to go into a "furious rage"?
7. Name three things that you love about the answer that Shadrak, Meshak, and Abednego gave:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
8. Agree/Disagree: Persecution is to be expected from Civil Governments even though God is in control of them.

The Young Men Are Miraculously Saved by God

¹⁹Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with rage, and the expression on his face changed against Shadrak, Meshak, and Abednego. He said to heat the furnace seven times hotter than it was usually heated. ²⁰He ordered some men, who were soldiers from his army, to bind Shadrak, Meshak, and Abednego in order to throw them into the blazing fiery furnace. ²¹So these men were bound in their coats, their pants, their turbans, and their other clothing, and

they were thrown into the middle of the blazing fiery furnace. ²²Because the king's order was urgent and the furnace was extremely hot, those men who carried Shadrak, Meshak, and Abednego were killed by the intense heat of the fire. ²³But these three men, Shadrak, Meshak, and Abednego, who had been tied up, fell into the blazing fiery furnace.

²⁴Then King Nebuchadnezzar was startled and immediately stood up. He said to his advisors, "Didn't we throw three men, who had been tied up, into the middle of the fire?"

They answered the king, "Certainly, Your Majesty."

²⁵He said, "Look! I see four men, who are untied and walking around in the middle of the fire, unharmed. What is more, the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods."

²⁶Then Nebuchadnezzar approached the door of the blazing fiery furnace. He said, "Shadrak, Meshak, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out!" Then Shadrak, Meshak, and Abednego came out from the middle of the furnace. ²⁷The satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the royal advisors gathered together and looked at these men. The fire had no power over their bodies. Not a hair on their head was singed, their robes were not damaged, and the smell of fire had not stuck to them.

²⁸Nebuchadnezzar said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrak, Meshak, and Abednego, who sent his angel and saved his servants, who trusted in God and ignored the king's command. They gave up their bodies and did not pay homage or worship any god except their God. ²⁹So I have issued an order that every people, nation, and language that speaks any blasphemy against the God of Shadrak, Meshak, and Abednego shall be cut to pieces, and his house shall be turned into a pile of rubble, because there is no other god who is able to save like this."

³⁰Then the king promoted Shadrak, Meshak, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

9. You probably first learned this story in Sunday School. What stands out to you now?

10. Sometimes "angel" is just an angel. Sometimes, in the Old Testament, we see the "Angel of the LORD". The "Angel of the LORD" often does things, promises things, or says things that only God can do (i.e., forgive sins, etc. (Gen 16:10, 22:12, Ex 3:2,6, 23:20-23)). Who do you think is the fourth man in the furnace?

11. Verses 28-29. Is this faith?

12. Once again, the result of this chapter is God lifting up his people. Earlier, Shadrak, Meshak, and Abednego did not have any specific promise of God that they would survive this event, but God blessed them twice over.