

Nebuchadnezzar the king: "O king, live forever!
¹⁰You, O king, have made a decree that every man who hears the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery and bagpipe and all kinds of music, is to fall down and **worship** the golden **image**.¹¹But whoever does not fall down and **worship** shall be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire.¹²There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the administration of the province of Babylon, namely Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. These men, O king, have disregarded you; they do not serve your gods or **worship** the golden **image** which you have set up."

A sign of good leadership is how followers act while the leader is absent.

¹³Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego; then these men were brought before the king.¹⁴Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up?¹⁵now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery and bagpipe and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, very well. But if you do not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?"

Exodus 20:4-5 NASB

⁴"You shall not make for yourself and idol or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.⁵You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me.

¹⁶Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter.¹⁷If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king.¹⁸But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or **worship** the golden **image** that you have set up."

If your goal is comfort and ease, you will end up eventually denying God.

¹⁹Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with wrath, and his facial expression was altered toward Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego. He answered by giving orders to heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. ²⁰He commanded certain valiant warriors who were in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego in order to cast them into the furnace of blazing fire.

²¹Then these men were tied up in their trousers, their coats, their caps and their other clothes, and were cast into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire. ²²For this reason, because the king's command was urgent and the furnace had been made extremely hot, the flame of the fire slew those men who carried up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. ²³But these three men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, fell into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire still tied up.

²⁴Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up in haste; He said to his high officials, "Was it not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire?" They replied to the king, "Certainly, O king." ²⁵He said, "Look! I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!" ²⁶Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the furnace of blazing fire; he responded and said, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, come out, you servants of the Most High God, and come here!" Then Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego came out of the midst of the fire. ²⁷The atraps, the prefects, the governors and the king's high officials gathered around and saw in regard to these men that the fire had no effect on the bodies of these men nor was the hair of their head singed, nor were their trousers damaged, nor had the smell of fire even come upon them.

God perfects our faith through trials (James 1)

²⁸Nebuchadnezzar responded and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, who has sent His angel and delivered His servants who put their trust in Him, violating the king's command, and yielded up their bodies so as not to serve or **worship** any god except their own God. ²⁹Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation or tongue that speaks anything offensive against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego shall be torn limb from limb and their houses reduced to a rubbish heap, inasmuch as there is no other god who is able to deliver

GROUP DISCUSSION

Daniel: Shining in Babylon
Daniel 3 Pastor Lance Ainsworth
October 12th & 15th , 2023
Courage

Prayer Requests:

Group Discussion: What is the largest statue you have seen in person?

Read aloud: Read Daniel 3, count how many times you see the words “image” and “worship.”

1. Daniel 3:1 “Nebuchadnezzar the king made an **image** of gold” What images have we made in the 21 st century? How are we asked to bow to them? We have the obvious political agendas, but can you think of any others?

2. Daniel 3:4-5 “To you the command is given, O peoples, nations and men of every language, 5 that at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe and all kinds of music, you are to fall down and **worship** the golden **image** that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up.” Why are the instruments and music mentioned? What role does music play in our lives? How is Babylon a counterfeit kingdom?

3. Daniel 3:16-18 “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. ¹⁷If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. ¹⁸But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or **worship** the golden **image** that you have set up.” Where do these three men find the courage to stand up to Babylon? Is courage something you decide or something you are given? Why did they not condemn everyone else? What does the statement show about the power of confession?

4. These three men chose to trust God even if he did not deliver them. Is there an area of your life right now where your trust is being tested? How do trials shape us? What’s a trial you can remember that has helped perfect your faith?