

Devoted Part 4 - "What do you Worship?" (8-8-21)

Review: The king's dream & demand; Daniel's prayer, insight, & praise!

1) The Dream - hearing & understanding what God's saying

Daniel 2:27-28, 30 (ESV)

(27) Daniel answered the king and said, "No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked, (28) but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days . . . (30) But as for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because of any wisdom that I have more than all the living, but in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your mind.

Note: Daniel doesn't take credit - God has something to say to Nebuchadnezzar

The Dream (Daniel 2:31-45)

- **The Great Image** - Head (gold), Chest & Arms (silver), Waist & Thighs (bronze), Legs (iron), Feet (iron & clay)
- **The Rock** - Cut from a mountain, smashes the feet and destroys the whole image into dust & blows away
- **The Interpretation** - **Gold** (Neb. current kingdom), **Other metals** (future kingdoms), **Rock** (eternal kingdom)

Notes on the Dream:

- Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom (gold) is a gift from God (2:37)
- Kingdoms of this world are continually inferior (even those appearing strong are mixed with clay)
- Only 1 Kingdom lasts - all others are destroyed

The Results - Daniel promoted & remains in the king's court. His friends are given positions in the province.

One more result . . .

Daniel 3:1 (ESV)

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.

Note: When God speaks what do you hear? What he is actually saying to you, or only what you want to hear?

2) The Image of Gold - recognizing the idols we worship

Daniel 3:2 (ESV)

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.

Note: Neb. gathers all the leaders that he has conquered, trained, & given position to come to the dedication

Daniel 3:4-6 (ESV)

(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."

Note: Worship this image (setup by the one who has conquered, re-conditioned, and promoted you) or else!

Daniel 3:7 (ESV)

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.

Note: All bow but 3, and certain people come forward to point it out!

Daniel 3:12 (ESV)

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.”

Daniel 3:13-15 (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?”**

Daniel 3:16-18 (ESV)

(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.”

Note: The King spoke & God’s faithful spoke . . .

- **Where are the others who resisted? Who else was inspired to join them?**
- **The real tragedy isn’t being thrown into the fire - the real tragedy is no one else joined them!**
- **God’s Kingdom and the true measure of success - Faithful Devotion!**

From Hebrews 11:32-40

Miraculous Rescue - conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight, received back their dead by resurrection.

Seeming Defeat - Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword.

Difficult (unsuccessful) Lives - They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated— of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

Hebrews 11:39-40 (ESV)

(39) And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, (40) since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

3) The Fire - transformation at the hands of the “true” King

Daniel 3:19-23 (ESV)

(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.

Note: The king is with you, but only when you are with him! Neb. turns in an instant - with great fury!

Daniel 3:24-25 (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.”

Note: The astonishing power of God - present in the fire!

Daniel 3:26-27 (ESV)

(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.

Note: What burned in the fire? Notice - only the bonds placed on them by the kingdoms of this world!

Daniel 3:28 (ESV)

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.

Note: Who is willing to put their trust in God and set aside the king's command?

Application: When we remain devoted . . .

1) We face our idols honestly and reject them (even at great cost!) - mention link to Jimmy's sermon

2) Jesus joins us in the fire, and we are purified & set free! (refined) - Their bonds - only thing that burned!

3) We leave a legacy of devotion that impacts others (Daniel not present in chapter 3 / see: Hebrews 11)

For reflection: a Psalm of David written centuries earlier . . . Psalm 12:1-2, 6-8 (ESV)

(1) Save, O LORD, for the godly one is gone; for the faithful have vanished from among the children of man.

(2) Everyone utters lies to his neighbor; with flattering lips and a double heart they speak . . . (6) The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times. (7) You, O LORD, will keep them; you will guard us from this generation forever. (8) On every side the wicked prowls, as vileness is exalted among the children of man.