

# Life Group Lesson

Life Hurts, Christmas Heals • Week of November 27

There is something to a name. Take a few moments, share what your name means.

During the Babylonian exile, Nebuchadnezzar had ordered some of the young men of Judah's royal line and other noble families be trained in Babylonian culture. He said, "Select only strong, healthy, and good-looking young men... Make sure they are well versed in every branch of learning, are gifted with knowledge and good judgment, and are suited to serve in the royal palace. Train these young men in the language and literature of Babylon" (see Daniel 1:3-4). Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were among the young men chosen; the king gave them new Babylonian names to replace (and in mockery of) their given Hebrew names —

Babylonian Name  
Shadrach – "Inspired of Aku" (moon god)  
Meshach – "Who is what Aku is"  
Abednego – "Servant of the god of vegetation"

Hebrew Name  
Hananiah – "Yahweh is gracious"  
Mishael – "Who is what God is"  
Azariah – "Yahweh has helped"

In Daniel, chapter two, Nebuchadnezzar's dream causes him to demand something impossible: for one of his wise men to not only interpret the dream but *tell* him the dream. The astrologers reply, 'No one on earth can tell the king his dream! And no king, however great and powerful, has ever asked such a thing...' (Daniel 2:10). Thus, all wise men of the land were to be executed. Yet, Daniel with "wisdom and discretion" asks for more time; and after praying with his three friends, God gives Daniel Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Daniel praises God, goes before the king to tell the dream and interpret it, saving lives (see Daniel 2:17-28). Though Nebuchadnezzar gives honor to the God of Daniel initially (Daniel 1:46-49), it is not long until Nebuchadnezzar makes a gold statue of himself and calls for all to bow in worship to the statue. But three men refuse.

**Read:** Daniel 3:1-18

Why did Daniel's three friends (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego) refuse to bow in worship at the sound of the musical instruments? (as you discuss, consider the three friends' response in Daniel 3:16-18, also Exodus 20:1-6, Acts 4:10-12, Daniel 2:44-45)

**Read:** Daniel 3:19-30

Nebuchadnezzar is surprised to see 'four men, unbound, walking around in the fire unharmed!' The king gives praise to God Most High and declares: "There is no other god who can rescue like this!" Advent is about the Christ of God becoming flesh – Emmanuel means, *God With Us*. The Son of God meets us where we are (even in the flames of fiery trials) and rescues those who call upon His name. He alone is worthy of our praise and worship. Close by reading together -

*"For a Child is born to us, a Son is given to us. The government will rest on His shoulders. And He will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6)*

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# Life Hurts, Christmas Heals

Text: Daniel 3:19-30, Daniel 4: 24-25

## Plain Truth:

Christmas is God's \_\_\_\_\_ mission.

We can receive healing this Christmas when we do 3 things:

1. (receive) \_\_\_\_\_ from God
2. (give) \_\_\_\_\_ to God
3. (express) \_\_\_\_\_ for God

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