

Small Groups Study Guide: Read the entire Passage first

- Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

Other passages to look at: — 1 Peter 3:15

READ THE PASSAGE

What does this passage tell us about God? Who He is and what He does.

¹ 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. ² 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. ³ Then the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. And they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. 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." ⁷ 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.

What we worship, we will serve (vs 1-7)

The issue of idolatry is making something good into a false god (vs 1-7)

⁸ Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and maliciously accused the Jews. ⁹ They declared to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever! ¹⁰ You, O king, have made a decree, that every man who hears the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image. ¹¹ And whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into a burning fiery furnace. ¹² 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." 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?” 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.

Jealousy is the raw material for murder (vs 8-17)

Lasting faith is the courage to obey, before we know the outcome (vs 8-17)

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.” 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. 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.”_

The fiery furnace freed them from their bondage (vs 19-25)

God does not always protect us from the fire, but God promises to be with us through the fire. (vs 24-25)

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.

²⁸ 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. ²⁹ Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and

their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way.”³⁰ Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

Put into Practice:

☐ People are Watching.

☐ We are the Witness.

☐ Stop asking for deliverance; start depending on His presence.

Small Group Discussion Questions

1. Why was bowing to Nebuchadnezzar's image such a serious sin, and what modern-day idols tempt us to give our allegiance to?

2. What gave Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego the courage to stand when everyone else bowed?

3. How does God use trials and suffering to accomplish His purposes in our lives?

4. What can we learn from the fact that Nebuchadnezzar was watching these men walk through the fire?

5. How does Daniel 3 ultimately point us to Jesus and the Gospel?

PURPOSE OF SMALL GROUPS

Small groups exist to promote spiritual maturity and personal growth together in deep Christian relationships through the application of God's Word. The goal is to care about each other enough to ask the BIG questions of life, such as, what is God doing in your life? What is He asking you to do about it? Then walk with each other through

sharing, caring, praying, serving, and mobilizing each other.

SHARING – We come together each week to share a meal, God's Word, and how His story impacts our daily walk.

CARING – We gather together each week to ask great questions, listen to understand each other, and what God is doing in and through our lives.

PRAYING – We meet together to pray with each other. Not just to speak to God, but to hear from Him each week in community, and daily individually.

SERVING - We work together, using our unique gifts, to serve one another by God's grace and build the body in love each week.

MOBILIZING – We are praying for our neighbors by name and pray through “Good Events” once a quarter.

Leaders' Guide (WITH SUGGESTED AND HELPFUL ANSWERS)

Main Purpose

Help your group see that the gospel is not merely behavior improvement but identity transformation. This is not a time to just walk away with another “to-do” spiritually, but an opportunity for the Gospel to shape us and transform us into the image of Jesus. This happens as we see the perfection of Jesus, recognize we are saints who still sin, are transparent with one another, and pray with each other.

Pathway

When people move off track of the purpose, point to Scripture and remind people of the purpose.

Understanding the Questions

1. Why was bowing to Nebuchadnezzar's image such a serious sin, and what modern-day idols tempt us to give our allegiance to?

Biblical Answer:

The issue was not simply bowing to a statue; it was giving worship and ultimate allegiance to someone other than God. Scripture teaches that we were created to worship God alone (Exodus 20:3-5). Anything that becomes more important than Christ, even good gifts like family, sports, career, comfort, or success, can become an idol (Romans 1:25). God calls us to worship the *Creator rather than His creation*.

Additional Scriptures: Exodus 20:3-5; Romans 1:25; Matthew 22:37.

2. What gave Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego the courage to stand when everyone else bowed?

Biblical Answer:

Their confidence rested in God's character, not in a guaranteed outcome. They trusted WHO God is, not just WHAT God might or might not do for them. They believed God was able to deliver them, but even if He chose not to, they would remain faithful (Daniel 3:17-18).

Biblical faith obeys before it knows the outcome because it trusts the One who holds the outcome.

Additional Scriptures: Hebrews 11:6; Proverbs 3:5-6; 2 Corinthians 5:7.

3. How does God use trials and suffering to accomplish His purposes in our lives?

Biblical Answer:

God did not keep these men out of the fire, but He met them in the fire. The flames burned away only the ropes that bound them. Likewise, God often uses suffering to refine our faith, remove what enslaves us, and conform us to Jesus. His presence is His greatest gift in our trials.

Additional Scriptures: James 1:2-4; Romans 5:3-5; 1 Peter 1:6-7; Isaiah 43:2.

4. What can we learn from the fact that Nebuchadnezzar was watching these men walk through the fire?

Biblical Answer:

Our response to suffering is one of our greatest testimonies. Nebuchadnezzar expected panic but witnessed peace because God was present with His servants. People are watching how believers respond when life is difficult, and faithful endurance points others to Jesus.

Additional Scriptures: 1 Peter 3:15-16; Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:14-16.

5. How does Daniel 3 ultimately point us to Jesus and the Gospel?

Biblical Answer:

Jesus is the faithful One who perfectly obeyed the Father under the greatest trial. He entered the ultimate "fire" of God's judgment on the cross so that everyone who trusts in Him would never face God's condemnation. Because Jesus was forsaken in our place, believers can know that He will never leave nor forsake them, regardless of what trials they face.

Additional Scriptures: Hebrews 13:5-6; Matthew 27:46; Romans 8:31-39; John 16:33.