

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

SESSION 4

Book of Daniel: Daniel Chapter 3 - **LEADERS GUIDE**

WELCOME

Welcome back to Session 4 of our study in Daniel. This week we'll be in **chapter 3**. Before we get started let's review **chapters 1 & 2**.

Daniel 1 teaches us that faithfulness to God often comes with trials, but it is met with divine favor and wisdom. Despite being in a foreign land under oppressive circumstances, Daniel and his friends remain firm in their convictions – they continue to sing the Lord's song even though they are in a foreign land. Their obedience not only protects them but also sets them apart, showing God's power and faithfulness.

Daniel 2 provided us with a glimpse into the sovereignty of God over the affairs of mankind. God places and removes kings. God places and removes empires. It assures us that while human empires rise and fall, God's kingdom remains steadfast. God's power to reveal dreams – as seen in Daniel's divine interpretation of the king's dream – is a testament to His supreme wisdom. When confronted with impossible challenges, like Daniel, we should lean on God's wisdom, not on our own.

So now we move to **Daniel 3**. In this chapter, we will not see Daniel. But we will see Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah – and we will continue to see how they sing the Lord's Song in the face of temptation and adversity. These men were young professionals. When they came to Babylon they were trained, wined & dined, given new names and assimilated into Babylonian culture. Their story serves as an example of steadfast faith and trust in God. It also reminds us that no god saves like our God!

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Daniel 3:1-7**

There are two things going on here:

- **First**, King Neb **misinterpreted** Daniel's interpretation from **chapter 2**. Remember, Daniel told him that the head of the statue made of gold was – King Neb. So King Neb made sure there was a FULLY golden image that would be worshipped.
- **Second**, this is a picture of **conformity**. If they didn't fall down and worship the image then they would be thrown into a fiery furnace. One of those, conform or become "well done."

QUESTIONS

Remember back to the end of chapter 2, King Neb was acknowledging the "God of Daniel," for interpreting his dream. In chapter 3 we see that this was shallow and short-lived. How can we discern when praise and repentance are genuine?

What was the difference between the image that King Neb built and the one he saw in his dreams? [the one he built was entirely made of gold – in his dream, only the head was gold.]

- *What does this suggest about King Neb's view of himself and his empire?*

Everyone in the kingdom [including the Hebrew men] faced enormous pressure to conform. How does our culture pressure believers to reject God and conform to the culture?

What are some of the idols of our day that compete for our worship?

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Daniel 3:8-14**

I want you to notice something about this passage – no one is required to give up their gods. It is really interesting. Most of the time we have this “here I stand moments” is because someone is asked to denounce God, but no one is asked to stop worshipping their gods.

- Neb is not asking them to worship the Babylonian gods instead of their gods.
- He is just asking that they worship the Babylonian gods in addition to their gods.
- They are being asked to demote God and their gods. Just scoot Him over in your heart and make a little bit of room – just make Him secondary.

The ISSUE here is **WORSHIP**.

The verb for worship and serve is used 16 times in this chapter.

- **Daniel 3:5, 3:6, 3:7, 3:10, 3:11, 3:12, 3:14, 3:15; 3:15; 3:18; 3:28** | *segid* = worship
- **Daniel 3:12, 3:14, 3:17, 3:18, 3:28** | *pelach* = serve

Neb doesn't care that they worship other gods, BUT in public – when the orchestra plays – everyone should bow down to the image that Neb has created. ***“You can worship your gods privately, but in public you will acknowledge the Babylonian gods.”***

This is **pressure**.

And this pressure extends to our time today. Do we not agree that we are increasingly living in a culture that says, ***“you can privately worship any way you want, but in public, you must be like everyone else.”***

QUESTIONS

We've seen through the first 3 chapters of Daniel that Daniel and the boys have their convictions/ resolve about God. Why do you think it is often too late to develop our convictions in the moment of truth?

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Daniel 3:15-18**

There is very little conversation and there are no negotiations because there is nothing that can be negotiated. They are not showy and not an arrogant defiance – this is a bold defiance. They are told to worship a foreign god publicly – and they did not run away from the pressure.

Neb said, you will fall down and worship me – the 3 said ***“we WILL NOT worship your gods.”*** Their position cannot be made any clearer.

In their words we begin to see what true **faith** looks like. Basically, they are stating that they will serve God only for who He is – and not for what they hope to **get** from Him.

Faith plays a crucial role in both our personal life and life in general. It serves as the defining aspect that shapes our decisions and perspectives. The decisions of our lives are often determinative of where our faith lies.

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Daniel 3:19-23**

Now think about ALL that Neb loses here:

- He loses his **temper** – he was filled with fury.
- He loses some of his **army** – sacrificed them to cast 3 kids into a furnace.
- And, he potentially loses three of his **best & brightest** – remember how they tested in **chapter 1**? They were men who had government jobs and were in high standing.

QUESTIONS

What did these three men care about more than their lives?

What does it mean to view your life as expendable for your faith, resolve and worship of God?

What do you make of what the men say in **verse 18**, “But if not...”. Does this represent doubt on their part?

- *How do we typically respond when God doesn't answer all of our prayers exactly the way we want Him to?*

When God doesn't deliver us from dangers, sickness, trials or even death – does this mean that He has abandoned us? Why or Why not?

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Daniel 3:24-30**

What's funny – is that this is the section we often remember from our Children's story book Bibles or from talking & singing fruits and vegetables. Through these – we often talk about what they were saved from – the trial and the fire.

What we should be talking about is what they **found** in the furnace.

- The first thing they found was **freedom**. [**Isaiah 43:1-3a**]
- The second thing they found was **fellowship**. They found a 4th Man.

QUESTIONS

How do you interpret the phrase " that the fire had not had any power " in **verse 27**?

What was the only thing that burned up in the furnace?

- *Why is that important?*

What is the lesson of the 4th man?

When have you sensed Him in times of trouble?

Why do you think the King promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego after their defiance?

CONCLUSION

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's miraculous survival in the furnace shows that faith in God – no matter the threat – is what truly defines us as His children. This is a truth that Christians often forget while hoping to conform God to our agenda – and to not experience suffering. According to the Bible, suffering can shape our character, deepen our trust in God. Jesus showed us that trusting in God's provision can lead to freedom and fellowship, reminding us to always be thankful for God's presence.

Outline for how we will study Daniel:

- ***April 14th: Daniel 4: King Neb's Pride and Humility***
- ***April 21st: Daniel 5: The Handwriting on the Wall***
- ***April 28th: Daniel 6: Daniel in the Lion's Den***
- ***May 5th: Hangout Night or Summary of Daniel***