

Intro: Who were some of the great servants of God willing to die for their faith throughout history?

Today we will again see the miraculous hand of God not in the life of Daniel, but in the life of his friends because of their complete trust in God. Again, it is critical that we see God is always working for His glory through His faithful servants. Today we will meet the promised Son of Man, the Messiah, long before He came to earth to save us. We will see God make a miraculous statement to silence to arrogance and pride of the King of Babylon.

READ DANIEL 3:1-3

1. **Describe the statute of the idol the King built on the plain of Dura.** (*90' tall and 9' wide. Let me put that in perspective, especially for the day long before cranes were around. A building story is between 10' and 12' depending on who you read. That means this statue was around 8-9 stories tall. That is huge for the day. The King even builds it out on a plain where all can see its magnificence. The great King shows his ego but also his devout worship of idols, which is a sure fire way to anger God!*)

Q – What are some of the idols men set up today and expect everyone to bow down to? (*Our court systems can become an idol when they call for us to serve what is contrary to God's Truth. Dare we bow down and obey what is contrary to God's teaching? We need to remember, "If God is for us, then who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31). As the world continues to become more ungodly, we need to remember this truth and the miraculous events we will see today.*)

2. **Who was ordered to come to the dedication ceremony of this idol?** (*satraps which were Persian officers who had authority over all the civil and military leaders of the provinces including the governors of the provinces; prefects which were governors; governors which were obviously distinguished in their role from the governors called prefects. We don't know much more. Advisers where the officers of the court of Babylon; treasurers of Babylon; judge; magistrates; all other provincial officials which was derived from an Aramaic term denoting rulers. This would have been a catch word for all the rulers not previously mentioned that the king used to rule over the people with an iron fist. Babylon was not a government that would have had dissension and protesters!*)

READ DANIEL 3:4-7

3. **What were all people nationalist and slaves commanded to do?** (*When the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music are heard you must instantly drop down prostrate, on your face flat on the ground, and worship the image of gold the king had set up. Anyone who refuses will be immediately thrown into the blazing furnace. The furnace was probably used commercially as a lime-kiln or a brick-kiln which is heated to extreme temperatures to cure the brick. Paul Butler records that in A.D. 1671 a traveler by the name of Chardin went to Persia and noted that two furnaces of fire were kept burning for a month for consuming those who overcharged for food. Note that all the people obeyed, fell down and worshiped the idol.*)

Q – How hard would it to be to stand before a king, a monarch, or even a president and refuse to obey the voice of the law of the land? (*The first thing we have to remember is that God told us all in authority, even kings and rulers are put there by Him to protect the innocent and punish those who are evil. God demands order in His creation. Governments are allowed by God for our good.*)

Q – Where did Jesus draw the line on obedience to governments? (*“Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God” (Matt. 22:21). The direct context is that there may be a conflict at some time. If Caesar demands what belongs to God, the he cannot have it and we will have to protect what belongs to God. Truth belongs to God. If the government wants to steal truth away from God, then we are obligated to take a stand for God.*)

4. Did the king believe any god could save them from a furnace blazing? (*The brick furnaces were heated from 900 to 1000 degrees in that day. The king had never seen anyone survive that heat. It was impossible. Ah, what an opportunity for the God of the Miraculous, the Almighty God of Creation!*)

READ DANIEL 3:16-23

5. How do Shadrack, Meschach and Abednego reply to the king and what do they give as the possible outcomes? (*WE don’t need to defend our actions. The God we serve is able to rescue us from the blazing furnace, do the miraculous before your eyes, and if He does not, He is still the only God we serve, not your gods, images of gold.*)

Q – What important truth do we learn from their statement? (*God has a plan and it may not be what I think it will be. Prayer aligns us to embrace the will and plan of God. We should know that God always answers prayer but it may be yes, no, wait, or I have a better idea for you.*)

Q – Have you ever prayed and prayer and then thanked God He did not answer it in the way you asked?

6. How did the king respond and what happened to the soldiers who bound and threw them in the furnace? (*He is so angry that he orders the furnace fueled until it is 7 times hotter. That means it could have been between 6000 and 7000 degrees! It is so hot it kills the strongest soldiers in his army who threw them in the furnace.*)

READ DANIEL 3:24-27

7. What statement has God just made to the king? (*I am the Lord of Creation. No one can do anything apart from Me allowing it to be done.*)

8. Who is the fourth man in the furnace? (*One who looks like a son of the gods! Note that is how the Babylonians see this 4th man. They are walking around unbound, the 3 plus this fourth one! In Daniel 7:13 he uses the same term to refer to the Son of Man, a term used for the Divine Glory, a name for Jesus. It was most likely Jesus who is talking with them. They see the promised Messiah long before He came to earth. How incredible would that have been?*)

9. After God’s miracle, how does Nebuchadnezzar respond? (*That is not possible. The laws of nature do not allow for it! The king knows only their God could have performed this miracle. He calls their god the God of*

the Most High! He calls them out of the furnace. Everyone can see they are totally unharmed. It's as if they were not even near the fire! The king praised their God and believes an angel was sent to deliver them.)

READ DANIEL 3:28-30

10. How has the king changed his entire outlook of their disobedience? *(He is stating that it is because they rebelled to remain faithful to their God, the God who could perform the miraculous, even willing to die, that they are alive! He then issues a decree that anyone who says anything against their God will be cut into pieces and their houses turned into piles of rubble for no other god can save in this way. He has seen the power of the only true God. They have been God's witness to all of Babylon!)*

Q – Notice they ended up blessed even greater than before for their faithfulness to the God of miracles. Have you ever stood up for God and found that you ended up far better off than you had ever been before?

Q – What are some of the lessons you and I can learn from this chapter?