

**MONDAY                  Worshiping the Image**

**Daniel 2:46–49** King Nebuchadnezzar super impressed w/Daniel = fell on his face, prostrate before Daniel...saying... “Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret.”

- Recognized Daniel’s God as one of / pantheon of gods
- King promoted Daniel as ruler over Babylon = chief administrator over wise men of Babylon
- At Daniel’s request = king promoted Shadrach/ Meshach / Abed-Nego = set them as administrators over affairs of Babylon
- Nebuchadnezzar’s admiration for /loyalty to Hebrews didn’t last

**Daniel 3:1–12** = in total defiance of God’s miraculously provided interpretation of his dream / Nebuchadnezzar made an image of entirely of gold = set up in plain of Dura

- Indicated = he would always be king/ Babylon never fail
- Called all officials of kingdom together for dedication of image
- Sent out decree = Commanding when music played
  - all persons must fall down worship image
  - Vs. 6 = “whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.”
- So = music played = all fell down / worshiped
- All except three Hebrew worthies Shadrach/ Meshach / Abed-Nego who were in attendance [obviously Daniel was not]
- Certain Chaldeans = envious of these Hebrews
  - Seeking to have them put to death
- Quick to **point** out their disobedience of the decree to king
- **Daniel 3:13–15** Nebuchadnezzar, in rage/ fury, commanded they be brought to him
- Asked if accusation true / given one more chance

- King challenged them to fall down / worship image
- Pressured them /deny their God/ saying “But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?”

**[LESSON QUOTE]** It serves as a powerful reminder that our human desire for self-determination can quickly blind us to the truth about how the great controversy will most certainly play out. ... In some ways, Nebuchadnezzar resembles characteristics of Lucifer: he was ambitious, self-important, and prideful enough to rebel openly against God’s authority. In other ways there are marked differences: Nebuchadnezzar eventually came to faith in the true God, and it is likely that we will meet him in the kingdom he originally fought so hard to defy.

**Daniel 3:16–18** <sup>16</sup>Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter.

<sup>17</sup>If that is the case, **our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king.** <sup>18</sup>But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.”

- How many excuses could they have found to save their lives?
  - Do it just this once = ask God for forgiveness
  - Fall down, but not actually worship in our hearts
  - We need to follow customs of this foreign land we’re in
  - Need to maintain our position to help our people in this exile

**[LESSON QUOTE]** Think how easily these three men could have rationalized their way out of this dangerous situation. After all, were they not being fanatics, willing to be burned alive over merely bowing down? Couldn’t they have just faked it, bowing to tie their shoelaces

while praying to their own God? Was it really worth what they were facing? Obviously, they thought so, even though their words showed that they knew that they might not escape this with their lives. **unquote**

**Luke 16:10** He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.

- If succumbed to pressure = would have broken one of God's Ten commandments = **Ex 20:3** "You shall have no other Gods before Me"
- Easy to rationalize our behavior to violate God's commandments
- Why should we die over keeping one of God's Ten Commandments?
- Easy = but dangerous = ruins our witness / also takes us outside boundaries of God's protection
- Must adopt same determination of 3 Hebrew worthies
  - Be faithful to God = endure to end = regardless of whether He intervenes to save us from an immediate situation
- **Daniel 3:21-24** Men were bound/cast into midst of burning fiery furnace = so hot = flame/sparks from fire killed men who took them to top of furnace to throw them down
- King Nebuchadnezzar gazed at furnace astounded
- knew they cast three men in bound = But what did he say?

**Daniel 3:25** <sup>25</sup>"Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." Preincarnate appearance of Jesus Christ = accompanying faithful men during time of great trial

**1 Peter 4:12-13** Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; <sup>13</sup>but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.