

Growing Deeper Continued:

- Pastor Matthew mentioned that one of the key verses in chapter 3 of Daniel is verse 25. Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego are thrown into the fiery furnace, but they are not killed. Nebuchadnezzar sees a fourth man in the furnace with the 3 Hebrew men. The fourth man in the furnace looked like “a son of the gods.” What was so significant about the statement made by Nebuchadnezzar? Is this possibly a visit by a preincarnate Christ? (**Cf. Gen. 16:13**).
- Notice the attitude change in Nebuchadnezzar once he witnesses the power of Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego’s God (Yahweh) to preserve them from death in Daniel 3:26. What significant statement does Nebuchadnezzar make about their God? What 2 things does Nebuchadnezzar declare to the entire nation of Babylon after Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego come out of the furnace alive? What is the king’s reward to the 3 Hebrew men?

Taking it Home:

- It’s been stated that compromising in little things leads to compromising in bigger things. As believers it is easy to be faced with compromise on a daily basis—most of the time no one even knows—except God. When faced with compromise of your Christian convictions this week, can you trust God to help you make the right decisions.
- How can you find courage within yourself when faced with adversity? Where did the faith giants, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego find their courage? (Cf. Isa. 43:2-3; Ps. 27:1-2; 14; 91:3-9)
- Sometimes when we’re in the pit of despair because of the tough stuff that we face in this present age, it’s difficult to realize **God is always** there with you. What example did Daniel show us in Daniel 2 and Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego show us in Daniel 3 regarding trust, hope and deliverance? (Cf. Prov. 3:5-6; Phil. 4:6-7).

For a restatement of Pastor Matthew’s sermon points, visit pastormatthew.net and click on the “Write This Down” tab.

Memoirs of an Ancient Prophet
God’s Presence in the Pit
Daniel 3: 1-30

Dr. Matthew R. St. John
Bethel Church
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God’s Presence in the Pit

Notes:

For more information about Growth Groups, Growth Group homework, and a podcast of sermons with homework, visit www.bethelfc.com.

Growth Group Homework

For the week of January 30, 2011

Daniel 3: 1-30

Quick Review: Nebuchadnezzar summons eight classes of officials to a dedication of a 90 foot high golden image of himself. Among those officials invited to the ceremony of unveiling the golden image are Daniel's three friends who were in positions of authority in Babylon (3:12), Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego. Daniel's three friends refuse to bow down and worship the golden image of Nebuchadnezzar which infuriates the king. In a condition of violent rage, the king orders Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to be executed by being thrown into a fiery furnace. Faced with certain death, the 3 men choose death rather than worship an idol. The 3 men showed absolute confidence in God even if it meant dying for their faith. God shows His power by delivering Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego from the fiery furnace which results in Nebuchadnezzar's honor of God and promotion of the 3 Hebrew men to positions of greater authority. Their faith testimonies greatly impacted the Babylonian empire.

My Story:

- Share a personal story or a powerful faith testimony of someone you know who stood firmly for God regardless of the consequences.
- Place yourselves in the three Hebrew men's sandals for a moment, in a modern day scenario; what do you think your response would be if faced with a similar experience as Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego?

Growing Deeper:

- King Nebuchadnezzar assembles eight different types of Babylonian officials (3:2) to go to a dedication of an image of himself. The officials are commanded to worship the statue or die a fiery death. READ Daniel 3:12 and interpret this verse. Who discloses to Nebuchadnezzar that the 3 Hebrew men refused to worship the idol? What reason(s) would there be for the Babylonians to accuse Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego before the king? What sinister undertones do you read between the lines? (**Cf. John 15:18-19**).
- The 3 Hebrew men are confronted by King Nebuchadnezzar in verses 14-18. **READ Daniel 3:16-18** concerning the 3 Hebrew men's reply to the king. There are 3 significant statements being made to the king by Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in these 3 verses; what are they?
- King Nebuchadnezzar was filled with rage when the 3 Hebrew men refused to worship his image. Daniel 3:19 states that Nebuchadnezzar's face was contorted due to his anger. Nebuchadnezzar demands the furnace heated 7 times hotter to destroy the 3 men who refused to worship the tyrannical king. Daniel is known as the most Prophetic book of the Old Testament. **READ 2 Thess. 2:5; Revelation 13:7; & 15.** Compare the actions of Nebuchadnezzar & the end time ruler, Antichrist; what do they have in common?
- Did Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego trust God to the point of being willing to die for God, or do you think Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego knew for certain God would spare their lives? Discuss and defend your position. What about you? (Cf. Dan. 3:18). Pastor Matthew stated in his message: They prayed for the best, but they prepared for the worst. What does that mean?
- Why would Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego risk their lives when all they had to do was bow down and worship the statue for just a short, quick moment? They could have compromised just once—who would have known? What's the bigger picture of WHY they didn't compromise their convictions?