

Committed

Opening: How Inky Gave 'em the Slip Ever feel like you just want to get away from it all?

Text: Daniel Chapter 3

Daniel's book and life ... Pivotal in Scripture

Twenty-five centuries later this book is still a has life changing impact on its readers

Key thought of this book:

“God is sovereign over kingdoms of men and over the tides of history”

Some may find this hard to swallow – You're thinking, I can't even get God to take care of my problems – and you expect me to believe He controls this world and its leaders? Have you checked local and world news lately?

Phone call back from a contractor – his work truck had broken down and I encouraged him to pray and ask God for help I explained that God is waits for opportunities to show that He cares about our problems ... I told him I'd pray about it with him

- He called back couple days later “Your prayer didn't work.” The truck couldn't be repaired
- My reply “How do you know? – the answer to our prayer is not always what we expect Maybe God wants something better for him

Theme of Daniel is that God cares about everyday things as much as the full scope of our lives – He watches over the smallest detail as well as the world changing scenarios

If you're concerned about:

- What your children or grandchildren are going to be taught in public school?
- Current threats to personal and religious freedoms?
- Family or personal health issues
- Financial challenges that are immediate or down the road
- The increasing violence in our world and society?

You need to read this book!

If you've never read the Bible because you were told it's not infallible or that it's full of contradictions ...

- Why not find out for yourself? You have nothing to lose and everything to gain.
- What if God really can speak to you through this book ... wouldn't you like to find out?

The book of Daniel is composed of equal parts, stories and visions

We are going to break this Message into two parts – two weeks (next week the prophetic vision)

Chapters 1-6 have six amazing stories – we can only cover one today ...

Chapters 7 – 12 deals with four visions (Prophecy) God reveals the future hundreds – thousands of years before it happens. – all of which have been realized except one ...which may just over the horizon

The Prophecies in Daniel are the backdrop to the book of Revelation

Today's Focus – Daniel's three friends -- along with the King Nebuchadnezzar are the main characters of these stories – What's a good story without great characters?

It's unclear if any of these four guys knew each other back home in Judea but they form unbreakable friendships in Babylon

Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah ... better known as Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego their Babylonia names

These three along with Daniel are put into a three year Babylonian training program

- Complete indoctrination – sever all links and identity to their past ... even their names were changed
- But God knows what He's doing ... brings these men together to bond of friendship that's so unbreakable they are willing to die if necessary together.

Turn to **Daniel 3** (MSG)

¹⁻³ King Nebuchadnezzar built a gold statue, ninety feet high and nine feet thick. He set it up on the Dura plain in the province of Babylon. He then ordered all the important leaders in the province, everybody who was anybody, to the dedication ceremony of the statue. They all came for the dedication, all the important people, and took their places before the statue that Nebuchadnezzar had erected.

Do you think Nebuchadnezzar was trying to make an impression?

If you want to know what this golden stature is about read the previous chapter!

Nebuchadnezzar *King Sized Ego* Ninety foot golden statute!

⁴⁻⁶ A herald then proclaimed in a loud voice: “Attention, everyone! Every race, color, and creed, listen! When you hear the band strike up—all the trumpets and trombones, the tubas and baritones, the drums and cymbals—fall to your knees and worship the gold statue that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. Anyone who does not kneel and worship shall be thrown immediately into a roaring furnace.”

⁷ The band started to play, a huge band equipped with all the musical instruments of Babylon, and everyone—every race, color, and creed—fell to their knees and worshiped the gold statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

⁸⁻¹² Just then, some Babylonian fortunetellers stepped up and accused the Jews. They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “Long live the king! You gave strict orders, O king, that when the big band started playing, everyone had to fall to their knees and worship the gold statue, and whoever did not go to their knees and worship it had to be pitched into a roaring furnace. Well, there are some Jews here—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—whom you have placed in high positions in the province of Babylon. These men are ignoring you, O king. They don’t respect your gods and they won’t worship the gold statue you set up.”

¹³⁻¹⁵ Furious, King Nebuchadnezzar ordered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to be brought in. When the men were brought in, Nebuchadnezzar asked, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you don’t respect my gods and refuse to worship the gold statue that I have set up? I’m giving you a second chance—but from now on, when the big band strikes up you must go to your knees and worship the statue I have made. If you don’t worship it, you will be pitched into a roaring furnace, no questions asked. Who is the god who can rescue you from my power?”

A question you might be asking yourself is where was Daniel in all of this why wasn’t he there to be thrown into the fire with them? His absence is conspicuous! More on this next week

¹⁶⁻¹⁸ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered King Nebuchadnezzar, “Your threat means nothing to us. If you throw us in the fire, the God we serve can rescue us from your roaring furnace and anything else you might cook up, O king. But even if he doesn’t, it wouldn’t make a bit of difference, O king. We still wouldn’t serve your gods or worship the gold statue you set up.”

Fear ... is a great motivator isn’t it? What you’d call an incentive plan ... Bow or Die!

Our spiritual enemy – loves to use the fear tactic on us ...

Paralyze you with fear wanting to overwhelm us with the plan to break our trust in God
This is an ongoing battle ... you’ve heard that voice of discouragement or condemnation

These attacks are not exclusive to Christians – they are leveled on all people **But** believers might be more mission critical because God is intent on using you to others who are desperately hurting

Letter from C W yesterday ...

Could not get the chance to talk to her tried to before she left but she could not ... please pray for her
You were meant to be part of the solution ...

Don't accept the lies from the enemy ... if God really is in charge why has he let these terrible things
happen to you or your family?

Imagine the attacks that must have been leveled on **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego**. They are
facing a certain death terrible death ...

So this is how God rewards you for your faithfulness to him? Rips you from your home and how you
will be charbroiled in furnace? Still small voice calls to us to trust – voice of faith of the Spirit

¹⁹⁻²³ Nebuchadnezzar, his face purple with anger, cut off Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He
ordered the furnace fired up seven times hotter than usual. He ordered some strong men from the army
to tie them up, hands and feet, and throw them into the roaring furnace. Shadrach, Meshach, and
Abednego, bound hand and foot, fully dressed from head to toe, were pitched into the roaring fire.
Because the king was in such a hurry and the furnace was so hot, flames from the furnace killed the
men who carried Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to it, while the fire raged around Shadrach,
Meshach, and Abednego.

²⁴ Suddenly King Nebuchadnezzar jumped up in alarm and said, “Didn’t we throw three men, bound
hand and foot, into the fire?”

“That’s right, O king,” they said.

²⁵ “But look!” he said. “I see four men, walking around freely in the fire, completely unharmed! And
the fourth man looks like a son of the gods!”

²⁶ Nebuchadnezzar went to the door of the roaring furnace and called in, “Shadrach, Meshach, and
Abednego, servants of the High God, come out here!”

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego walked out of the fire.

²⁷ All the important people, the government leaders and king’s counselors, gathered around to examine
them and discovered that the fire hadn’t so much as touched the three men—not a hair singed, not a
scorch mark on their clothes, not even the smell of fire on them!

²⁸ Nebuchadnezzar said, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! He sent his angel
and rescued his servants who trusted in him! They ignored the king’s orders and laid their bodies on
the line rather than serve or worship any god but their own.

²⁹ “Therefore I issue this decree: Anyone anywhere, of any race, color, or creed, who says anything
against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego will be ripped to pieces, limb from limb, and
their houses torn down. There has never been a god who can pull off a rescue like this.”

³⁰ Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon. (MSG)

We go through the fire **but** we don't go through it alone.
Jesus was in that fire furnace with them ... He was the fourth man

The end result is great but could not happen without commitment –

God was using them to Get to Nebuchadnezzar because he loved this man too

Isaiah 43: 1-3 (NKJ)

“Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you.

I have called you by name; you are mine.

²When you go through deep waters,

I will be with you.

When you go through rivers of difficulty,

you will not drown.

When you walk through the fire of oppression,

you will not be burned up;

the flames will not consume you. For I am the LORD, your God,

God knows your name ... He is aware of and ultimately in control of everything that concerns you

R.C. Sproul said: The issue of faith is not so much whether we believe in God but whether we believe the God we believe in.

What is your level of commitment to God?

Philippians 3: 10 That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings ... (NKJ)

Lets pray