

## Uncompromising Week 3 Glory Redefined

### Daniel 3

<sup>1</sup> King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubit and its breadth six cubits. He set it up on the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. <sup>2</sup> Then King Nebuchadnezzar sent to gather the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. <sup>3</sup> Then the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. And they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. <sup>4</sup> And the herald proclaimed aloud, "You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, <sup>5</sup> that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. <sup>6</sup> And whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace." <sup>7</sup> Therefore, as soon as all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, all the peoples, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

#### The Fiery Furnace

<sup>8</sup> Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and maliciously accused the Jews. <sup>9</sup> They declared to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever!" <sup>10</sup> You, O king, have made a decree, that every man who hears the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image. <sup>11</sup> And whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into a burning fiery furnace. <sup>12</sup> There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These men, O king, pay no attention to you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

<sup>13</sup> Then Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought. So they brought these men before the king. <sup>14</sup> Nebuchadnezzar answered and said to them, "Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have setup? <sup>15</sup> Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, well and good. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands?"

<sup>16</sup> Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. <sup>17</sup> If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. <sup>18</sup> But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

<sup>19</sup> Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was usually heated. <sup>20</sup> And he ordered some of the mighty men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. <sup>21</sup> Then these men were bound in their cloaks, their tunics, their hats, and their other garments, and they were thrown into the burning fiery furnace. <sup>22</sup> Because the king's order was urgent and the furnace overheated, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. <sup>23</sup> And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell bound into the burning fiery furnace.

<sup>24</sup> Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He declared to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king." <sup>25</sup> He answered and said, "But I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods."

<sup>26</sup> Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the burning fiery furnace; he declared, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here!" Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire. <sup>27</sup> And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king's counselors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men. The hair of their heads was not singed, their cloaks were not harmed, and no smell of fire had come upon them. <sup>28</sup> Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God. <sup>29</sup> Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way." <sup>30</sup> Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

### The Big Picture: God redefines glory. Christ is glory and gives His followers eternal glory.

#### Truth:

You have to remember that the king was the most powerful man in the world at that time. The very definition of worldly glory. No one dared question his command, but Daniel's interpretation from the previous chapter must have been unsettling. It meant his kingdom would end. So, whether in defiance or desperation, King Nebuchadnezzar decides to erect a statue for his own glory to show his power and might.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's response must have been further upsetting. How dare they refuse to bow! Nebuchadnezzar thought he had defeated all of the gods of his enemies, so he couldn't imagine a power greater than his own. "And who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands?" Nebuchadnezzar was wrong.

"O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up." There was a limit to the king's power, and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were brave enough to voice it. The glory of the king was nothing compared to the glory of God.

God saved them...more than that, God joined them in the fiery furnace. The true glory of God was seen by all the unbelieving world as four men walked around a fiery furnace and three men walked out unharmed. To the king's surprise, God's power was more glorious.

Living in “Babylon,” glory can be misunderstood. Each of us were created to reflect the glory of God, but sin affects that pursuit. Like the king, we can seek the praise of others, to be in control, or to have our own way as an affirmation of our glory. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego knew that they could only reflect the true glory of God by having a right relationship with Him. The three friends knew God. They had seen His faithfulness when they refused the king’s table yet were healthier and more robust than their counterparts, and in this story when they faced certain death. When the king commanded them to disobey God, they knew God’s ways were better than the ways of the king, and they chose to obey God for God’s glory.

Babylon tells us our glory is defined by the number of likes we receive, how many followers we have, through our grades, our looks, our achievements....but God tells us our glory is already secure because it is found in Him (not in what we do or don’t do). When we live in the security of His love and enjoy Him, we reflect His glory and that changes everything!

### **GOSPEL CONNECTION**

*(Christ entered the furnace on our behalf to save us from the fires of hell. Because of what he did, we have salvation and the power to live for him)*

- Why did the three friends refuse to bow to the king’s statue? (see 10 Commandments in Exodus 20)
- How did they experience God’s salvation?
- Where did they actually see God?
- What do we learn about God from this story?

### **Equipping:**

- Recall last week’s lesson. Nebuchadnezzar just had a dream about a statue that would crumble (signifying Babylon’s greatness and eventual demise) and yet he erects a statue and declares that people ought to worship it. We’ll continue to see what a character Nebuchadnezzar is but even in this story, what similarities do you see between him and our own fallen condition?
- It’s clear that Nebuchadnezzar had issues with pride, arrogance, power, and anger. How do those things compete with (or are opposed to) the glory of God?
- Do you see the actions and words of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego as bold or stupid? How come?

### **Accountability:**

- Have you ever faced a situation in which you were willing to do something you knew was wrong to get the approval of others? How much were you thinking of God’s glory in that moment? What about after the fact?
- Compromising our faith is a daily struggle for all Christians. Some of us struggle more with doing the things we know we should not do (sins of commission), while others of us struggle with not doing the things we should do (sins of omission). This past week (and looking toward next week), where do you most struggle?
- In what ways have you attempted to steal God’s glory this week? In other words, how have you lived your life for your sake and comfort as opposed to living for God.

### **Mission:**

- Boldly living for God’s glory can be seen as foolish according to the world. Have you ever experienced judgement from the world because you chose to live for God? What happened and how did that go? Did your faith in God grow as a result?
- When was the last time you served in the community as a group? Consider how you and your discipleship group might serve the community in the next several weeks. For ideas and opportunities, visit the [Community Outreach](#) website.
- We want to keep on encouraging you to find small ways to serve in your schools as well. Keep praying for God to open your eyes to opportunities to serve your classmates and teachers.

**Supplication:**

- Will you pray for the Nov. 7<sup>th</sup> WASH meeting as a part of your group prayer time? It is the culmination of our 6:10 Prayer Initiative. We are wanting to see dozens of new people visit the church, hear the gospel, and experience a community of grace. Specific things you can be praying for are:
  - That God would use Tegan to clearly communicate the good news of Jesus
  - That all the final details of the night come together (room set up, the worship band, tech set up, welcoming, and hang out time afterward)
  - That the visitors who come would have open ears and softened hearts
  - That Watershed students would be welcoming and warm to visitors

**For Further Study:**

- 1 Corinthians 1:18-25
  - How do you see God's word (and being a follower of Christ) as "power"? What are some ways that you are encouraged to seek after God even when the world says it is "foolishness"? How do you struggle with this?
- Romans 1:16-17
  - In your experience, have you ever felt ashamed to be a Christian? If so, how? How do Paul's words in these verses encourage or challenge you?
- Colossians 1:24-29
  - What is the "hope of glory" in verse 27? The phrase, "in Christ" is a powerful and important theme throughout the New Testament, especially Paul's writings. Why do you think this might be? How can you be "in Christ" this week?