

Gleanings of Grace

Daniel 3

Lesson 33

In 605 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon conquered Judah and deported many of its inhabitants to Babylon. Among those deported were Daniel and his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. They were each given Babylonian names. Daniel was given the name Belteshazzar, while his friends were given the names Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. Daniel 3 records the testing of the faith of Daniel's companions who chose, despite horrific threats, to worship the Most High God. May our choices be as theirs.

OBSERVATION: Daniel 3

1. Read Daniel 3 using the Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework). After reading through the chapter, what would you say to someone if they asked you what it is about?
2. Key words help us to better understand the verses. We have listed below key words. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text. Remember to mark any personal pronouns/titles that refer to *LORD*, *Nebuchadnezzar*, and *Shadrach*, *Meshach*, and *Abed-Nego*.
Key Words: *God*, *Son*, *Angel*, *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Shadrach*, *Meshach*, and *Abed-Nego*, *fire/fiery*, and *gold image*
3. The term of conclusion, *therefore*, is used three times in Daniel 3. Mark the word. Choose one instance and record what it is based upon.
4. The contrasting word *but* is used in verses 15 and 18. Mark the word. Choose one instance of its use and record what is being contrasted.

Background:

1. Daniel 1 begins with the siege of Jerusalem, including the carrying away of both articles from the *house of God* and many of the people of Jerusalem. The king instructed the *master of the eunuchs* to bring some of the children of Israel to be trained to *serve before him*. Read Daniel 1:4-5 and record the criteria for these young men.
 - a. Those selected were given a *portion of the king's delicacies and wine*, which were contrary to the foods eaten by the Jews. What does verse 8 reveal that Daniel *purposed*?
 - b. According to verses 12,13, what did Daniel request?
 - 1.) According to verse 15, what was the result? Notice that Daniel was not alone in this. His friends also chose not to *defile* themselves.
2. Daniel and his friends found favor with King Nebuchadnezzar. Using verses 17-20, describe the king's impression of these *four young men*.
3. Daniel 2 records the account of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. No one but Daniel could interpret the dream. The chapter closes with the king's response to God's revelation of the dream to Daniel. Using verses 46-48 summarize that response.
 - a. What was Daniel's petition? see verse 49
4. What can we learn from Daniel's example of how he approached the king's servant?
5. What are your thoughts as you consider the choices of these *four young men* and the way God honored their lives?

Read Daniel 3:1-7 - The Image of Gold

1. Nebuchadnezzar's dream included an image of *great splendor* made of gold. Daniel 3 begins with him making *an image of gold*. In our measurements, the image would have been about 90 feet tall and nine feet wide. He *gathered together* all of his officials. According to verse 5, what was the king's *command*?
 - a. What would be the consequences of disobeying the king's command?

2. What did *all the people* do?
 - a. Read the words of Proverbs 29:12. In what ways might this be true as it relates to the submission of the people to the king's evil?

3. When Moses seemed to tarry on Mt. Sinai, the people of Israel grew impatient. According to Exodus 32:2-4, what did Aaron (the priest) and the people do?
 - a. What did Moses say to the LORD in verse 31?

 - b. The LORD proclaimed a commandment against images in Deuteronomy 7:25. What did He warn them would happen?
 - 1.) Define the word *snare*.

 - 2.) Gideon's great error after his victorious battle with the Philistines is recorded in Judges 8:26,27. What was that error?

 - 3.) Worshipping an image is not only an *abomination to the LORD*, but it is a *snare* to those who worship it. How might looking to an idol, or anything other than the LORD, become a *snare*?

Read Daniel 3:8-18 - The Disobedience to the Command to Worship the Image

1. *Certain Chaldeans came forward and accused the Jews.* Utilizing verses 9-12, summarize their accusation.

2. Notice the phrase *these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you.* What can we learn from the examples of:
 - Jesus (1 Peter 2:21,22a)

 - Peter and John (Acts 5:28,29)
 - a. What is your understanding of when we should and when we should not *pay due regard* to those in authority?

3. What was Nebuchadnezzar's response? verses 13-14
 - a. Verse 15 indicates that Nebuchadnezzar gave them another chance. They answered *we have no need to answer you in this matter.* Reflect upon their response in verses 17,18. What did they know *God is able* to do?
 - 1.) Describe David's confidence as he declared to Saul God's power to deliver him from the giant, Goliath. see 1 Samuel 17:37

 - 2.) Read Psalm 27:1. In what ways do you personally live this declaration?

 - b. Although they believed God *would deliver them*, they also knew that although He is able, He might choose not to deliver them. Regardless of God's *deliverance*, what did they declare?
 - 1.) Describe David's confidence as he declared to Saul God's power to deliver him from the giant, Goliath. see 1 Samuel 17:37

 - 2.) Read Psalm 27:1. In what ways do you personally live this declaration?

 - c. Though God is always *able to deliver*, there are times He does not *deliver* as we might ask. Thoughtfully record the first sentence of Job 13:15.
 - 1.) What understanding of God is necessary for us to make that sort of statement?

 - 2.) A very different *deliverance* was promised to those in the church of Smyrna. What were they promised in Revelation 2:10?

 - 3.) What are some of your thoughts as you consider God's ability to deliver, but sometimes His choice not to?

Read Daniel 3:19-25 – Saved in the Fiery Trial

1. In response to the three young men's refusal to bow down to Nebuchadnezzar's image, they were thrown into *the burning fiery furnace*. Using Daniel 3:19-25, record what happened as you would write a newspaper article.

- a. What is the promise of Isaiah 43:2?

2. Thoughtfully, write the words of Daniel 3:25.

- a. What do you think it was like for Nebuchadnezzar to see one *like the Son of God* in the midst of the *fire*?

Read Daniel 3:26-30 – The King Praises God

1. Nebuchadnezzar and all those with him saw that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego were free from the effects of the *fiery furnace*. What did Nebuchadnezzar declare about:

God

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego

2. King Nebuchadnezzar made a decree earlier that all should bow down and worship the image of gold. What new decree did he make?

3. Consider the statements made by both King Nebuchadnezzar and King Darius (after Daniel survived the lions). What were they?

Daniel 4:35

Daniel 6:27

4. If you were these kings, how do you think these events would have affected your life?

REVIEW: Daniel 3

1. In what ways have you been challenged to obey God's clear commands regardless of the consequences?
2. Daniel's friends committed to obeying the LORD regardless of whether He *delivered* them or not. How does this challenge you?
3. Share some of your favorite thoughts about Daniel 3.

*Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him,
On those who hope in His mercy,
- Psalm 33:18*

Observation Worksheet

Daniel 3

¹ Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its width six cubits. He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. ² And King Nebuchadnezzar sent word to gather together the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. ³ So the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered together for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. ⁴ Then a herald cried aloud: "To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, ⁵ that at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up; ⁶ and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace." ⁷ So at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the horn, flute, harp, and lyre, in symphony with all kinds of music, all the people, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the gold image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. ⁸ Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and accused the Jews. ⁹ They spoke and said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever! ¹⁰ You, O king, have made a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the gold image; ¹¹ and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. ¹² There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up." ¹³ Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. So they brought these men before the king. ¹⁴ Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up? ¹⁵ Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, good! 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?" ¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ 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." ¹⁹ Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. He spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. ²⁰ And he commanded certain mighty men of valor who were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, and cast them into the burning fiery furnace. ²¹ Then these men were bound in their coats, their trousers, their turbans, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. ²² Therefore, because the king's command was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. ²³ And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. ²⁴ Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king." ²⁵ "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." ²⁶ Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace and spoke, saying, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here." Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire. ²⁷ And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king's counselors gathered together, and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them. ²⁸ Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God! ²⁹ Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this." ³⁰ Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the province of Babylon.