

DANIEL

We'll Burn Before We Bow

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SHEPHERD
CHURCH

THE CHALLENGE THEY FACED (Daniel 3:1-7)

1. The challenge they faced was to obey the governing authorities (Nebuchadnezzar) **or** God.

A. God commanded His people to never **make** or **worship** idols.

Exodus 20:2–5 (NIV84) ²"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. ³"You shall have no other gods before me. ⁴"You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. ⁵You shall not bow down to them or worship them . . .

B. Nebuchadnezzar was commanding them to do something that **opposed** God's command.

Daniel 3:5 (NIV84) ⁵ . . . you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up.

- Believers are commanded to **submit** to governing authorities.

Romans 13:1 (NIV84) ¹Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.

- When governing authorities command action that opposes God's standards, it is wise to **obey God** rather than oppose Him.

Acts 4:19; 5:29 (NIV84) ¹⁹But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God . . . ^{5:29}Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men!"

THE CHOICE THEY MADE (Daniel 3:8-15)

2. They chose to **obey God** rather than man.

Daniel 3:12 (NIV84) ¹²But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, O king. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold."

A. If you believe God, you **stand out** from the **crowd**.

- It is impossible for a true believer of God to **conform** to a godless culture.

Romans 12:2 (MSG) ²Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.

- A true believer is more concerned about pleasing **God** than pleasing **man**.

Galatians 1:10 (NIV84) ¹⁰Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.

B. If you believe God, you **stand firm** in your **convictions**.

Daniel 3:16 (NIV84) ¹⁶Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter.

- Standing firm is easier when you determine your convictions **before** the pressure comes.

C. If you believe God, you **stand with confidence** in God's ability to deliver.

Daniel 3:17 (NIV84) ¹⁷If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king.

- If you believe God, you **act** upon the belief that God can do what He said He can.

1 Kings 18:36–37 (NIV84) ³⁶At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: "O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have

done all these things at your command. ³⁷Answer me, O LORD, answer me, so these people will know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.”

D. If you believe God, you **stand regardless** of the **consequences**.

Daniel 3:18 (NIV84) ¹⁸But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”

- Their faith and obedience in God was not **conditional**.
- Deliverance was not their concern, their **obedience** was.

Luke 22:42 (NIV84) ⁴²“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”

Habakkuk 3:17–18 (NIV84) ¹⁷Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, ¹⁸yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior.

- The presence of difficult times does not indicate a lack of God’s blessing, it often **confirms** it.

THE CONSEQUENCES THEY FACED (Daniel 3:19-23)

Daniel 3:19–20 (NIV84) ¹⁹Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual ²⁰and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace.

3. If you believe God, you never stand **alone**.

Daniel 3:24–25 (NIV84) ²⁴Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, “Weren’t there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?” They replied, “Certainly, O king.” ²⁵He said, “Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods.”

A. God’s Word says no one can stand against you because God is standing with you!

Joshua 1:5 (NIV84) ⁵No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.

THE CREDIT THEY GAVE (Daniel 3:28-29)

4. If you believe God, your life will result in **honor** being given to God!

Daniel 3:28–29 (NIV84) ²⁸Then Nebuchadnezzar said, “Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king’s command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. ²⁹Therefore I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way.”

MY NEXT STEPS:

1. If you were accused of being a Christian, would there be enough evidence against you to convict you?
2. There is a difference between believing IN God’s existence and believing in God with a deep trust and confidence. If you believe God, are you acting in obedience to what God is asking of you?
3. Do you have a set of faith convictions that you live by? If so, are you living by them? If not, why don’t you spend some time and identify your convictions?
4. Do you trust God’s sovereignty enough to still love and trust Him even if the outcome isn’t what you hoped?