

Radical Faithfulness



Week Three

inTro



Reflecting on what we learned in Chapters 1 & 2, watch the following video:
<https://youtu.be/XzWpa0gcPyo>

After seeing it, please write down what you can apply for what you learned so far in your own exile experience.

Read This Week's Passage:
Daniel 3

COMMITMENT

We live in a culture where the Christian community has recreated God in its own image—the postmodern Christian God that is big on grace and low on human commitment. Rationalizations are given for every biblical principle. Compromise and explanations are touted any time biblical principles conflict with human desire. In short, we live in a world where Christianity promises you everything and yet requires little or no commitment.

Daniel chapter 3 radically challenges the postmodern picture of God. The God of Daniel is the God of both radical grace and radical commitment. Rather than recreating God in our image, we are recreated in the image of God's willingness to sacrifice even life itself.

The radical grace of God that required the death of God brings out a response of radical human commitment even unto death. The three Hebrews made their stand on the plain of Dura, exemplifying radical faithfulness unto death, a characteristic that will be reproduced again in God's people at the end of time.



inScribe

Write out Daniel 3 from the translation of your choice. If you're pressed for time, write out Daniel 3:16–18. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, outline, or mind map the chapter.



Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

Circle repeated words/phrases/ideas

Underline words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you

Draw **Arrows** to connect words/phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?

Memorize your favorite verse in Daniel 3. Write it out multiple times to help memorization.

What were the pressures that you felt that caused you to compromise?

What were the rationalizations that you told yourself? How did you feel afterwards?

FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH

Daniel's three friends are standing on the plain of Dura. They can see the smoke from the furnace ascending and perhaps even feel its heat. The music plays and like dominos, thousands bow before the golden image gleaming in the sun. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego remain standing while all around them, as far as the eye can see, it's clear they are the only ones.

The temptation to compromise in this moment would have been almost irresistible. It would have been the easiest thing to do to rationalize in that moment. There would have been a thousand excuses to kneel before the image or even conveniently tie your shoelaces! After all, it's just kneeling. Wouldn't God understand that I'm really kneeling in my heart to God and not to the image?

The three Hebrews on the plain of Dura made a commitment that they would rather die than kneel. They represent a radical commitment to truth and duty that is foreign to our contemporary culture. Yet it is this radical commitment that God is calling His faithful to emulate at the end of time. "We should choose the right because it is right, and leave consequences with God," even if that means our death (*The Great Controversy*, p. 460).

Biblical end-time ethics is not situational; it is radically principled. Even life itself is not worth compromising our allegiance to God. "It is better to die than to sin; better to want than to defraud; better to hunger than to lie" (*Conflict and Courage*, p. 119).

The scenes on the plain of Dura will be repeated again at the end of time. There will be an image that is set up and all will be forced to worship the image on penalty of death. But there will be a remnant that will refuse to worship the image. The clarion call to be faithful to God, even unto death, will be answered by God's people. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's radical faithfulness typify the characteristics of God's last day people.

A DEEPER LOOK INTO CHAPTER 3

Hermeneutics

Nebuchadnezzar used a conveniently biased hermeneutic (an interpretive lens) to reinterpret the Daniel 2 dream to suit his own egotistical ambitions. Instead of the multi-metal man of his dream, the king erects an image entirely of gold—implying, of course, that his kingdom would never end. Using an alternative hermeneutic to that which God has revealed, unfortunately, did not end with Nebuchadnezzar.

There are three main schools of prophetic hermeneutics: preterism, futurism, and historicism. Preterism assumes that prophecy is entirely a description of the past: there is no predictive nature to prophecy. Futurism assumes that prophecy has no present or historical bearing as it will only happen in the future. Historicism follows history as it relates to God's people down to the present day and through the end of time. This is similar to Daniel 2 as it begins with Babylon and extends down through history to the present day into the future prediction of the second coming of Jesus and the establishment of God's kingdom.

Music

Nebuchadnezzar incorporated the use of music to capture the emotions and set the stage for worshipping the image. Four times in Daniel chapter 3 the music is mentioned repetitiously detail of even the types of instrument that was played. The music clearly was the signal to bow down and worship the image that the king had set up.

Music plays a critical role in false worship. It has the power to capture the emotions, overriding reason and conscience. Music will no doubt play a crucial role in false end-time worship as well.

Tribulation

There is popular belief today among Christians that God's people in the end of time will avoid tribulation. However, the story of the fiery furnace illustrates that God will not keep His people from tribulation, He will be with them through tribulation. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were not saved from the fire, they were saved through the fire.

Revelation 13 and Daniel 3

The same issues and themes that presented itself in Daniel 3 will be played out again in the end of time as described in Revelation 13. Even as there was an image set up in Daniel 3, there will be an image set up in the end of time. Even as there was a call to worship the image, there will be worldwide call to worship the image in the end of time under the penalty of death.



inTerpret

After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks overall seem to point to?



What questions emerge after studying this passage? What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?

What parts of Daniel 3 do you see happening today?

What was the core question in the incident?



What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

Revelation 13:8–18

Daniel 6:8–15

Revelation 14:6–10

Revelation 16:1–12

Revelation 5:6–14

What other verses/promises come to mind in connection with Daniel 3?

Review your memorized verse from Daniel 3.

WHOSE OPINION MATTERS

What was the motivation that drove the three Hebrews to make such a radical stand on the plain of Dura? It certainly was not the fear of man; it was the fear of God. This was not a fear of God in the sense of being afraid, but rather for the Hebrews, the opinion of God mattered more than the opinion of their human peers. God’s opinion was worth dying for. They cared what God thought more than anyone else in the world!

The person you love the most is the person whose opinion matters the most. In a sense you because you love, you “fear” displeasing them. In the end of time, there will be two groups of people: those who fear God and those who fear the beast. Those who worship the Lamb and those who worship the beast. The beast uses coercive measures, while those who follow the Lamb do so out of love.

The Hebrew young adults made their stand because to them God was living reality in their consciousness. Through the eyes of faith, they believed in the invisible God and when the music played, it was as if they were in the audience of the only One whose opinion mattered most.



inVite

Where do you see Jesus in Daniel 3?

←
What is He saying to you through these texts?

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?

Prayer: How do you respond to seeing Jesus in this way?



Review the memory verse.
How does it apply to your
life this week?

—————→

After this week's study
of the chapter, what are
personal applications you are
convicted of in your life?

What are practical applications
you must make in your school,
family, workplace, church, and/
or society?

THE SAME MIGHTY TRUTHS

What a lifework was that of these noble Hebrews! As they bade farewell to their childhood home, how little did they dream of their high destiny! Faithful and steadfast, they yielded themselves to the divine guiding, so that through them God could fulfill His purpose.

The same mighty truths that were revealed through these men, God desires to reveal through the youth and the children of today... The greatest want of the world is the want of men—men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall. (*Education* by E. G. White, pp. 57)



Share insights from this week's memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.



What are you willing to die for?

What do you think were the motivations for why you made your stand?

Would you die for someone that you love? Does love change one's perspective of death?

What does standing for God even in the face of death reveal about God's perspective of death?

Why do you think God asks us to be willing to die for Him rather than compromise principle?

What are ways that we can keep a consciousness of God ever before us?

What are ways that we can get to the place where God's opinion matters most?