

## **We Will Not Bow**

Welcome to Harvest Community Church

Series: Daniel

**Text: Daniel 3:1-7**

There is a saying, ‘power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely’. Every person with unfettered power and influence will eventually believe that they are better than everyone else and worthy of **worship**. Leadership and government must always start from a place of humility and service, or it will eventually expect and demand to be served. If not, ego will determine that those who will not, are not worthy to live. All world dictators have succumbed to this kind of pride. One does not have to dig far into the history books to see that this is true. This is still happening in our world today. In many ways King Nebuchadnezzar is a **foreshadowing** of the final world ruler, the anti-Christ. The anti-Christ is not only against Christ, he will be nothing like Jesus in holiness, purity, character and divinity. He will be everything Christ is not. He will be described later in our study of the book of Daniel.

We notice right away that Daniel is not in this story. We are not told why. It was possible that he was traveling or that at his level of leadership, his loyalty was not in question. There will come a time in all of our lives where we will have to take a **stand** for what we believe and refuse to bow to the pressures around us. Many people have asked why the three Hebrew men didn’t just go along to get along. In their hearts they know that King Nebuchadnezzar is not a god. This could cost them their life, just bow, God knows their hearts; this is called **situational** ethics. The entire point is that God does know our hearts, but He requires both our obedience and our loyalty. A lie is still a lie anyway you tell it. Abraham found this out when he identified Sarah as his sister instead of his wife. **Genesis 20:1-16**

Many Christians do things out of fear instead of trusting God. They will also justify half-truths as a way of getting around the truth. In reality Sarah was both Abraham’s sister and his wife. In the parable of the two sons God makes a distinction between religious **pretenders** and the truly obedient. **Matthew 21:28-32**

There are times that because of our stand for Christ it may cost us our lives. 10 of the 12 original disciples gave their lives for the **cause** of Christ. (See List) A book was written entitled “Fox’s Book of Martyrs”. It is a collection of stories of men and women who lost their lives to both religious and secular governing authorities for their faith in Christ. It is estimated that there are **270** new Christian martyrs every 24 hours around the world. We must make sure that we do not take our freedom of religion granted. There are “rulers” and secularists who are demanding that any presentation of God be eliminated from public recognition. Discrimination against Christianity is rising in America and around the world. People and nations are erecting their own idols. The idols of climate change, inclusion, globalism and even charity are calling people to bow or to be canceled. It will take **courage** to continue to stand for the things of God as we draw towards the end of the age.

Notice that even in Daniel’s day, **music** was used to manipulate people into false worship. Music and all kinds of instruments can be used to signal and **conditional** people into idolatry. **Daniel 3:5 & 7** Satan has always used entertainment to signal to the masses how they are to respond. Music and entertainment put people in an agreeable mood.

We see now how TV, movies and music are indoctrinating our nation with the doctrines of demons and millions even Christians are bowing to the pressure. Satan understands that if you make everything an ‘experience’ that is pleasant if you join but has negative impact if you do not participate, then most people will simply follow the path of least resistance and pain. Even in Christian circles we have made an idol of the music in our services.

~ “How was worship?” is a question only the object of our worship can answer. Our answer to this question is revealing of what was really worshipped. Our experience has become the gauge, thus revealing that we in fact do not worship God, we worship our experience of worship. In essence we worship ourselves. Idolatry is a sneaky thing.

### **Daniel 3:8-12**

When you choose not to follow the crowd or blindly obey government officials it will get you noticed. Remember that the Chaldeans owed their very lives to Daniel and Shadrack, Meshack and Abednego. It is important to remember that we serve God to be approved by Him and Him alone. The approval of God will often times earn you the disapproval of man.

The three Hebrew men were excellent at their assignments given to them by the king. These were men with excellent mental, physical and skillful administration. In the secular world that is littered with idolatry, excellence is never enough they will require complete agreement with their ways. When we do not blindly follow it will anger them. This pattern is seen throughout Biblical examples and is clearly seen by the king’s reaction and the Chaldean betrayal.

### **Daniel 3:13-18**

Notice that the king in all of his condescending anger wants to give these men a second chance followed by a threat. This is how all spiritual warfare and manipulation works, it uses intimidation to force its way. This is how Satan works and you can see it at work in our current governmental climate, not just in the U.S but around the world. Peer pressure and shaming is still the same thing whether it is happening in Jr. High or to adults.

What caused the king and his FOLLOWERS such consternation was that they had no power over these men of God. Rejection, shaming and even the threat of death did not shake their faith or alter their position. Notice that the three Hebrew men never stopped being respectful to the king. They did not belittle, they didn’t name call or shame in return. They just refused to be moved from their Godly position. They didn’t need a second chance they did not delay the confrontation. They bravely, confidently and faithfully stated their case, ‘Our God is able to deliver us and even if He chooses not to, we are willing to die for Him, we will not compromise’.

### **Daniel 3:19-23**

It should not surprise us when Satan or those who oppose us act out on their threats. Too often in modern Christian circles we quote the verse that says - “No weapon formed against us shall prosper”. It doesn’t mean that the weapon won’t be formed, used and, in some cases, bring death; it says that it will not prosper. Even if we are killed for the gospel, we are only dead to this realm of living. These men showed no fear and refused to bow.

### **Daniel 3:24-27**

The fire was so hot that those putting the Hebrew men in the fire died as they got close. When the king and those watching saw that the young men were still alive, they knew that it could only be explained as something supernatural. In the middle of the fire there were four men instead of three and one had the appearance of the “Son of God”. In the middle of an inferno the glory of God was clearly evident to all. Not just that the four were alive but that you could see the GLORY of God. Notice that they had to be called out of the fire. They were in no rush to come out. What was going on in there. Can you imagine the conversation going on between Jesus and the young men? Some speculate that it was an angel in the fire others believe that this was the pre-incarnate Christ. Either way it is amazing.

### **Daniel 3:28-30**

King Nebuchadnezzar, as a person, ran hot and cold with his spiritual life. Seeing a miracle, he again was praising and recognizing the God of the Hebrews. Not only were they unharmed by the fire but their cloths and hair were all intact. Remember these were Middle Easterners, not even their turbans smelled of smoke. God is able to do so much more than we ask or think when we stand in faith and refuse to bow or compromise.

Here is a great truth that we need to learn from this chapter that speaks to Christians throughout world history – God could have delivered these three men FROM the fire. He did not do so. Instead, He delivered them IN the fire and brought them through.

Too often we pray to be delivered from a situation and God allows us to be thrown right in. Many times, God gets much greater glory when He delivers us IN our problem, IN our bad health, IN our time of dire need, IN our desperate situation.

As we leave chapter 3 it seems as if the king is a follower of God. He is so sinful we will see in the next chapter that God has to humble him in extreme ways.