

CLASS: SS2
SUBJECT: CRS
TOPIC: FAITH IN GOD
WEEK: 4
TERM: THIRD

CONTENT

1. The Command to Worship King Nebuchadnezzar's Image (Daniel 3:1-7)
2. The Refusal of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to Worship the King's Image (Daniel 3:8-18)
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THE COMMAND TO WORSHIP KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S IMAGE (Daniel 3:1-7)

Faith is the bedrock and foundation on which the Christian religion is built. Faith is an absolute trust in God and His power in spite of unfavourable situations. It is man's personal conviction and trust in God arising from a direct personal relationship with God.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah was their Hebrew names respectively) were young Hebrew men who had faith and confidence in God even while they were in captivity in Babylon. They dedicated themselves to the worship of God and a strict observance of God's ordinances and statutes. Their virtues, qualities and their excellence in the special school of the Chaldeans earned them appointment as officials in the Babylonian kingdom. It happened that the king (Nebuchadnezzar) made a golden image which he set up in the **plain of Dura** in the province of **Babylon**. He invited all the principal officers of the province for the dedication ceremony. He ordered the people regardless of language or nationality to fall down and worship the image as soon as they heard the sounds of musical instruments played. He had clearly stated the punishment for flouting the order which was that, the offender would be thrown into a burning fiery furnace. All the people in his domain complied with the provision of the king's decree by worshipping the image, except the three young men.

THE REFUSAL OF SHEDRACH, MESHACH AND ABEDNEGO TO WORSHIP THE KING'S IMAGE (Daniel 3:8-18)

The people in king Nebuchadnezzar's domain complied with the king's order accordingly except Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (the three Hebrew young men). **The Chaldeans** went to the king and reminded him of the content of his decree regarding worship of the image. Then they maliciously reported to the king that certain Jews, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego who were officers appointed over the affairs of Babylon neither obeyed the king, nor served his god, nor worshipped the image set up by him.

On hearing these reports, Nebuchadnezzar angrily ordered that the three Hebrew faithful servants of God be summoned before him to find out whether the allegation was true. On finding out from them that the allegations were true, he proposed to give them "soft landing" if they would comply and worship the image. But Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego openly refused to worship the image or serve the king's god. They pointed out to the king without reservation that their God whom they serve would deliver them from the burning fiery furnace and from him the king.

PUNISHMENT FOR REFUSAL AND GOD'S DELIVERANCE (Daniel 3:19-28)

The response of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego greatly angered the king and the expression on his face changed against them. He ordered the fiery furnace to be heated **seven times** more than its normal heat. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were then bound by mighty men of the king's army and cast into the overheated burning fiery furnace. The furnace was so hot that the flames killed those men who cast the three Hebrew young men into the furnace.

The king together with everybody was surprised when they saw four men walking in the midst of the fire unhurt. Nebuchadnezzar immediately asked his counsellors:

"Do we not cast three men bound into the fire? ... "But I see four men loose, 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" Dan.3:24, 25.

He came near the burning fiery furnace and called “Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, the servants of the Most High God, come forth, come out here”. When they came out, the officers of the province and the king inspected them and discovered that the fire had no single effect on them. The expression of boldness, courage and faith by these three Hebrew young men demonstrated to king Nebuchadnezzar, picture of God by saying,

“Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego who had sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him and set at naught the kings’ command and yielded their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God”. (Daniel 3:28)

THE EFFECTS OF THEIR FAITH AND COURAGE ON THE PEOPLE – BABYLONIANS AND JEWS

(Daniel 3:29)

Having recognised the supremacy and power of God through the miraculous deliverance of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, Nebuchadnezzar therefore promulgated a new decree which made it unlawful for any person, nation or language to speak against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Anybody who did so would be destroyed with his household. He declared, “There is no other god who is able to deliver in this way, as the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego”. He then promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

ASSIGNMENT

1. Explain how the faith of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were tested in Babylon.
2. Give two examples of cultural practices which are contrary to the Christian faith in your society.