



Title: Death-Defying Faith

Text: Daniel 3:1–4:3

CONTEXT |

We are not told what the image of Nebuchadnezzar's 90' tall golden statue was, but it seems clear that this is his eventual response to the interpretation of being represented by the golden head of the statue in his dream about 15 years prior (chapter 2). In that dream he was replaced by other kingdoms and eventually they would all give way to God's kingdom. In Daniel 3, Nebuchadnezzar is calling all people to bow to him in worship. He goes from praising God at the end of chapter 2 to defying him again a few years later. And, this time he becomes angry when the few who are faithful to God would not bow to him. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are forced to choose between faithfulness to God and obedience to their leader with their lives on the line.

MAIN IDEA |

Trust in the Lord and remain faithful even if your life is at stake.

KEY VERSES |

...our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.

Daniel 3:17–18 ESV

DISCUSSION QUESTION IDEAS |

- What are some common idols in our culture?
- What are some ways we are pressured to be unfaithful to God?
- Do you think you are more like Nebuchadnezzar in this chapter or the 3 faithful Jews?
- Do you view your life as expendable for the Kingdom of God? What would it look like if you did?
- How does the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego point us to Jesus?

EXPLANATION |

This is a wonderful story of the death-defying faithfulness of these three men who wouldn't bow to Nebuchadnezzar. It is also a great testimony of the limitless power of God available to care for his children as he preserves them in the midst of an incinerator. The fourth person seen in the furnace is probably one of the pre-incarnate appearances of Jesus.

Although there is a clear encouragement to emulate the faithfulness of the 3 men, we must resist immediate identification with them. Our tendency would more likely be to take the path of least resistance. The remedy is to look to the Savior who rescued these men from flames they didn't deserve as the one who rescues us from the flames we do deserve. He is our model, and the more we know and love him, the more we will be willing and ready to defy death by surrendering our life to him.