



## A JOURNEY THROUGH THE BOOK OF DANIEL

### YES, NO & MAYBE

1. I think most of the people in this room would like to have a statue of themselves displayed somewhere in town.
2. Most Christians worship God for what they might GET, rather than what they now can GIVE.
3. In religious debates, I tend to get irritated more than informed.
4. When politicians and celebrities have a true conversion experience, they bring theological clarity to what God wants.
5. Not receiving a miracle is a sign that your faith is lacking in some way.

### DIG DEEPER

#### ➤ READ Daniel 3:1-7 (NLT)

*King Nebuchadnezzar made a gold statue ninety feet tall and nine feet wide and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. 2 Then he sent messages to the high officers, officials, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates, and all the provincial officials to come to the dedication of the statue he had set up. 3 So all these officials came and stood before the statue King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.*

*4 Then a herald shouted out, "People of all races and nations and languages, listen to the king's command! 5 When you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes, and other musical instruments, bow to the ground to worship King Nebuchadnezzar's gold statue. 6 Anyone who refuses to obey will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace."*

*7 So at the sound of the musical instruments, all the people, whatever their race or nation or language, bowed to the ground and worshiped the gold statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.*

#### » The Image -

- Why did Nebuchadnezzar want all of his conquered subjects to bow and worship a statue? Think beyond what you've heard before and ask yourself, why is he **not** simply having all of them bow to him on his throne?

« The fact that all peoples, nations and languages were to fall down and worship it suggests that Nebuchadnezzar intended to unite his kingdom under one religion. The incident represents the conflict between worship of the true God and the humanistic use of religion to boost the power of the rulers of this world.

#### ➤ READ Daniel 3:8-18 (NLT)

*8 But some of the astrologers [Chaldeans] went to the king and informed on the Jews. 9 They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "Long live the king! 10 You issued a decree requiring all the people to bow down and worship the gold statue when they hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes, and other musical instruments. 11 That decree also states that those who refuse to obey must be thrown into a blazing furnace. 12 But there are some Jews—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—whom you have put in charge of the province of Babylon. They pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They refuse to serve your gods and do not worship the gold statue you have set up."*

*13 Then Nebuchadnezzar flew into a rage and ordered that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought before him. When they were brought in, 14 Nebuchadnezzar said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you refuse to serve my gods or to worship the gold statue I have set up? 15 I will give you one more chance to bow*



## DIG DEEPER...CONTINUED

down and **worship** the statue I have made when you hear the sound of the musical instruments. But if you refuse, you will be thrown immediately into the blazing furnace. **And then what god will be able to rescue you from my power?"**

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you. 17 If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, **the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty.** 18 But even if he doesn't, we want to make it clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will never **serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up.**"

» **The Real Conflict -**

- Why is Nebuchadnezzar so enraged? Look again at his words. Why might he be confused by the actions, especially, of these three?

» **The Accusers -**

- « "Informed" translates the picturesque expression "eat the pieces of flesh torn off from someone's body" and so means "to slander". The accusers are well aware of the circumstances in which these Jews were appointed to office and they resent the king's promotion of foreigners over their heads. Now is their opportunity.

» **The Response -**

- « The three Hebrews respond: "we do not need to defend ourselves before you"; "God is able"; "But even if he doesn't."
  - These are extremely bold statements to the already enraged king. What do these phrases express about God's true character?

» **READ Daniel 3:19-30 (NLT)**

19 Nebuchadnezzar was so furious with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that his face became distorted with rage. He commanded that the furnace be heated seven times hotter than usual. 20 Then he ordered some of the strongest men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. 21 So they tied them up and threw them into the furnace, fully dressed in their pants, turbans, robes, and other garments. 22 And because the king, in his anger, had demanded such a hot fire in the furnace, the flames killed the soldiers as they threw the three men in. 23 So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, securely tied, fell into the roaring flames. 24 But suddenly, Nebuchadnezzar jumped up in amazement and exclaimed to his advisers, "Didn't we tie up three men and throw them into the furnace?"

"Yes, Your Majesty, we certainly did," they replied.

25 "Look!" Nebuchadnezzar shouted. "I see four men, unbound, walking around in the fire unharmed! And the fourth looks like **a god** [like a son of the gods]!"

26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came as close as he could to the door of the flaming furnace and shouted: "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, **servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!**" So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego stepped out of the fire. 27 Then the high officers, officials, governors, and advisers crowded around them and saw that the fire had not touched them. Not a hair on their heads was singed, and their clothing was not scorched. They didn't even smell of smoke!

28 Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise to the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! He sent his angel to rescue his servants who trusted in him. **They defied the king's command and were willing to die rather than serve or worship any god except their own God.** 29 Therefore, I make this decree: If any people, whatever their race or nation or language, speak a word against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, they will be torn limb from limb, and their houses will be turned into heaps of rubble. **There is no other god who can rescue like this!**"

30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to even higher positions in the province of Babylon.

- What does God want us to discover about His character in this story's conclusion?

## MY PRAYER...

1. In what ways am I worshiping God only so that I will receive more blessings and power?
2. Am I comfortable knowing that God is able to work miracles for me even at the times that He does not intervene?
3. What new aspect of God's character does He want me to know?

