

Getting Fired Up!

Long Beach Alliance Church · July 12, 2015 · Pastor Chris Lankford

King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you! It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me. How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures from generation to generation.

~Daniel 4:1-3 (ESV)

1) Chosen For The Furnace Of Affliction

- A) Similar to our own lives, “faith challenges” for Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah came when least expected! These challenges often occur in the same places where blessings have already been received (Daniel 2:49-3:1).**
- B) As God’s people, we (sometimes unintentionally) expect our relationship with an all-loving God to result in our happiness. Like unspoken expectations between friends, we anticipate that our faithfulness will naturally result in blessings, comfort, and safety from God.**
- C) It is important to affirm that God is truly concerned with our happiness. He loves us more than we can comprehend (Ephesians 2:4-10). It is more important to affirm that God is most concerned with His glory, and lovingly uses us to reveal His greatness and extend His fame (Isaiah 48:9-14).**
- D) Life is different when we can view ourselves correctly in relationship with God. If God exists for our happiness, we are destined for frustration and endless pursuit of finding the “right formula” for receiving His elusive blessings.**
- E) But if we own lives as champions of God’s glory, His chosen people who shine His greatness in both happiness and sorrow, we will experience truly abundant living which makes an authentic and eternal difference in the world!**

2) King Nezzar Makes His Dream A Reality

- A) As a response to Daniel's interpretation (Daniel 2:37-38), King Nebuchadnezzar builds a gigantic idol, probably of their principal gods, covered in gold representing the greatness of Babylon. More significantly, worshipping the golden idol is a measure of loyalty to the King (3:4-7).**
- B) Imagine the pressure Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah must have experienced as provincial leaders in Babylon as they heard the command of the King to "fall down and worship" the 90-foot high golden image (Daniel 3:2-7).**
- C) The penalty for disloyalty? Incineration in a furnace (3:6). The story takes on a racially anti-Semitic (anti-Jew) tone from the Chaldeans (3:8-12) when our three super-heroes are put to the test by a furiously angry King (3:13-15).**
- D) King Nebuchadnezzar's question, "who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands?" (3:15) dominates the scene!**
- E) The faithful response of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (3:16-18) is powerful. Their collective confidence in God is so resolute, they answer the King AND give glory to God with 100% loyalty, even if it results in their deaths!**
- F) The loyalty to God of these three young Jews twists King Nebuchadnezzar into a fiery rage (3:19). The King orders his smelting furnace heated to its maximum level (7X) and mighty soldiers throw the three young men to their deaths. Fierce heat kills the soldiers, but... (3:20-23).**

3) God Reveals His Glory To Babylon

- A) Expecting sounds of screaming and agony, the King leaps up and is shocked to see our three heroes casually walking around in the midst of the fiery furnace WITH A FOURTH MAN, whom the King describes as divine (3:24-25)!**
- B) King Nebuchadnezzar calls Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego out of the fiery furnace completely unscathed! God's great saving miracles are witnessed by all of the most significant leaders in Babylon, and leads the King to give an ecstatic proclamation of blessing to God and preservation of God's people in Babylon (3:26-30).**
- C) Despite King Nebuchadnezzar's praise of God (4:1-3) the King pursued his dreams for himself. This is a cautionary tale for God's people. Do we dream for our own comfort or glory? Or, do we dream of maximizing God's Name, His greatness, His fame, and His glory? No matter what fiery ordeal you face, give all possible glory to God (Isaiah 43:2)!**