

THE BOOK OF

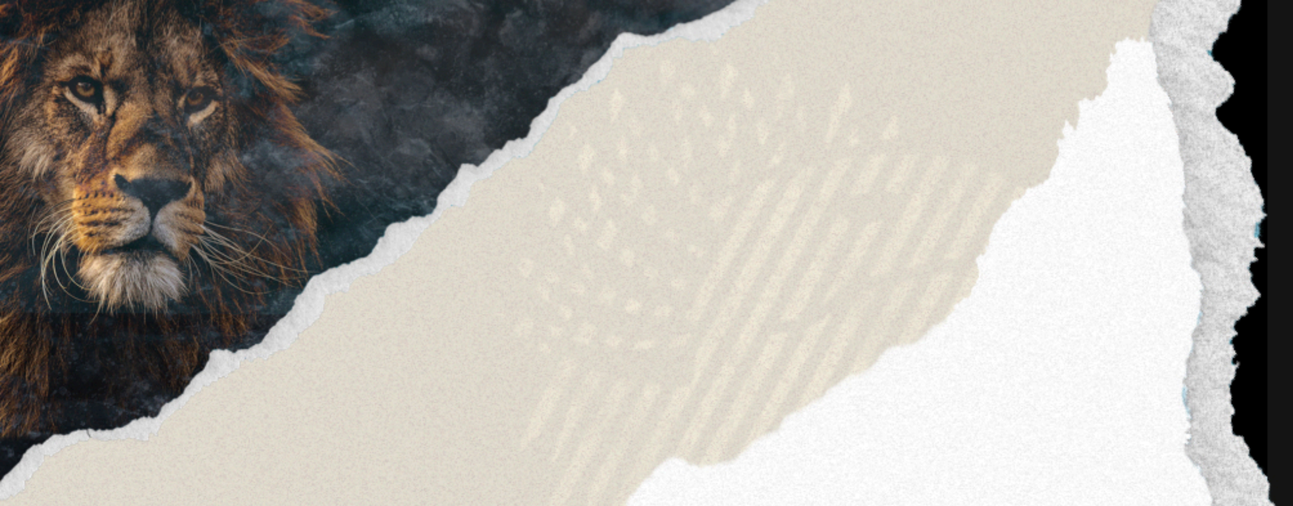
DANIEL

Breaking The Norm (Courage)

Chapter 3

Goal Of Chapter 3

The goal of Daniel 3 is to help us learn how to be as courageous as Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah while living in Babylon. Courage is an essential characteristic for those who would thrive in Babylon. There will always be cultural idols that fight for our allegiance and our attention, and Chapter 3 is one of those chapters that builds our courage so that we can respond with boldness, courage and dependency on God knowing that he is with us.



King Nebuchadnezzar

At the end of Chapter 2 in verse 47, King Nebuchadnezzar made a bold declaration: *“Truly, your [Daniel’s] God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries”*. The disappointment comes at the start of Chapter 3 when the king makes an image of himself of gold that he demanded everyone bow too. Building this image made the matter worse since in the dream only the head represented him, but in Chapter 3 the entire image from top to bottom is gold. The fact that the entire image is gold means he thinks his kingdom is going to last forever, and it is the most important thing on earth. God will humble King Nebuchadnezzar.

Golden Image

This statue would have been 60 cubits high and six cubits wide, which would equate to ninety feet high and nine feet wide. Imagine how small Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah must have looked next to this statue, or even next to the most powerful man in the world - King Nebuchadnezzar - and his soldiers. Now let's imagine how small King Nebuchadnezzar, his soldiers, and his ninety foot statue looked next to God. Courage always begins when we learn to see everything else smaller than God.

“But If Not”

In verses 17-18 Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah say*“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.”* There seems to be such a delicate balance between fully trusting in God to deliver them but giving God room to do whatever He pleases. It is almost as though they’re saying we’d rather die in the flames with our God than live in a palace with a mere man like King Nebuchadnezzar. What is clear to us in this passage is the three Hebrew boys were not 100% sure God would come through, yet they were willing to risk their lives for the sake of their God. This is the bold dependency that God is calling us to. Pray that we would step up to the challenge to be bold.

The Fourth Man

Verses 24-27 say that King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished to see a fourth man in the fire with Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. The Christian understanding of reading the New Testament through the lens of the Old Testament helps us see that the fourth man is the Son of God. This story is a great pointer to the work of salvation that Jesus will do on the cross. On the cross, Jesus saves us from the unquenchable fire (The wrath of God). What’s beautiful is that the same way the boys from Israel didn’t have a hair singed, nor burns in their clothes or the smell like smoke, that in the same way Jesus completely saves us from God's wrath.

Questions:

1. If you’ve ever had your faith or biblical convictions tested, what did you do?

2. King Nebuchadnezzar didn’t get the lesson in Chapter 2 that God was all powerful. Rather, he made the situation worse in Chapter 3. How have you missed a lesson that God has been giving to you, and what happened?

3. Although the statue was big, God was bigger. What would it take for you to begin to see God as bigger in every area of your life?