

Bowing to a Golden Statue (Dan 3)

A Small Group Outline

1. **Praise** (*Purpose: To worship God*)
 - What are you thankful for this week? (*let the group's secretary write these down in an A4 hardcover or some notebook*)
 - Song Service
 - Sing a few songs of praise to God
2. **Pray** (*Purpose: To carry each others' burdens and to seek the Lord*)
 - What challenges did you have this week? (*write these down in an A4 hardcover or some notebook*)
 - Go into a season of prayer
3. **Review** (*Purpose: To learn accountability*)
 - Tell us how it went with what you promised to do in last week's meeting? (*e.g. Who did your share you faith with this past week? Who did you minister to? How did actioning your I WILL STATEMENT go?*)
 - *Where people have failed to fulfil what they said they would, do not be harsh with them but gently encourage them to try again in the coming week. Give them more support by phoning or joining them in the week.*
4. **Give** (*Purpose: To be good stewards of our monies*)
 - Our best option in the lockdown is to return tithes and offerings electronically. Ensure you get the bank details from your treasurer. Don't forget to complete an envelope and to send the breakdown to him/her.
5. **Discover** (*Purpose: To learn to listen to God, and be obedient to His Word*)
 - **Notes for the facilitator**
 - For further insights read *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 503-513
 - The central issue in Dan 3 is worship (the word is used 12 times in this chapter)
 - Dan 3 deals with the union of church and state. All the invitees were political figures but the decree to worship was religious in nature
 - Nebuchadnezzar's decree to worship was universal. It included all nations, peoples and languages (see Dan 3:4, 7)
 - A death decree was proclaimed against those who worshipped the image (3:6, 11, 15, 19)
 - A remnant chose to worship God and keep His commandments, even at the risk of death
 - Music played a significant role. It appealed to the senses, enticed the ear while the magnificent idol enticed the eye, giving people a sense of grandeur and power. It impressed everyone to 'go along'
 - Texts that show that the furnace purifies: Isa 48:10, 11; Job 23:10; Mal 3:2, 3
 - Meaning of: 'We have not need to answer you in this matter' (NKJV) or 'We do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter' (NIV): "It is true that we did not bow O Nebuchadnezzar, and therefore cannot defend ourselves for our civil 'disobedience'. Our case is now rests in the Hands of the God we serve, and He is our Defender."
 - Meaning of 'son of the gods': Because the word 'son' is a noun of relation it is best to translate it as 'a member of (a group)', that is, Nebuchadnezzar saw the fourth person as a member of the 'divine family'. (See also *Prophets & Kings*, p. 509).
 - *Read Dan 3 as a group. Preferably let one person read it. Let everyone then put down their Bibles and get the group to reconstruct the passage in their own words. This teaches the*



group to be careful in quotation Scripture correctly and to use it as the basis of their discussions.

- **Discussion Questions** (*use only a few*). *The notes in italics after some of the questions below are for the facilitator, and not to be read out to the group.*
 - By making the image of pure gold Nebuchadnezzar was saying: *“History will not flow as God determined. I am in control of human history.”* Are there ways in which we re-interpret God’s Word to suit our preferences? Give some examples.
 - According to 2 Kings 24:14-17 we know that Nebuchadnezzar took many great men into captivity from Judah to Babylon. So there must have been other Jews on the plain of Dura that day. Why do you think they bowed to the golden image, instead of standing with their fellow countrymen?
 - Why do you think music was employed at this event?
 - Why is it so difficult to stand out from the crowd, to stand alone?
 - Why do you think God did not deliver them **from** their time of trouble, but rather **through** their time of trouble? What is the difference between these two perspectives?
 - Why did Babylon use the bewitching power of beauty (the image) and music at this time? What was their effect?
 - What value is the furnace of affliction to God’s saints?
 - It is said that character is **not formed in a crisis**, but rather **exposed during a crisis**. How can this be seen from vss 16-18?
 - What does Jesus’ presence in the furnace communicate?
 - What impact do you think this episode of the ‘fireproof boys’ had on those who witnessed the events on the plain of Dura? How do you think God’s name was honoured when all these dignitaries went back to their lands? (*Ask one question at a time*)
 - How do you think the issues of Dan 3 will again play out at the end of time?
 - What was so significant about Nebuchadnezzar’s reaction in vss 28-29?
 - How is it possible to build ‘fireproof characters’?
- **Application Questions** (select a few depending on your time. One has to be the I WILL STATEMENT)
 - Do you find that you easily stand for your convictions, or do you tend to go along with the crowd?
 - What ‘furnace’ experience have you come out of, or are going through, or are going into? What is it teaching you? What comfort can you draw from Daniel 3 about the trials you face? (*ask one question at a time*)
 - What has touched you the most about what happened on the plain of Dura that you would like to incorporate into your life?
 - I WILL STATEMENT: Formulate an I will statement in response to what you have discovered in the Word. Let the group’s secretary also record these in an A4 notebook. Ensure that everyone gets a chance to give their I WILL STATEMENT. You have to be specific. E.g. “I am determined to stand for my convictions at work / school / university and not be afraid to let my friends know that I am a Christian / Adventist.”
- **Share** (*Purpose: To be witnesses of our faith*)
 - Do you have anyone you could share today’s lesson with this week? *Be specific.*
- **Closing prayer**