**GOD IS STILL A DELIVERER**

**Daniel 3:1-30**

**THE BIG IDEA: God is able to, and He will, ultimately deliver His faithful from the furnace of affliction and judgment.**

**THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD’S PEOPLE WILL BE TESTED**

* *“Then in a furious rage Nebuchadnezzar gave orders to bring in Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king. 14 Nebuchadnezzar asked them, ‘Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, is it true that you don’t serve my gods or worship the gold statue I have set up? 15 Now if you’re ready, when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, drum, and every kind of music, fall down and worship the statue I made. But if you don’t worship it, you will immediately be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire—and who is the god who can rescue you from my power?’”* (Daniel 3:14-15)
* *“Look, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.”* (Isaiah 48:10)
* **When you belong to the one true God, you understand that circumstances and appearances are no match for the sovereign God you serve.**
* *“Do not make an idol for yourself, whether in the shape of anything in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth. 5 Do not bow in worship to them, and do not serve them.”* (Exodus 20:4-5a)
* *“Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied to the king, ‘Nebuchadnezzar, we don’t need to give you an answer to this question. 17 If the God we serve exists, then he can rescue us from the furnace of blazing fire, and he can rescue us from the power of you, the king. 18 But even if he does not rescue us, we want you as king to know that we will not serve your gods or worship the gold statue you set up.’”* (Daniel 3:16-18)
* **Whether our deliverance from affliction comes now, or whether it comes when we meet Jesus face to face, our faithfulness is a result of how we view God now.**

**GOD IS SOVEREIGN AND ABLE TO DELIVER HIS PEOPLE FROM THE FURNACE OF AFFLICTION**

* *“He exclaimed, ‘Look! I see four men, not tied, walking around in the fire unharmed; and the fourth looks like a son of the gods.’ 26 Nebuchadnezzar then approached the door of the furnace of blazing fire and called, ‘Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, you servants of the Most High God—come out!’ So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out of the fire. 27 When the satraps, prefects, governors, and the king’s advisers gathered around, they saw that the fire had no effect on the bodies of these men: not a hair of their heads was singed, their robes were unaffected, and there was no smell of fire on them.”* (Daniel 3:25-27)
* **There is no circumstance that catches God by surprise or is not subject to His sovereignty.**
* *“You can make many plans, but the Lord’s purpose will prevail.”* (Proverbs 19:21 NLT)
* *“Nebuchadnezzar exclaimed, ‘Praise to the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! He sent his angel and rescued his servants who trusted in him. They violated the king’s command and risked their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. 29 Therefore I issue a decree that anyone of any people, nation, or language who says anything offensive against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego will be torn limb from limb and his house made a garbage dump. For there is no other god who is able to deliver like this.’ 30 Then the king rewarded Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.”* (Daniel 3:28-30)
* **Every earthly ruler and leader will submit to God’s sovereign plans and purposes, whether they realize it or not.**
* *“A king’s heart is like channeled water in the Lord’s hand: He directs it wherever he chooses.”* (Proverbs 21:1)

**GOD SENT JESUS TO DELIVER PEOPLE FROM THE ETERNAL FURNACE OF SUFFERING**

* *“For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”* (John 3:16-17)
* **Like the angel of God that saved Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fiery furnace, the Son of God saves all who call on Him from the fire that will never be quenched.**
* *“The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will gather from his kingdom all who cause sin and those guilty of lawlessness. 42 They will throw them into the blazing furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in their Father’s kingdom. Let anyone who has ears listen.”* (Matthew 13:41-43)
* **One thing is for certain, whether deliverance from “the fire” happens in the present circumstances or in the life hereafter, God rescues His children.**

**\*\*CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION ON BACK\*\***

**Connect Group Discussion**

**Understanding:**

* What does Daniel 3:1-30 teach us about God/Jesus?
* What is the main message of Daniel 3?
* Why wouldn’t Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego bow to the statue even though their lives were at stake?

**Digging Deeper:**

* What are some “fiery furnace” situations where you may have to show courage?
* What are some of the current cultural pressures to conform that Christians face today?
* What are some modern day idols that people seem to be drawn to?
* How can you be better prepared to respond properly when faced with pressure to conform to culture and/or modern day “idols”?
* How do you respond when God doesn’t deliver you/others in the immediate situation(s) in life?
* What do you need to do differently as a result of this study?

**Loving Outward:**

* Who do you need to share the gospel with this week?
* Who do you need to follow-up with regarding the gospel?
* Who are you bringing to church next Sunday?

If you are not in a Connect Group and would like to get connected to grow in your relationship with God and others, contact the church office at 225-272-3740, and we can help find a group that fits your schedule.