

The Ability of God

Fred Muse

July 12, 2009

Scripture: Daniel 3

16-18 ¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. ¹⁷ If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. ¹⁸ But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

Full scripture at the end of lesson.

Other Passages Sited

1 Cor. 5 governing authority

1 Tim. 2:1-3 submit to governing authorities

Ex. 20:2-6

Group Session

Opening Question

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego showed great faith in God by their stand. Have you witnessed anyone taking a strong stand for what they believe, even a stand that could cost them personally?

Digging for Truth

1. Review or read the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Remind the group of their reply to King Nebuchadnezzar. Did it show a lack of faith in God when they said, "But even if he does not (save us)..."? Why?
2. What are some things that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego knew that King Nebuchadnezzar did not?
3. Fred talked about experiential knowledge vs. academic knowledge. How do these two related to the Christian life?
4. One of the main factors in a strong faith is having a track record of faith hearing about and living experiences of faith.

What stories from the Bible give you faith?

What are the things in your life history that help you have a stronger faith for the future?

5. Fred talked about the relationship between worship and service. Do you agree with the statement that people with a sincere love for God show it through serving Him?
6. What are some ways you serve God? Do you see that as an act of worship?
7. Fred said that worship is centered in the glory of God, not what we can get out of it. What wrong motives are possible in service?
8. Below is a list of ways to make God's ability personal in your life. Which of these blesses you the most at this point in your life.

God has the ability to save you. (Heb. 7:25)

God has the ability to keep you saved. (2 Tim. 1:12)

God has the ability to protect you. (Jude 1:24)

God has the ability to strengthen you. (Romans 16:25)

God has the ability to meet your needs. (2 Cor. 9:8)

God has the ability to answer your prayers. (Eph 3:20)

Closing Challenge

Fred shared Dan. 33:32 that says, "But the people who know their God will display strength and take action." What are some things going on in your life right now that God is calling you to show strength and action?

Daniel 3 Full Chapter

¹ King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, ninety feet high and nine feet ^[a] wide, and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. ² He then summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the image he had set up. ³ So the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials assembled for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and they stood before it.

⁴ Then the herald loudly proclaimed, "This is what you are commanded to do, O peoples, nations and men of every language: ⁵ As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. ⁶ Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace."

⁷ Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp and all kinds of music, all the peoples, nations and men of every language fell down and worshiped the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

⁸ At this time some astrologers ^[b] came forward and denounced the Jews. ⁹ They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever! ¹⁰ You have issued a decree, O king, that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music must fall down and worship the image of gold, ¹¹ and that whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace. ¹² But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, O king. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up."

¹³ Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king, ¹⁴ and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? ¹⁵ Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?"

¹⁹ Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual ²⁰ and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. ²¹ So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. ²² The king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, ²³ and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace.

²⁴ Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?"

They replied, "Certainly, O king."

²⁵ He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods."

²⁶ Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!"

So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, ²⁷ and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.

²⁸ Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. ²⁹ Therefore I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way."

³⁰ Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the province of Babylon.