

Daniel Dialogue

3

Reading Guide for Daniel 3

God Rescues in surprising ways!

Group Discussion

Think of a time you were caught by surprise. What happened and how did it feel?

Kids Activity

Follow the maze to find out how God Rescues.

Life seems to be the most unpredictable adventure!

We are encouraged to plan for our futures, however the old adage *life is what happens while you're planning* is often true. The surprises of life can be a cause for excitement and joy—but the unpredictable can leave us wondering.

The stories of Daniel 2 and 3 are closely related. In Daniel 2 Nebuchadnezzar saw an image composed of different metals representing the rise and fall of empires, while in Daniel 3 Nebuchadnezzar made an image completely of gold, representing his desire for his kingdom to remain forever. This story contains some surprises.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S IMAGE AND DEATH DECREE verses 1-7

1. THE IMAGE verse 1

Nebuchadnezzar's golden image must have been an impressive sight.

2. THE DEATH DECREE. verses 2-7

List the features of Nebuchadnezzar's decree:

1. A _____ compelled worship.
2. The basic issue was _____.
3. To bow down was to disobey _____ of God.
4. If any person refused to worship as ordered, that person faced _____.

Compare the decree of Daniel 3:1-7 with that of Revelation 13:11-17. What are the similarities?

ANS: _____

NEBUCHADNEZZAR MEETS FAITH & COURAGE verses 8-18

3. Which commandments would the Hebrew youth have violated if they had bowed before the golden image? Exodus 20:3-6

ANS: 1. " _____ ."

2. " _____ ."

4. When Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were accused of treason and called before Nebuchadnezzar, his first question was, "Is it true ... that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up?" Daniel 3:14.. What basic principle for effective human relations was understood by Nebuchadnezzar? Matthew 18:15.

ANS: _____

5. In what way did the three Hebrews demonstrate faith? Daniel 3:16-18

ANS: _____

6. How would you define faith—and courage? See 2 Corinthians 5:7 and Hebrews 11

ANS: _____

NEBUCHADNEZZAR MEETS THE GOD OF THE HEBREWS verses 19-30

7. What purpose did the fire accomplish? Daniel 3:23,25.

ANS: verse 23 _____ verse 25 _____

8. God was closer to His followers in trial than before. He showed up in the heat of the fire. verse 25

Reflect upon these questions:

- What do you think the three men thought about God as they walked into the furnace? Did they wonder what God was doing? Did that mean that they didn't have faith?
- What would you have been thinking—if you were one of them? How would you feel when you saw Jesus?

Consider these promises:

- "So do not fear, for _____ ." Isaiah 41:10.
- "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond _____ . But when you are tempted, he will also provide _____ so that you can stand up under it." 1 Corinthians 10:13.

AN APPLICATION ...

"The most important thing to notice about the events of this chapter is the New Testament prediction that they are soon to be duplicated on a worldwide scale. This event on the plain of Dura is the first recorded instance of an attempt to produce conformity in idolatrous worship by penal statute. It has been abundantly imitated since, but the most universal and drastic exemplification of religious persecution yet awaits us.

"Rev. 13:11-18 uses the elements of chapter 3 to portray a universal test over worship that is to climax history. The whole world is to come under the sway of a system of apostasy called Babylon, church and state will unite to enforce idolatrous worship upon all, and death is to be the penalty for nonconformity. On the other hand, the following chapter in the Book of Revelation warns that eternal death will be the result of compliance (Rev. 14:9-11). The commandments of God once more become the touchstone at a time when that idolatrous worship of the creature which the three Hebrews refused to give will characterise the multitudes of earth.

"According to Revelation, the outward token of false worship in the last days will signify to the universe that its participator has 'the mark of the beast', the character of the first idolater - Satan himself - while those who worship in the way of the divine law will demonstrate that they have 'the seal of God', the name or character of their Redeemer. The deeper meaning of chapter 3, when read in the light of Revela-

tion 13, is that all the world is to become a Calvary demonstrating the depths of good and evil in such a thorough way that God can bring the curtain down on time ...

“While what has been mentioned is the ultimate significance of the record we are about to study, it would be foolish to forget that it applies also to the daily decisions of every professed worshipper of God. With unceasing constancy we are called upon to decide between giving our allegiance to the idols of popular conformity or to the requirements of our Creator. Though furnaces of trial threaten, the believer will count on the saving presence of the Son of God and seek to obey and follow Him only. If duty is clear, no question need be asked about consequences. Providence may permit us to be thrown into the furnace, but it will only consume our bonds. Heaven is the presence of God, and it is worth entering a fiery furnace if thereby we meet Christ.” - *Daniel*, pages 102, 103. Southern Publishing Association, 1978.

PARALLELS: DANIEL 1-3 & the warning message in REVELATION 14:6-12

DANIEL'S DAY	REVELATION 14:6-12
<p>Daniel 1 Prior to final judgement on ancient Babylon, Hebrews are sent as witnesses to call the nation to worship the true God.</p>	<p>Revelation 14:6,7 Prior to the final judgement of symbolic Babylon God sends a message through His witnesses.</p>
<p>Daniel 2 Babylon's world empire is to be overthrown. It has taken God's people captive and oppressed them.</p>	<p>Revelation 14:8 As a result of rejecting this warning message, symbolic Babylon falls.</p>
<p>Daniel 3 A universal decree is passed enforcing worship of the image of Babylon. God manifests His hand as the three Hebrews face death.</p>	<p>Revelation 14:9-12 A universal decree is passed enforcing worship. The issue is clearly between the commandments of God and the mandate of men. Miraculously, God manifests His hand to deliver His people.</p>

DISCUSSION

1. What do you believe provided Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego with the foundation for their decision not to bow down to the image?
2. What pressures does Satan use to cause us to break or disregard the law of God?
3. What practical help have you received from this story that will help you when faced with difficult situations?
4. In what area of your life are you now facing the greatest pressure or challenge?
5. Why doesn't God act sometimes? Do we always see the ways that God acts? Have you ever felt God's presence in a difficult situation?
6. **Kid's DISCUSSION:** To get to the end of the maze we go in all sorts of directions, but we find the gift in the end. God promises to rescue us. What are some different and interesting ways by which God Rescues?
7. **Daniel 3:29 is a key verse.** Here is a paraphrase of the central idea: *There's no other God that can pull off a rescue like this!* In your own words, share what this text tell us God can do. What things would you like God to help you with?

FINAL PERSONAL WORD ...

DANIEL 3 is as up-to-date as any chapter in the Bible. Even while we read and share, believers in many countries of the world are suffering in prison for their faith—and some are facing death.

Even though we can never predict how God will act, we can trust or put our faith in Him. In Daniel 2 we saw that God sees the big picture, far beyond our finite view of the world. With that view and His power to act, because He knows and cares, He rescues. The surprise is how He does that!

DANIEL 4, the chapter we will read in our next dialogue, is one of the most outstanding in Scripture. It is actually written by King Nebuchadnezzar himself. It includes an official edict from the king—with his personal testimony to God's leading in his life. After reading Daniel 4 you will know that God reaches out to all people. In mercy and justice He works for each person.

If you turn your eyes towards God as Nebuchadnezzar did in chapter 4, you will discover new meaning to life and blessings from God will be yours.