

# SERMON | DO NOT BOW

## SERIES | STRANGE LAND

STUDY GUIDE | ALEC SEEKINS | SUNDAY, APRIL 28, 2024

### SERMON SUMMARY

In Daniel 3, we read the story of Shadrack, Meshach, and Abednego coming out of the fiery furnace without even a hint of smoke. In a situation like theirs, most people would bow down to the idol and compromise their faithfulness to the Lord. What set Shadrack, Meshach, and Abednego apart and gave them the strength to resist?

Deuteronomy 6 is where we find both the commandment not to go after other gods, as well as the three things that strengthened Shadrack, Meshach, and Abednego from bowing down to false idols: fear of God, trust in God, and love for God.

**Fear of God:** Courage is not the lack of fear, it is the clarity and the resolve to fear the right thing. When we fear God rather than man, we fear the right thing, and as a result we will do the right thing. We are to fear God supremely, because He has ultimate authority over our bodies and souls. No man controls our eternal destiny. Instead of seeking approval from other people, the gospel of Jesus reminds us that we are approved by God.

**Trust in God:** Sometimes our circumstances make it appear as though God will not be or is not being faithful to us. If we know the Lord, we know His character, and we know this is not true. He is *always* faithful to us. If we trust God according to His character, and if necessary, against the circumstances, we will not bow down to the idols of Babylon.

**Love for God:** When Jesus was crucified, nearly all of His disciples and followers abandoned Him. In the darkest hour of history, they were unfaithful to Him. There were, however, three of His followers who were there when He was being crucified. His mother, who years ago carried Him in her womb, Mary Magdalene who days ago anointed His feet with her tears and dried them with her hair, and John the beloved, who hours ago was resting on Jesus' chest at the last supper. Perhaps these three did not abandon Jesus, because they were the only ones who knew that they were following Jesus, not because of what He could do for them and Israel, but because they loved Him. Our love for God can help to sustain our faithfulness and obedience toward Him.

### SCRIPTURE READING

**READ THIS WEEKS BIBLE PASSAGE: Daniel 3:16-30; Deuteronomy 6:1-4, 13-15 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. <sup>17</sup> If this be so, 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. <sup>18</sup> 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." <sup>19</sup> Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was usually heated. <sup>20</sup> And he ordered some of the mighty men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. <sup>21</sup> Then these men were bound in their cloaks, their tunics, their hats, and their other garments, and they were thrown into the burning fiery furnace. <sup>22</sup> Because the king's order was urgent and the furnace overheated, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. <sup>23</sup> And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell bound into the burning fiery furnace.

<sup>24</sup> Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He declared to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king." <sup>25</sup> He answered and said, "But I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and

they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods.” <sup>26</sup> Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the burning fiery furnace; he declared, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here!” Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire. <sup>27</sup> And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king's counselors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men. The hair of their heads was not singed, their cloaks were not harmed, and no smell of fire had come upon them. <sup>28</sup> Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God. <sup>29</sup> Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way.” <sup>30</sup> Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon. – Daniel 3:16-30

### **The Greatest Commandment**

**6** “Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the rules—that the LORD your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, <sup>2</sup> that you may fear the LORD your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long. <sup>3</sup> Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey. <sup>4</sup> “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. – Deuteronomy 6:1-4

<sup>13</sup> It is the LORD your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve and by his name you shall swear. <sup>14</sup> You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you— <sup>15</sup> for the LORD your God in your midst is a jealous God—lest the anger of the LORD your God be kindled against you, and he destroy you from off the face of the earth. – Deuteronomy 6:13-15

### **BIBLE PASSAGE APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

What stood out to you in these passages? Did the Lord highlight anything to you? What do these passages teach you about the character of God? What do these passages teach you about mankind? What do these passages teach you about how mankind should respond to God? What do these passages teach you about how to respond to others?

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Read these passages again (use a different translation if helpful). How did these passages help to convict, correct, or encourage you?

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## GROUP DISCUSSION

### DISCUSS THESE QUESTIONS WITH YOUR GROUP

1. Has there been a time in your life where you bowed down in your heart or worshipped with your lips the “idols of Babylon?” What do you think the idols in our culture are today?
2. The fear of man at its core is about the desire of approval. The Bible describes the fear of man as a trap. The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe (Proverbs 29:25). Do you struggle with fearing man over fearing the Lord? In what ways? How can you practice fearing God over man?
3. How has God helped you grow in your capacity to trust Him, according to His character, and even through difficult circumstances?
4. As you’ve walked with the Lord, in what ways has your love deepened for Him? How has this brought newfound revelation of what it means to love the Lord with all your heart, soul, and might?

## PRAYER

Take some time for prayer requests and pray over one another before wrapping up.

