



# Meeting God in the Fire

Matt VanCleave  
January 29, 2023

## REVIEW LAST WEEK'S NEXT STEPS

What, if any, next step did you commit to last week, how did it go?

- I will honor God in my relationships, and not bow to the god of pleasure.
- I will honor God with my finances, and not bow to the god of security.
- I will honor God in my worship, and not bow to my self-interests.
- I will remain devoted to God even if he does not give me what I want.

## THIS WEEK'S SERMON RECAP

Imagine this; you have risen to a position of power and prestige at your job. You have promises of great wealth, great adoration, and a great future. Your heart is full of hope and dreams.

And then, the person who rules your country mandates that you turn from your religion and bow down to Him. You are faced with a choice, do you move with the crowd and keep all you've earned, or do you follow your God and walk into your death?

This tension is what Daniel chapter 3 is all about. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were faced with a choice, and it led them into a fiery furnace. Yet they didn't burn; they didn't die. Instead, they experienced a powerful God who changed them and the people around them.

This week we'll talk about how that kind of devotion to God really is possible for ordinary people like you and me today.



# Meeting God in the Fire

Matt VanCleave  
January 29, 2023

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Daniel 2 ends with Daniel being elevated to a high position after he interprets the King's dream. Daniel also requested that the king appoint Shadrach, Meschach, and Abednego to high-status roles. Read Daniel 2: 48-49. What do you think Shadrach, Meschach, and Abednego must have felt and thought as their life transitioned in these verses?
2. When have you experienced moments of success and promotion like Shadrach, Meschach, and Abednego? Have these moments and experiences shifted your relationship with God?
3. Daniel 3 brings a new reality for Shadrach, Meschach, and Abednego. King Nebuchadnezzar forges a statue of himself and then requires everyone to worship this statue publicly. Shadrach, Meschach, and Abednego are faced with a choice, bow down to this idol and save all that they have worked for or refuse the King and face death. The story seems extreme, but I imagine all of us have faced moments in our life when we are faced with a choice between our own perceived needs and desires and what God wants from us. When have you lived in the tension of a situation like Shadrach, Meschach, and Abednego?
4. Shadrach, Meschach, and Abednego certainly could have bowed down but not 'meant it.' Or they could have bowed down and prayed to God for forgiveness. Yet they chose the stand. How do you react when our faith calls us to be resilient? Why is it hard to stand in our lives?
5. If we were honest, we would say that we have, at one time or another, chosen to join the crowd rather than stand up. What have those moments taught you about yourself? What have those moments taught you about God?



# Meeting God in the Fire

Matt VanCleave  
January 29, 2023

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

6. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego stood, and then as a repercussion they were sentenced to immediate and painful death. Read Daniel 3: 13- 23. What does the emotion and brashness of King Nebuchadnezzar teach you about his character? What strikes you about the reaction and acceptance of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego?
  
7. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are thrown into the fire, but the fire does not consume them. They stand in the fire, untouched by the flames, protected by God. What does this teach you about God?
  
8. When has God protected you like he protects Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? OR, when did you feel like God didn't deliver you in the way He delivered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.
  
9. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are protected by God, and they walk out of the fire unscathed. King Nebuchadnezzar is in awe of what he saw in the fire, and when the men walk out of the fire he declares that anyone who speaks against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego will be 'cut into pieces.' Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are then appointed to even more prestigious roles. How does this ending of hope shape the way you understand the story? How does this ending give you hope?
  
10. The ultimate theme of this chapter is that God decided to deliver Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from a furnace. Their resilient faith was met with deliverance. How does that theme and story resonate with you? What area of life do you need God's deliverance from today?



# Meeting God in the Fire

Matt VanCleave  
January 29, 2023

## NEXT STEPS FOR THIS WEEK (COMMIT TO GROW)

- I will not make furnace avoidance the goal of my life.
- I will stop asking God to deliver me from the furnace and instead to meet me in it.
- I will pray, “God, give me an opportunity to show my commitment to you.”

## SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

- Daniel 3:17-30
- 2 Corinthians 12:7-9
- James 5:14-15

## Spiritual Practice of the Week

- Engaging the Present: part of growing in our faith is embracing God’s wisdom and guidance in our day-to-day life. It is easy to fill our minds with nostalgia from the past or plans for the future, and yet reflecting on God in the present is key to our spiritual formation. This week spend time contemplatively reflecting on your present, thinking about the way God is working in your life today and the way that God is drawing you to Him this week. Be present with God, living in the midst of who He is for you today.

## Prayer Request(s)

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
-