

FAITHFUL WORSHIP

(15-20 minutes, easy set-up)

Use this outline and the Biblical Commentary to prepare to share the truths of this passage with learners. Encourage learners to take notes on their worksheets as you teach. The underlined words in the Master Teacher Outline correspond to the blanks on the worksheet.

Introduction: When you think of the term “worship wars,” what comes to mind? Maybe you envision people disagreeing about worship elements such as hymns sung from hymnals or praise song lyrics displayed overhead, organ or drums, choir members in matching robes or singers in regular clothing. Today’s lesson, however, reveals a different type of worship war—one in which people have to choose whether to worship God or an idol created by human hands.

1. God has called His followers to worship only Him (Daniel 3:1-12).

- King Nebuchadnezzar created a golden image, which he set up on the plains of Babylon and dedicated to his god (vv. 1-3).
- The king required every person in the kingdom to worship this image or face the deadly consequences of being cast into a fiery furnace (vv. 4-7).
- When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship the idol, the Chaldeans immediately reported their disobedience to the king (vv. 8-12).

Illustration: A quick glance at newspaper headlines reveals these worship wars continue today. Athletes may be ridiculed for praying on the field. Teachers and coaches are prohibited from actively praying with students. Family members who profess faith in Christ are disowned or even killed. In some parts of the world, ISIS and the Boko Haram have executed scores of Christians.

2. Others will question why believers won’t compromise their worship of God (Daniel 3:13-18).

- The king personally offered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego one last chance to worship the golden image because no god could deliver them from his hands (vv. 13-15).
- Refusing to worship the image, the three men placed their safety in God’s hands (vv. 16-18).

Interactive Questions: Do you find it difficult to understand the choice the young men made? Why? What makes it possible for people to take such an uncompromising stand for their faith?

3. When believers refuse to compromise their worship, God is glorified (Daniel 3:19-30).

- Infuriated, Nebuchadnezzar order the men bound and thrown into the furnace (vv. 19-20).
- The furnace was so hot that their executioners were killed by the flames (vv. 21-23).
- Although three men were thrown into the furnace, the king witnessed four individuals walking unbound and unharmed in the fire (vv. 24-25).
- The king recognized that the young men survived due to God’s intervention (vv. 26-27).
- Because even Nebuchadnezzar recognized that The Future is in God’s Hands, he gave praise to God (vv. 28-30).

Illustration: Although God preserved the lives of these three men, He later allowed Stephen to be stoned for preaching the gospel to Jews who rejected the message. Stephen’s last recorded prayer was that God would not hold that sin against his killers (Acts 7:60). Both events are recorded in Scripture so that we can see God may choose to reveal His glory in either way.

Conclusion: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had the opportunity to faithfully worship God. By not compromising, even to the point of death, these young men gave powerful testimony of their faith in God.