

MESSAGE NOTES

Daniel - Staying Connected to Jesus

Daniel 3:1-18 (NIV)

¹ King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, sixty cubits high and six cubits 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, "Nations and peoples of every language, this is what you are commanded to do: ⁵ As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe 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 nations and peoples of every language fell down and worshiped the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

⁸ At this time some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews. ⁹ They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "May the king live forever! ¹⁰ Your Majesty has issued a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe 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, Your Majesty. 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, pipe 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?"

¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, "King 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 deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. ¹⁸ But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

...since from the beginning of the world there has been no region, no city, in short, no household, that could do without religion, there lies in this a tacit confession of a sense of deity inscribed in the hearts of all. (Calvin, Institutes)

"Idolatry is having or inventing something in which one trusts in place of or alongside of the only true God, who has revealed himself in the Word" (Heidelberg Catechism, 4.095)

"We live in the **mesmerizing rhythms of idolatry**. We don't usually choose it; we just slide into it. We get used to the way things are, and we assume that's the way they must be." (Mark Labberton, Dangerous Act of Worship)

NOTES:

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

March 8, 2026

Daniel 3:1-18

As needed, refer to the Order of Worship and Resources at solanabeach.church for sermon video, message notes, readings and resources, and small group question print out.

CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

Before beginning your time in the passage this week, consider sharing your thoughts on the following prompt: *What's a "good day" for you? What would it include? Not include?*

CONNECT WITH GOD (Choose from the below practices or select a practice from another week.)

- **Use the "Daniel" Card for Reflection on Reclaiming Presence this Lent**
Alone: Using SBPC's Lenten card, spend time in quiet prayer, reflection, and journaling. What has "reclaiming presence" looked like for you so far this Lent? How are you learning what it looks like to "dwell in the present moment with God?" How will you continue to commit to "reclaiming presence" this Lent?
- **Sacred Rhythms and Journaling**
Consider the rhythms of your daily life and how they impact the quality and texture of your life in Christ. Explore how you might cultivate daily rhythms that help you live well. Use the below questions as a guide (questions from Ruth Hayley Barton's [Sacred Rhythms](#)).
 - Who do I want to be?
 - How do I want to live?
 - How do I want to live so I can be who I want to be?

CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

- **Together:** Read Daniel 3:1-18.
- **Alone:** Read Daniel 3:8-16 again. Slow down and reflect on the below prompts for a few minutes.
 - o What are some contemporary forms of idolatry?
 - o How do you attend to those idols and rhythms that turn your attention away from God?
- **Together** as a larger group: Share your reflections from the prompt.

CONNECT WITH SCRIPTURE

If needed, read the passage again. Then select the best questions or customize the questions for your group.

- Watch the Bible project Video(s) on the book of Daniel.

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- Review the sermon outline.
- What are you still reflecting on from the message this week?
- What words or images stand out to you as you reflect on the passage?
- Is there anything new or surprising to you about Daniel 3:1-18?
- What stands out to you about the rhythms of idolatry that are present in this text?
- What is unique about the reply of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego's response?
- Is there anything surprising/telling about Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego's response to idolatry and the king?
- Have you ever faced a situation where your faith was challenged? How did you respond?
- In what ways do we face golden statues or mesmerizing rhythms in our lives today?
- At this midway point in Lent, how are you continuing to wrestle with the concept of a "digital Babylon"? And the invitation to a digital fast?

ENGAGE AND EXPLORE

Together: explore an excerpt from the podcast below, reflecting on the mesmerizing rhythms of idolatry in our lives today and in our broader contexts as a culture and society.

"But the highpoint theologically is right here: 'We don't need to give you a defense. And we are unhooked from your idolatry and your corruption and your distortion of reality. We're not going to live in that context.'"

—Mark Labberton, [Mesmerizing Rhythms of Reality](#) (solanabeach.church/030826)

PRAYER

Together in small groups: share prayer requests with one another. As a way to affirm the continual presence of God in your lives, despite the enticing rhythms and habits of the world, close your prayer time with Isaiah 43.

This is what the Lord says—
he who made a way through the sea,
a path through the mighty waters,
who drew out the chariots and horses,
the army and reinforcements together,
and they lay there, never to rise again,
extinguished, snuffed out like a wick:
"Forget the former things;
do not dwell on the past.
See, I am doing a new thing!

Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland.
The wild animals honor me,
the jackals and the owls,
because I provide water in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland,
to give drink to my people, my chosen,
the people I formed for myself
that they may proclaim my praise.