

# STAND on God's Word

A sermon on Daniel 3

We are in the middle of a series called STAND.

In the first two messages, we learned that the only way to stand at peace with God is to **STAND** by **FAITH** in God's **GRACE**.

But...

It is difficult to put faith in this *unseen* grace.

For example...

I collect PEZ dispensers. Even though it's nothing more than some cheap molded plastic with insertable little cubes of stale sugar, some PEZ dispensers can be quite expensive.

Like the Moustachio'd Alpine man.

PEZ released two versions of him. The clean-faced version of him is worth very little, but the version with a mustache is worth over \$1000 dollars to hardcore collectors. He is rare and not easy to find.

If you found one online that was selling for \$500, a good deal for that rare piece, I might not believe you till I saw the deal myself.

Even if I did see it, I'd probably look into whoever was running the ad. If the seller didn't have any reviews on Google, I might not believe the seller.

But if the seller had their own shop and a link to hundreds of outstanding reviews calling him the Prince of PEZ...

I'm all in.

*Faith in something you can't see is validated by a voice of authority telling you about that something you cannot see.*

How powerful is the voice behind the invisible truth of GRACE?

Today we'll look into the authority of God's voice and learn to STAND on God's Word. Before we do, a prayer: **O Lord, strengthen us by the truth. Your Word is the truth. Open our eyes to see what you want us to see; open our ears to hear what you want us to hear; and open our hearts to believe what you would have us believe. Amen.**

## I. A Story about Standing on God's Word

In Daniel 3, a man named Nebuchadnezzar is King of Babylon. Recently, he had conquered many nations, established an incredible empire, and set up a powerful government.

But taking over the world had gotten a bit boring, so...

**King Nebuchadnezzar made a golden statue. It was ninety feet tall and nine feet wide. (Daniel 3:1)**

That's large.

It's about 8 stories high.

It'd be like three of our church building stacked on top of each other.

That's a lot of gold material.

**King Nebuchadnezzar sent word to assemble...all of the rulers of the provinces to come to the dedication of the statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. (v.2)**

Since Nebuchadnezzar was a fancy king.

I'm sure it was a fancy party.

Fancy ballroom gowns.

Fancy red carpet to walk in upon.

Fancy music played by the fancy royal orchestra.

Fancy little hot dogs on the multicolored toothpicks.

(Sorry, that's about as fancy as my imagination gets...)

In the middle of this grand party with all kinds of important people present, King Nebuchadnezzar unveils the purpose of the statue:

***“To you peoples, nations, and languages, this command is given: When you hear the sound of .... all kinds of musical instruments, you will fall down and worship the gold statue that King Nebuchadnezzar set up. (v.4-5)***

*Because*

*Not only has Nebuchadnezzar created a violent army.*

*Not only has your King created an empire.*

*Not only has he created an impressive government.*

*Not only has he created this fancy party.*

*But King Nebuchadnezzar...*

*Has created a god.*

*For you.*

*Making Nebuchadnezzar a Creator of gods...*

*If you will.*

*So...*

*When you hear the music...*

*Bow down and worship the god Nebuchadnezzar created for you.*

*Enjoy it.*

*Revel in it.*

*Find peace from it.*

*Oh...*

*And one more thing.*

*If for whatever reason you choose not to fall down and worship the statue...>*

***You will immediately be thrown into the blazing fiery furnace.” (v.6)***

*Burned alive.*

*Your flesh will melt.*

*You'll die a painful death.*

*Let's test the system.*

Immediately, the orchestra played, music filled the air, sweat poured own people's faces...

Less because they believed that Nebuchadnezzar's art project was an actual god.

More because they didn't wanna die....

Everyone fell down...

Everyone worshiped.

Well...

Almost everyone...

As part of building his empire, Nebuchadnezzar had taken many individuals captive from the countries that he conquered. This included the nation of Israel. In Babylon, most of them served in lower class, peasant-level jobs to improve the lives of upper-class Babylonians.

But the more capable-looking young men were taken under Nebuchadnezzar's wing. They were fed, taught, and trained to be high-level advisors in the Babylonian kingdom.

This included three young men named Shadrak, Meshak, and Abenego.

These young teenagers had been trained to fight like Babylonians.  
They had been trained to speak like Babylonians.  
They had been trained to govern like Babylonians.

And they had done such a good job, they were given high-up positions in the kingdom.

But...

One thing they weren't trained to do?

Worship Nebuchadnezzar's art project "god".

The others took great pleasure telling on them: **"Your Majesty, may you live forever!... These men do not pay attention to you, Your Majesty. They do not serve your gods, and they do not worship the gold statue that you set up." (v.9-12)**

Nebuchadnezzar was angry.  
This was a slap in his face...  
And a slap in the golden face of the statue that he had set up.

He brought the three Israelites into his palace.

*Is it true you didn't bow?  
Did you just miss the music?  
Were you checking to see if others were bowing?  
Maybe you have some arthritis in your knee?*

*Tell you what.*

*Don't let anyone tell you that I'm not merciful.  
I forgive you.*

*As long as you, bow down and worship the golden image...  
Right now.*

*If not...  
**"You will immediately be thrown into the blazing fiery furnace. What god will be able to save you from my hands?" (v.15)***

The three men looked at one another.  
They had heard the king's words.  
They knew he was serious.

But...

They also remembered someone else's words.  
Words they had been taught way back in Hebrew school.  
Words written on ancient, treasured scrolls:

**The LORD said, “You shall have no other gods beside me. You shall not make any carved image for yourself or a likeness of anything in heaven above, or on the earth below, or in the waters under the earth. Do not bow down to them or be subservient to them, for I the Lord your God am...God.” (v.3-5)**

So...

The men nodded at one another.  
Meshach and Abednego put their hands on Shadrach’s shoulders.  
Shadrach took a deep breath and spoke:

**“We have no need to answer you about this matter. Since our God, whom we serve, does exist, he is able to save us from the blazing fiery furnace. So, he may save us from your hand, Your Majesty. But if he does not, you should know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods, and we will not worship the golden statue that you set up.” (v.17-18)**

As hot as that fiery furnace was...  
It was nowhere near as hot as Nebuchadnezzar’s temper.

*How dare you!  
Get out of my sight!  
You think you can defy me!  
Guards take them!  
Bind them.  
Heat the furnace seven times hotter than usual!*

*Do it quickly. I can’t wait to watch these men burn.*

And the crews worked quickly.  
The soldiers marched them towards the furnace.  
While the furnace workers added fuel to the flame.

As Nebuchadnezzar took his seat to watch ‘the action.’  
The soldiers tossed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego into the fire.

But then...

Tragedy!

Because the situation had been so tense, the furnace workers had moved too quickly and missed important safety protocols. This resulted in a large heat blast exiting the furnace and killing the soldiers that threw the three captives into the fire.

The king noticed.  
But he didn’t care.  
He just wanted everyone to know that anyone who crossed him would fa....

*Wait a second.*

*Didn’t I order three men thrown into the fire?*

***He said, “Look! I see four men, who are untied and walking around in the middle of the fire, unharmed. What is more, the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods.” (v.26)***

Sure enough.  
There.  
In the middle of the fire.

Where not even oxygen could survive.

Stood four men.

Shadrach.

Meshach.

Abednego.

And an angel of the LIVING God.

The King rubbed his eyes.

He ordered the men to come out of the furnace.

When they were removed from the heat, the king and the officials examined them.

Their hair wasn't singed.

Their clothes weren't burned.

Their bodies didn't even smell like smoke.

Nebuchadnezzar was humbled.

Nebuchadnezzar hadn't had the final say.

God had.

## II. Standing on God's Word

This is an amazing story of standing on God's Word.

These men refused to listen to the king's words.

Even if it cost them their lives.

In a world where we get nervous that standing on God's Word might cost us a Facebook friend, how do we get fiery furnace level faith?

Remember a few key truths:

### **(1) HUMAN words come with HUMAN authority**

Nebuchadnezzar really had a complex, didn't he?

The Bible tries to draw that out in the opening verses of this story.

There's a phrase that the author includes that dominates the initial paragraphs about the golden statue God.

"He set it up."

It's in verse 1.

It's in verse 2.

It's in verse 3.

It's in verse 5 and verse 7.

The point is very clear.

This thing had zero authority.

In fact, it wouldn't have even existed without Nebuchadnezzar.

This gave Nebuchadnezzar a "creator" complex.

**Apparently, Nebuchadnezzar had forgotten that...**

He too was created.  
He too was born.  
He too sat around in little Babylonian diapers.  
He too needed to be taught to walk.  
He too needed to be taught to talk.  
He too needed someone to wipe his chin when he spit out his Babylonian broccoli soup.

Nebuchadnezzar wasn't a Creator.  
He was created  
*By the Creator.*  
Meaning...  
There was always a BEING way more powerful than him.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego hadn't forgotten that.  
They knew the worst that the King could do is throw them in fire for about 30 seconds.

The Creator?  
He could save his creation from the fire.  
Or recreate them forever, perfectly in heaven.

### **Don't forget that.**

The guy who intimidates you on social media? Just a human.  
The coworker who ridicules you for following God? Just a human.  
The friend who tempts you to break God's Word? Just a human too.  
The judgmental words of your ex? Just human words too.

Their authority ends on the timeline.  
They have no power into eternity.

### **(2) GOD'S word comes with GOD'S authority**

Do you know the science of fire?

*Fire is the result of applying enough heat to a fuel source, when you've got a whole lot of oxygen around. As the atoms in the fuel heat up, they begin to vibrate until they break free of the bonds holding them together and are released as volatile gases. These gases react with oxygen in the surrounding atmosphere. (Science.org/au)*

At 118 degrees, human skin can sustain first-degree burns.  
At 131 degrees, a second-degree burn injury can occur.  
At 162 degrees, human skin is destroyed.

Humans have little to no authority over these atoms at the moment of ignition.  
Let alone thrown into the middle of seven-times-hotter-than-normal fire.

But not God.  
God has authority.  
Authority to the burnable atoms of human skin from the combustible atoms of fire.

Of course, he does!

God invented fire on the fourth day of the world when he caused the greatest ball of fire in the universe to explode into existence.  
We call it the sun.

**Theologically** this means that God has the final say.

If he calls something sin.  
*It is sin.*

It doesn't matter what the king of Babylon says.  
It doesn't matter what the laws of the Babylonians say.  
It doesn't matter what the Babylonian king threatens.

*It matters what God says.*

It doesn't matter what Twitter says.  
It doesn't matter what Facebook says.  
It doesn't matter what MeWe says.

*It matters what God says.*

It doesn't matter what Fox News says.  
It doesn't matter what CNN says.  
It doesn't matter what the Home Shopping Network says.

*It matters what God says.*

It doesn't matter what your coworkers say.  
It doesn't matter what your friends say.  
It doesn't matter what your family says.  
It doesn't even matter what your pastor says...

*Ultimately, it only matters what God says.*  
Because only God has ultimate authority.

If you are looking for answer on any issue.  
Look at his Word.  
He has ultimate authority.

### **(3) God's Word SAVES**

After the failed furnace execution, Nebuchadnezzar finally gets it right. He says this,  
**Blessed be the God of Shadrak, Meshak, and Abednego, who sent his angel and saved his servants... (v.28)**

God is the one who orchestrated the miracle.  
God is the only one who could orchestrate the miracle.  
God is the only one who could orchestrate the saving miracle.

And he is the only one who orchestrated your saving miracle too.

His Word sent Jesus to earth.  
His Word defied the devil.  
His Word condemned Jesus.  
His Word declared you innocent.  
His Word brought himself back to life.

His Word is speaking to you right now:

"Your salvation is in Jesus."  
"You are forgiven."  
"You are my child."  
"You are mine."  
"Come back to me and live."

God's Word saves.

No other book.

No other pamphlet.

No other authority has the power of God's Word.

God's Word contains the message of Jesus who saved us.

God's Word strengthens our faith in the message of Jesus.

God's Word saves.

## III. What Now?

### Stand on God's Word

Because human words have only human authority.

God's Word has God's authority.

And God's Word saves.

When we're standing on God's Word.

It might save more than just you.

Because do you know what happens in the next chapter of Daniel?

King Nebuchadnezzar...

The one who thought he could create a god.

The one who thought he was a god.

The one who learned he was not even remotely a god.

Look at what he says in Daniel 4:2-3

**It seemed good to me to declare the signs and wonders that the Most High God did for me. How great are his signs! How mighty are his wonders! His kingdom is an eternal kingdom, and his dominion extends from generation to generation.**

The guy's a believer.

The guy is most likely in heaven.

The catalyst?

The three men who STOOD on God's Word.

Do the same.

Stand on God's Word.

Who knows whom God might save through you?

Amen.