

Bigger Than | God Is Bigger Than Our Government | Notes - Daniel 3

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King Nebuchadnezzar would learn a lot from conquered Israel. He would learn that there was a true God over the world and that God was far larger than any earthly government.

Daniel chapter three tells the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These men withstand unbearable pressure to go along with the status quo when their government was very much in the wrong. The stand they took ended in their intended execution by burning, but the fire they were thrown into revealed their true protector instead.

Daniel 3:25 (NLT) "Look!" Nebuchadnezzar shouted. "I see four men, unbound, walking around in the fire unharmed! And the fourth looks like a god!"

Earthly governments struggle with a disciple's worldview. Why? Because an earnest follower of Christ is truly free. They are free from all fears a government might use to control them. This is why freedom of speech and religion are so vital to the existence of a nation. Without these two freedoms, no populace will ever be truly free.

God Established Roles For Government, Family, And Church.

The government has a job. Governments tend to forget that they have a responsibility to their citizens and to God. They are intended to provide protection, justice, and space for Righteousness. (Doing what is right.)

1 Timothy 2:1-2 (NLT) I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. 2 Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity.

God has established right and wrong. He has given earthly governments the authority to preserve them. When they work as they should, citizens are better able to live in peace and obedience to God. However, when governments are corrupted, chaos and rebellion against God prevail.

It is often demonstrated in the Bible, through the examples of Joseph, Daniel, Nehemiah, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that we should each work to make our government as healthy as possible. But the Bible also tells us of times that God's people confronted evil leaders and policies. The story of Ester, John the Baptist, and of course the stories of Daniel relate many of these confrontations. It should be noted that doing the right thing often led to jail time, lost property, fines, taxes, and even death. It seems that Governments don't handle confrontation well.

We Are Citizens Of A New Kingdom.

They Were Good Citizens. Our story today revolves around three men who were servants of Babylon and later Persia. They were far more than "law-abiding citizens". They were leaders. They were key players in the advancement and improvement of their government. They also demonstrated calm under pressure. While everyone else was caught up in or feeding into the king's drama, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego remained free from the hype simply stating what they would and would not do.

Philippians 3:20 (NLT) But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior.

They Were Also God Followers. Their excellent reputation was embedded in their faith. Their faith was not an accessory to their careers but rather the centerpiece of their lives. They were captive to a far more important kingdom. That is the Disciple's Worldview. In this world view, *God is King and we are citizens of His Kingdom.*

The governments of earth are often trying to push the disciple with his worldview out of key leadership roles. The claim is made that we must separate between church and state. But, a person who can be divided from their faith has no faith. By making sure that only the faithless run a country, we ensure a more dangerous future with far less freedom.

We Are Accountable To God.

Live By the Laws of the New Kingdom. As a believer, we are not from here. We live by the laws of our homeland. We are to love God and others while encouraging them to know God as well. We live by faith in God and His Goodness. And, we fight for what is right by overcoming evil with good rather than merely complaining about evil. We aren't staying here either. This isn't our home.

Hebrews 13:14 (NLT) For this world is not our permanent home; we are looking forward to a home yet to come.

Live By the Power of the New Kingdom. Our lives, our love for God and others should radically impact our world for good. We should hunger for the power and presence that Jesus demonstrated. We can bring so much more to the table than just condemnation of wrong. We really have the power to overcome evil with good if only we believe.

And last, Walk with Jesus. That is what it means to be a disciple. We are not only to consider His instructions but to base our actions upon them. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego walked with God and when the fire came His presence was revealed. This will also be true for us. So, there is no need to fear.

Talk About It...

- *What are your first thoughts regarding today's topic? Please share with the group.*
- *What is your favorite part of the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego as recorded in Daniel chapter three? Why?*
- *Discuss the responsibilities of the government mentioned above. What are some additional roles that government might accomplish?*
- *Discuss their courage in the face of "bad" government policy and the absence of religious freedom. What do you think of their response to the king in **Daniel 3:16-18**?*
- *Many Old and New Testament figures were involved in government. What should our involvement look like? How could we impact our government for the greater good?*
- *How could we overcome evil with good in our current political climate? What are some "good" tactics to help with abortion? Immigration? What else?*
- *What is the importance of free speech? What if we disagree with those speaking?*
- *What are the implications of **Hebrews 13:14**? How might it help us process our disappointment regarding various government policies and leaders?*
- *Is there anything in today's topic that you would be excited to share with a friend?*