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DO NOT PROVOKE YOUR CHILDREN

In the book of Daniel, three young men are put to a great test of character as they stood before the King of Babylon in defiance of a decree that could cost them their lives. Nebuchadnezzar had made an image of gold nearly ninety feet tall in the plain of Dura and commanded all people to fall down and worship the image at the sound of various forms of music. When the time came, all the “people, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the gold image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up” (Dan. 3:7). In the midst of this great throng of bodies bowing down in worship three men remained standing and refused to bow. The penalty for rebellion was

clear. “Whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace” (Dan. 3:6).

Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were Hebrew slaves taken from their homeland in the invasion of Judah by Babylon. They had been placed in the king’s palace to serve and learn the language and literature of the Chaldeans. We know them best by their Chaldean names of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. Brought before King Nebuchadnezzar the king gave them a second chance to reconsider their refusal to bow down and worship the image. Their reply was clear and demonstrative. “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no

need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up" (Dan. 3:16-18).

The three Hebrews were cast into the furnace but through the grace of God delivered without the hair of their hair singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them (Dan. 3:27). God used their faith to show the king of Babylon who "rules in the kingdom of men" (Dan. 4:17). This remarkable story of courage is one fitting for our young people to embrace as they graduate High School and begin the challenging walk of life.

Two things stand out in this story: first, the importance of believing in something; secondly, the need of believing in the right thing. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego did not go along with the crowd. It was

not their life's aim to be like everyone else. They believed in something and not only believed it but were willing to disobey the law of the king because of what they believed in.

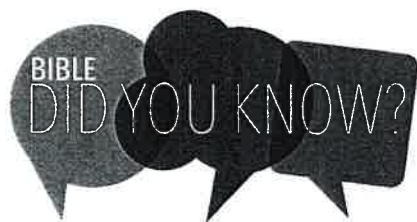
It is easy to go along with everyone else and be like the crowd. When the music began to play in the plain of Dura, thousands of people fell down to worship the image. Consider how odd they felt to be the only ones standing. Literally, everyone was bowing but these three men. They could have fallen down and who would have noticed? They possessed a belief system that challenged the moral code of the day. Young people, you must possess a system of belief to find happiness in life that will set you apart. Following the crowd will get you no where (Matt. 7:13-14).

Having a belief system is not enough – you have to believe in the right thing. They refused to worship the image because it was wrong. They stood for what was right because they stood for what God taught them. They served the Lord and not man

(Acts 4:19-20, 5:29). As young people going out into the world, you must believe in the right thing and the only thing that is right is what is found in God (John 17:7). True happiness will not be found in bowing down to the music of the day. It will only come from standing for God in the face of great opposition to the norms of today. If your life is going to make a difference it must be made with the Lord as your guide and compass (John 14:6).
– Kent Heaton

After studying the New Testament for a number of years, a man found that forty people who had the same disease were healed by Jesus. Of this number, thirty-four were taken to Him by friends, or He was taken to them. Only six of that number found their way to Jesus without assistance. Consider the number today who have been suffering spiritual sickness, and have come to Jesus in obedience. How many were brought by families or friends? How many were invited by folks they met during a normal

day's activities? How many found their way to the truth without assistance? Statistics show that less than 2% of members of the Church came on their own. The other 98+% were invited and encouraged to attend. With this realization, look for opportunities to invite everyone you contact to worship, encouraging them to learn God's will and become Christians. Only in this way will we fulfill our part of the great commission to take the gospel to the world.
– John Wright



The grace of God trains us to put away sin. "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,"
Titus 2:11-13

People, Places, and Things of the **BIBLE**



King Solomon's Mines

Manure preserved for millennia by the arid climate of Israel's Timna Valley is adding fresh fuel to a long-simmering debate about the biblical king Solomon and the source of his legendary wealth. Archaeologists discovered the 3,000-year-old dung in an ancient mining camp atop a sandstone mesa known as Slaves' Hill. The area is dotted with copper mines and smelting camps—sites where the ore was heated and turned into metal. University of Tel Aviv archaeologist Erez Ben-Yosef began excavating the site in 2013. Last year he and his team were uncovering the remains of several walled structures, including a fortified gate, when they discovered what appeared to be animal excrement of relatively recent origin. “We thought maybe some nomads had camped there with their goats a few decades ago,” Ben-Yosef said, noting that the dung still contained undecayed plant matter. “but the [radiocarbon] dates came back from the lab, and they confirmed we were talking about donkeys and other livestock from the 10th century B.C. It was hard to believe.” While the dung's extreme age and extraordinary condition were stunning, the implications of the radiocarbon results were even more jarring. “Until we started the project in 2013, this was considered to be a late Bronze Age site related to the New Kingdom of Egypt in the 13th and early 12th centuries B.C.,” Ben-Yosef says. There's clear evidence of an Egyptian presence during those centuries, and modern-day visitors to nearby Timna Valley Park are greeted by signs depicting ancient Egyptians. But high-precision radiocarbon dating of the dung, as well as textiles and other organic material, showed that the mining camp's heyday was the 10th century B.C.—the era of the biblical kings David and Solomon.

