

Worship By Choice

Not Coercion

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego

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What We Will Learn

- Two forms of motivation for worship
- Coercion
 - Use of force, intimidation, or any kind of threat of punishment to compel worship
 - Coercion is not of God
- Choice
 - Personal decision to worship God to earn the benefits of worshiping him
 - God wants us to choose to worship him

What We Will Learn cont'd

- Worship by choice based on God's covenant
 - With Abraham
 - Abraham's descendants
 - Beneficiaries of Messiah promise
- Daniel 3
- Genesis 12 and 17
- John 1

King Nebuchadnezzar's Decree

- Setup an image of gold
- Decreed that on hearing a musical prompt
- Everybody must fall down
- And worship the image of gold
- Whoever does not fall down and worship
- Will be thrown into a fiery furnace
- Daniel 3:1–6 [4–6 read in session]

Daniel 3 (NKJV)

4 Then a herald cried aloud: “To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages,

5 that at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up;

Daniel 3 (NKJV)

6 and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.”

- Uses threat of severe punishment for non-compliance
- To compel worship of an image of gold
- Does not offer any benefit or reward
- Coerced worship is not of God

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego Defy the King's Decree

- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego
- Were reported to have refused to obey the king's worship decree
- The king summoned them
- They confirmed their defiance
- They will not obey the decree
- Daniel 3:8–18 [14–18 read in session]

Daniel 3 (NKJV)

14 Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up?”

Daniel 3 (NKJV)

15 Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, good! But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?”

Daniel 3 (NKJV)

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter.

17 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.

Daniel 3 (NKJV)

18 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.”

- We worship God and He is able to deliver us from your furnace and your hand
- Even if he doesn't
- We will not worship your god or the image of gold you setup
- Our choice to worship God is permanent

Choice to Worship God

- God's covenant with Abraham
- Worship and serve God
- And God will be your God
- Reward for compliance
- No coercion
- Every person has a choice
- Genesis 17:1–7; 15:1

Genesis 17 (NKJV)

1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless.

2 And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly.”

3 Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying:

Genesis 17 (NKJV)

4 “As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations.

5 No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations.

6 I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you.

Genesis 17 (NKJV)

7 And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you.

- Worship Me and serve Me
- You and your descendants
- And I will be God to you and your descendants

Genesis 15 (NKJV)

1 After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.”

- I will be God to you and your descendants
- Your reward for choosing to worship and serve me

Beneficiaries of God's Covenant with Abraham

- Abraham
- Abraham's descendants
- Beneficiaries of Messiah promise
- Genesis 12:3
- John 1:6

Genesis 12 (NKJV)

3 I will bless those who bless you,
And I will curse him who curses you;
And in you all the families of the earth shall
be blessed.”

- God’s promise to send the Messiah
- Through Abraham’s offspring
- For all the earth
- Beneficiaries of Messiah promise are party to God’s covenant with Abraham

John 1 (NKJV)

12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

- Believe Jesus is the Messiah that God promised Abraham in Genesis 12:3
- Accept God's covenant with Abraham:
Choose to worship and serve God
- You earn the right to become child of God

Right of Child of God

- He will be your God
- If you worship and serve him
 - Resign to will of God in everything
 - Commit to living in the image of God
 - Represent God in every human interaction
 - God's provider assistant
 - Actions and words radiate Godliness
 - And elicit positive response from others
- And more

Choice of Worship

- Coercive worship does not please God
- Any action that has the effect of coercing an act of worship
- Could be likened to King Nebuchadnezzar's attempt to compel worship of the image of gold he setup
- God repudiated his attempt
- God wants people to choose to worship him

What We Learned

- Coercive worship does not please God
 - Using force, intimidation, or any kind of threat of punishment to compel worship
 - Applies to every act of worship
- God expects us to choose to worship him
 - Personal decision
 - Make the choice to earn benefits of worshiping God
 - He will be your God (You, a child of God)

What We Learned

John 1:12

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

- As many as CHOOSE to worship him
- He GIVES THE RIGHT
- To become children of God