

**HALLOW NO ONE ABOVE THE LORD!**

Daniel 2: 47-3: 30 – Pastor Richard P. Carlson

When God honors you highly, do you forget who your friends are? Do you forget who has been praying for you, and who is in your cheering section? I love this story in Daniel 2 and 3 because, you know what? Daniel doesn't forget his team. A victory for him is a victory for his whole team. Anyone who purposely remains a loner in being honored, if that person is not wanting to thank others, or give others credit, that person is very poor, and an emotionally and spiritually impoverished person. A teenager who can't thank his own Mom and Dad when he gets first place, is a teenager who won't stay on top long. When God makes you a winner, remember your family and friends who helped you get there. So what did Daniel do when Nebuchadnezzar rewarded him for interpreting his dream? He never forgot his three long time teenage friends. He remembered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And he requested of the king that his three young friends be promoted. And since Daniel was made ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief prefect or dean over all the wise men of Babylon, he made a request for his three believing Hebrew friends and he got it immediately. When God lifts us up on higher places, remember, God's Word is clear, as Jesus Himself said in Luke 12: 48, "To whom much is given, much is required. Suffice it to say, had Daniel not remembered his friends and brought them with him to high places, their lives might have been a bit easier life for them.

Let me warn you all. You may dream of winning, and earning scholarships, and being the lead quarterback or the team captain, or lead cheerleader or the spelling bee champion. Those are positions God may allow for us to achieve. But watch out. Success sometimes has more struggles with it than trials. If you live for God, and He lifts you up at times to good jobs, and good positions in high places, with those jobs will often come strong persecution at times, tough battles to fight, rough seas to pass through, with horrible trials to face and we are often left having to surrender everything to God and just hold on. Sometimes, when we stand for God in high places, we are left having to surrender every day to God, every moment, and the enemy may select us to be his special target—his bulls-eye to try to target practice on us to wipe us out. Sometimes the enemy actually prepares a fire for to have to pass through. He may even see to it that the furnace of our afflictions is heated seven times hotter than usual. But as we will find out in this message, this morning, God knows our address and He knows when to show up to win the battle.

Before examining this awesome story, look with me at the meaning of hallow. Sometimes, this word hallow is translated 'to make holy,' to sanctify, or to

consecrate. Hallow means to give high honor as sacred. In Leviticus 22: 31-33, I read, “Therefore you shall keep My commandments, and do them: I am the Lord. Neither shall you profane My holy name; but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel: I am the Lord which hallows you, that brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the Lord.” This Hebrew word hallow—meaning we are to hallow or make sacred the Name of the Lord, and that God hallows us, His children is the same Hebrew word, **qadash**. Qadash means to set apart as sacred, holy, prepared, purified, undefiled, and wholly set apart for the Lord and for His work. This Hebrew word is used 172 times in the Old Testament. Well, you may wonder why this word isn’t in the New Testament. The reason is, the New Testament is written in Greek, and hallow is used in the New Testament too. This sacred word is in the Greek in Matthew 6: 9 and Luke 11: 2. You say it with me every Sunday in the Lord’s Prayer. We pray together, “Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name...” The Greek word is **hagiadzo**. It also means to make holy, to purify, to consecrate, to venerate or reverence, and to set apart for God. As a teenager, my Mom used to say, “Only wear that shirt or those pants for Sunday. Hallow that set apart day, our risen Lord’s day Sabbath by wearing those clothes.” Guess what! My wife told me last Sunday. “This shirt is a Sunday only shirt. It looks great on you. Wear it only for Jesus on Sunday.” This morning’s message is about how we set God apart above everything else and everyone else—and how we set apart His people as sacred and hallowed too.

So let’s examine this awesome true story and find out what kinds of hallowing tests we may have to face if we draw the line, build a wall, and make up our mind to truly hallow Jesus all the way, every day. These hallowing tests are important for all of us to pass. I have to keep relearning them as I face similar tests to what Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego faced every day. What should we learn from these hallowing tests that face us about making up our minds as to whether we will hallow/honor the Lord, or bow down to the enemy? **Look for the D’s!**

**OUR HALLOWING TESTS ARE “DEFINED” FOR US ALL  
ULTIMATELY BY WHAT GOD ALLOWS TO HAPPEN IN OUR LIVES.**

(I.) Notice Daniel 2: 49. We read, “Daniel made a request of the king, and he, Nebuchadnezzar, appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon. But Daniel remained at the king’s court.” Notice that Daniel saw that God had raised him up to be ruler over the whole province of Babylon. How did he get there? He had three praying buddies. They went through the three years of Babylonian University Studies together and got their bachelors and masters, and maybe their doctorate. Daniel was probably the valedictorian of his class, but pushing him along by prayer support were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then one day, let’s do a flash back to Daniel chapter 2, the king had a

troubling dream and he told all his magicians and wise men to interpret it. So they said, “Tell us the dream and we’ll interpret it.” But Nebuchadnezzar was firm, saying, “You tell me the dream or I’ll tear you limb from limb and that means every last one of you wise men. The wise men told him no man on earth could get inside his head and know his dreams. They said only the gods knew his dream. They said the request was difficult, impossible and the king couldn’t expect such a request to have an answer. So, with the king so furious, he made arrangements to kill all his wise men, and guess who that included. You’re right! It included Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. When Daniel got wind of the plan—notice, Daniel 2: 13. “So the decree went out, and the wise men were about to be killed; and they sought Daniel and his companions.” Daniel asked why Arioch, the king’s captain was in such a hurry to kill them. Daniel asked for time—what kind of time. He needed time to pray and hallow the Lord. It was showdown time. Either Daniel would interpret a dream he had no idea what it was or he and his three companions and all the wise men were going to lose their heads. This led to a second test.

**OUR HALLOWING TESTS ARE “DIFFICULT” TO PASS WITHOUT MUCH PRAYER, EVEN UNITED PRAYER WITH OTHER BELIEVERS.**

(II.) I told you Daniel had three praying buddies. Listen! These were not just three Hebrew boys or children. These were young men advanced in intercession, praying partners who knew how to pray for mercy, praying for deliverance. When his neck and his buddies’ necks were on the line, what did Daniel do? Listen to Daniel 2: 17-19. “Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, and told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.” Listen! Listen! All of us, men and women, boys and girls, in our difficult hallowing tests, need prayer buddies. Jesus said in Matthew 18: 19, 20, “Again, I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in My Name, there am I among them.” Daniel didn’t get to the top alone. If all you learned at Snow Camp this year was to find two or three prayer buddies—companions in intercession, what would God do, what could he do in your life? I wouldn’t be here today with you and with these messages if I didn’t have prayer buddies to help me hallow these days with you and pass the tests of preparation of these messages. Thirdly,

**OUR HALLOWING TESTS ARE “DIFFERENT” FOR US ALL, AND THEY AREN’T EASY TO PASS WITHOUT GOD STEPPING IN. (III.)**

**Remember in Daniel 2: 49** that Daniel remained at the king’s court, though Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were appointed wise men over the affairs in the

rest of the province of Babylon. They were working, Dorcas, like your dad, Godwin, out of town. He is working in North Dakota. They weren't as far from Babylon as he is from Rock Springs, but a day's journey was a ways in those days. **Notice Daniel 3: 1-7.** Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were shipped out together to a place not far from Babylon where King Nebuchadnezzar had a wicked project under way, and no doubt, they were asked to serve in some aspect of the work. There was a project going on, it wasn't a coal mine, or a gas or oil well, or a new fertilizer plant. No it was an idolatrous project going on in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. The plain of Dura has been located by archaeologists. The little Dura River is a tributary of the huge Euphrates River, that opens into a delta or plain at the confluence of the little river with the big river. This plain was less than 15 miles southeast of the city of Babylon. Archaeologists have uncovered mounds or low hills in this plain of Dura they have named "Tulul Dura" and "Tell Der." Archaeologist Oppert, back in 1862 found a massive brick structure 14 meters square and 6 meters high. This base probably carried the image of King Nebuchadnezzar, 60 cubits high—that's 90 feet high and its breadth six cubits or 9 feet wide—Daniel 3: 1. Who talked Nebuchadnezzar into this idea? God alone knows! I'm venturing a wild guess. Do you think it could have been some jealous satraps—provincial governors who had a sinister plan to do away with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego? It's possible, but for sure, the enemy had this evil plan!

Fifteen miles from home in those days was a day's journey, so Daniel and his three friends were separated from their regular prayer times during this project. On the plain of Dura, this project was to build a golden image. What's so bad about a little vanity for the king, to have a statue built, an obelisk, to look like him that was 90 feet tall and 9 feet wide at the base? Should Shadrach, Meshach or Abednego look with concern at this project as it was going up? Did God care? In the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20: 2-6, God said plainly, "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. "You shall have no other gods before me. "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments." Wow! God did and does have a lot to say about that awful project. So Nebuchadnezzar made an idol of himself and upon finishing it, he summoned the officials from his various provinces to attend the inauguration ceremony. Sounds like a big deal, right! Fun? Sounds fun—there's going to be music of every sort. Who knows, maybe there would be dancing, but the gold-covered pillar to Nebuchadnezzar had a sting in its tail, a catch in its celebration.

When the inauguration party was signaled by flutes and bagpipes and harps and horns and pipes and all other kinds of instruments, everyone was invited to demonstrate their submission, allegiance, and worship of the King by falling down before the golden image. I can hear these three Hebrew children, upper teens or early twenties by now. They are saying—“Where’s Daniel when we need him?” Right? Wrong! We can’t always have our heroes next to us. God wants to make each of us heroes for Him in our own right. These young men knew they had to choose wisely. Refusing to fall down and worship the golden image would end in fiery death. They could see their lives passing before their eyes. Nebuchadnezzar, made sure everyone participated in the inauguration party. Dedicating the image to himself, he built a huge furnace nearby for one purpose. There in the plain of Dura, he would throw any defiant conscientious objector into that furnace which he would fire up seven times hotter than normal. That would be a morning or afternoon out that they would love to escape. How many other Hebrew captives bowed their heads with mental reservations and fell down before this evil golden image? Perhaps hundreds. Okay? It’s no big deal. Save your hide. Why not? God knows our hearts. Isn’t it better not to make any waves? Why end life abruptly in a blazing hot furnace and mess up God’s future plans for us to get married and have a family and serve Him all our lives? Would these three prayer warriors be hog-tied and carted off to this furnace on the plain of Dura, stoked seven times hotter just for them—to char them to a black crisp in a split second. Now don’t forget this lesson. We can’t pass our difficult tasks alone without God stepping in. How does God step in? I Corinthians 10:13—explains, “No test or temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation or the test, he will also provide a way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. That doesn’t promise us we will live and not face death, but it does mean God will have a way to bring us through the test by life or death. 4th,

**OUR HALLOWING TESTS ARE “DEVISED” BY THE ENEMY TO STOP US FROM HALLOWING THE LORD.** (IV.)

Notice verses 8-15. What did God allow Job to face? Satan’s schemes and devises are never above God. Every trial we face has to pass by God’s throne first, but each trial you can be sure is out to stop us from honouring and hallowing the Lord. At the inauguration ceremony, these three Hebrew young men were being watched by other fellow governors, satraps they were called. Someday all of you will have jobs at home or at another job site. The enemy will scheme to stop you from hallowing the Lord? The day will come when the heat is on, the test is set, and the scheme will be devised to make us bend our wills and bow our knees to worship the enemy. Will we fall down and worship the image? Will we bend under pressure and curse and swear like the rest of those around us? Will we talk like drunken sailors or vulgar soldiers, proving we aren’t different from the world? If we stand for God, our superiors and peers will be furious. Nebuchadnezzar was. 5thly,

**OUR HALLOWING TESTS ARE DOUBLED IN DIFFICULTY AT TIMES BY OUR BEING GIVEN A SECOND CHANCE TO BEND AND BOW TO SATAN.**

(V.) Notice Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego didn't bend or bow or fall for the supposed merciful second chance of the devil. Notice v. 16-18. I have seen so many young people initially say no to sin, but when given a second chance and told the consequences of failing to bend and bow down, they have succumbed. They've given in. How many beautiful young ladies have been told, "Unless you make out with me, and be intimate with me, I will break up with you!" Don't fall for Satan's second chances which are really only evil threats. I've seen many young Christian men see how dangerous marriage is, how many divorces there are, and take the devil's bait— He says, "You are a strong man, standing for God. Wait for a while to marry and avoid divorce. Just live with your girlfriend for a while and make sure she is the right one." These are tests to quit hallowing the Lord, His Word, and His plan to be virgins when we marry. The devil may say, "Remember, God forgives. Better to live together & get the right one, be forgiven, and have a long marriage than to marry now & be divorced. The enemy is slick. How did these three men answer? Look at Daniel 3: 16-18. I love their answer. "We have no need to answer you again, or differently. We've made up our minds. God is able to deliver us and He will deliver us from your hand, O King, but even if He doesn't deliver us, we won't fall down before your image." 6thly,

**OUR HALLOWING TESTS ARE DRAMATICALLY ANSWERED IN LIFE OR DEATH, WHEN WE PLACE OUR LIVES INTO GOD'S HANDS ALONE.**

(VI.) Daniel 3: 19-30 tells the story of God saying, in effect, "I can't take it. Where is there faith in Me like this in all the world?" Let's do something dramatic on the plain of Dura. But let's let Nebuchadnezzar do his worst first. **(1) Make the furnace 7 times hotter. (2) Bind these men, hog tie them** and put them down like a steer wrestled to the ground **and carry them to the furnace. (3) Throw them into the fire.** When the devil has done his worst, what then? Well, he finds out who God is. How hot was the fire? Those roaring flames of the furnace killed the men who threw the three men into the fire. Did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego hallow the Lord above all else including their own lives? You bet. Good for them. They'll get a martyr's crown. I know they will, and so will John who lived after being placed in boiling oil, but he lived. To face the firing squad is to be willing to die a martyr. God is overwhelmed with love and respect for such faith and love in His followers who face the fire and will not bend or bow. And once in a while, not always, God does something that just amazes and baffles the world and even us, His sons and daughters. He says, "Let Me show you My best! They wouldn't bend or bow. **(1) They won't burn. (2) I'll make it cool in the furnace. (3) I'll walk with them Myself through the valley of death. (4) I'll be the 4th Man in the fire. (5) I'll show the world Who I AM is. (6) I'll stun the world and make the ones who denied me bless me. (7) I'll promote those who face the worst for me.** It pays to serve Jesus. Best of all, **(8) I'll let Myself be known as the God of those that lay down their lives for me and hallow Me. I'll be known as the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.** Is God the God of you and me?