**Old School – Week 3 (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego – Trust)**

**June 22-23, 2019**

What’s up, everyone?! We are ready to get into week 3 of our Old School series where we are looking at several stories from the Old Testament of the Bible. Before we start, I want to share an observation with you that I’ve made about people…

Sometimes, it’s pretty easy to follow the crowd. In fact, if we went around the room, there would probably be a lot of us that would say we have followed the crowd and it ended up being a good decision. Other times, it might have been a BAD IDEA to follow the crowd.

**(Leaders Note: Share personal story…either good or bad…where you followed the crowd)**

Today, our THP is going to focus on the topic of TRUST. This is a very powerful word because trust requires us to let go of control or to place our faith in something or someone else. Sometimes, TRUST may lead us to take a stand…sometimes with a lot of people and other times with a small group of people…or even by ourselves.

We are going to look at a story in the Bible about three friends named Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. They lived in Judah which is part of Israel. Some of you may know them by the new names given to them by King Nebuchadnezzar. They were called Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Here is the situation…these three guys lived under the Babylonian Empire and King Nebuchadnezzar. The Babylonians worshiped false gods…they didn’t worship the one true God. In fact, Nebuchadnezzar built this gold statue that was about 90 feet tall. In fact, here is how one artist thinks it may have looked **(Leaders Note: Show picture of statue)** This statue was meant to serve as an image that promoted or represented the Babylonian gods.

I**n fact, after the statue was built, check out what Daniel 3:4-6 says about it**: *“Then the herald loudly proclaimed, “Nations and people of every language, this is what you are commanded to do: As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.”*

Man, talk about a crazy situation! In other words, if you worshiped the Babylonian gods, this would be easy. No big deal. However, if you worshiped the one true God…the same God that Adam/Eve, Abraham, Noah, and Shadrach/Meshach/Abednego worshiped…then you were risking your own life if you didn’t want to bow down.

**The story goes on when a few guys come up to Nebuchadnezzar and tell him some information. Let’s read on in Daniel 3:12-15**: *“But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up. Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king, and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? Now when you hear the sound of the [instruments] and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?”*

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego took a stand and refused to worship. They trusted God.

**Here is our THP for today: Trusting God is always worth it!**

Here is why the word “trust” is so important to the story today. Look at what these guys say in response to King Nebuchadnezzar after he says he’s going to throw them in the furnace…

Daniel 3:16-18: *“Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied to him, “King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty’s hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”*

Wow! Talk about having a deep trust in God. They were willing to take a stand and trust God even if He would not save them from the furnace!

Well, Nebuchadnezzar is obviously really ticked off and he orders that the furnace be made 7 times hotter than usual and he gets some of his strongest soldiers to tie Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego up! The soldiers throw them in and the fire was so hot, that it actually killed the soldiers who threw them in.

But something happened…Nebuchadnezzar sees 4 men inside the furnace…not 3. The 4th man looked like an angel. The king called for the 3 guys to step out of the furnace. They were not burned, they didn’t smell like smoke, and even their clothes were perfectly in tact. Nebuchadnezzar was amazed and immediately called out to the one true God and says in Daniel 3:29b: *“…for no other god can save in this way.”*

Have you ever been in a situation where you had to take a stand? What’s the “fiery furnace” in your life that you might be afraid of if you DO take a stand? What about doing something you know you shouldn’t do simply because someone told you to do it…or simply because everyone else is doing it?

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had a deep trust in God that He would come through for them. They were right! However, they were still willing to trust Him even if it meant He didn’t keep them alive. That’s incredible trust!

**What’s your trust level in God today? If you DO trust Him, it is always worth it! Even if you have to do something unpopular or difficult, He will help you. Let’s pray.**