

Daniel 3:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.

Analysis

The three men's response 'O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter' demonstrates remarkable courage and conviction. 'Not careful' (Aramaic: *la chashchin*, not anxious/worried) doesn't mean disrespectful but rather confident peace about the outcome. They don't need time to deliberate, strategize, or negotiate—the answer is clear because their allegiance is settled. This contrasts sharply with the Chaldeans' earlier panic when unable to interpret the dream. True faith produces confidence before hostile authority because ultimate trust rests in God rather than human favor.

Historical Context

Ancient protocol demanded elaborate deference when addressing absolute monarchs. Speaking directly without extensive honorifics or anxious hedging was dangerous. The three men's straightforward response demonstrates extraordinary courage given Nebuchadnezzar's documented volatility and unlimited power. Refusing a king's direct command, especially after being given second chance, normally meant immediate execution. Their willingness to speak plainly despite fatal risk reveals faith that relativizes all human authority under God's sovereignty.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does settled conviction about ultimate allegiance produce peace and confidence when facing powerful opposition?
2. What does their immediate, clear answer teach about faith eliminating need for anxious deliberation when truth is at stake?

Interlinear Text

עָנָו	שְׁדַרְחַן	מִישַׁךְ	וְעֶבֶד	דָּ	נָגַו	וְאָמַר	יְהוֹאֲכִיֹּן
answered	Shadrach	Meshach		H0	and Abednego	and said	to the king
H6032	H7715	H4336			H5665	H560	H4430

נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר	לֹא	חָשָׁה	יְהוֹאֲכִיֹּן	עָלֶיךָ	בְּדִן	הַזֶּה
O Nebuchadnezzar	are not	careful	we	thee in	this	matter
H5020	H3809	H2818	H586	H5922	H1836	H6600

לְהַתְּבוֹנֶה:

to answer

H8421

Additional Cross-References

Daniel 1:7 (Parallel theme): Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abed-nego.

Daniel 3:12 (Kingdom): There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; these men,

O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

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