

SCHEDULE OF ASSEMBLIES

Sunday morning worship (Bible study)	9:30 AM
Sunday morning worship (Preaching)	10:30 AM
Sunday afternoon worship (Preaching).....	4:00 PM
Wednesday evening worship (Bible Study).....	7:00 PM

NEWS AND NOTES

SCHEDULE: The schedule for December is posted on the bulletin board so the men can see what their responsibilities are for the month.

SERVICE TIMES: We are meeting at our normal schedule of assemblies.

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT: Jerry and Dottie Henderson are now the proud great-grandparents of Ezekiel Obinna Prevost. He was 7lbs 1oz born 8:15 AM Dec 5th. Mother and baby are both doing fine.

SICK AND SHUT-INS: Woody and Jane Edwards are still recovering from Covid-19. Jack and Breda Elliott are better, and Jack has now tested Negative. Donna Criswell's aunt, Nell Barrett, is not doing well at all, and this makes it harder for Donna to attend services. Also, Donna's brother and brother-in-law are not doing well. Remember Telford's brother and brother-in-law. Nancy Summerford's mother has Alzheimer's and has gotten a lot worse. Virgie Waddle said home health has been helpful and she is doing some better. Hopefully, she will be able to be back at services before too long. Remember her sister-in-law, Jean Malone, in the nursing home in Golden.

STAYING IN: As a result of the of the Corona Virus some members may quarantine themselves at home because of contact with an infectious person or underling health issues or just precautionary. We respect their decisions.

TEACHING EFFORTS: Our teaching bulletin, the **EASTSIDE EXAMINER**, was inserted in the **Red Bay News** in October. Copies of the new issue are on the table in the foyer for those who do not receive a paper. These may also be used to give to a friend or neighbor. When these are depleted, more can be printed. There is also an ad in the local paper once a month offering a free Bible correspondence course. There are DVD copies of past TV programs available. The radio program on 95.5 FM at 10 AM each Sunday continues. Please pray that these efforts will reach people interested in studying God's word.

GOSPEL MEETINGS / SINGINGS: I know of no meetings in the area. If you know of meetings or singings in the area, please tell the one making announcements.

POINTS TO PONDER

- Love that doesn't understand the language of sacrifice is not true love.

THE EASTSIDE REMINDER

2Pet 1:12-15

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Editor: Jerry L. Henderson: Send comments to: The Editor, 1205 Hwy 24 East, Red Bay, AL 35583
Phone: 256-333-0017 or 662 - 542-3170 - email: jerry@hendersons.net

STAND OR BOW

Daniel 3:7 "Therefore at that time, when all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe and all kinds of music, all the peoples, nations and men of every language fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up."

Did you read the verse? All the peoples...nations...and men of every language fell down and worshipped-all of them that is except for three. We know those three. We know them by their Babylonian names. Most of us grew up hearing the vivid story of faith and courage of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. This is the stuff for youth lectures and sermons for young people. It makes incredible devotions. But more than all of that, it's history, it's true and it's a demonstration of faith over fear and conviction when faced with death. This is not just for teenagers. It's for all of us. We can know this story so well that we fail to connect. It can be almost too familiar for us. I saw the movie Shane the other day. My favorite western of all time. I grew up watching that movie. I've seen it zillions of times. My brothers and I can quote the movie, line by line. Yet the other day I saw something for the first time. In one of the scenes there is a chicken on the roof. That chicken has been there every time. I just never saw it until now. We need to be looking at the Bible with fresh eyes. We need to see things that we've skipped over. We need to pay attention to the details. This story-the fiery furnace is a great place to do that.

Away from home, against their will, these young men from Judah were being indoctrinated and changed into Babylonians. Their names were changed to Babylonian names. They were given Babylonian food. Now, the final straw was to introduce them to Babylonian religion. Change their faith. This happens for many of our young people when they are away at college. So sad to see that happening.

The king made a massive image. It stood tall. One couldn't miss it. Everyone was gathered for the ceremony. Tons of people were there. The instruments blew. You'd notice. It must have been loud. Everyone bowed down. Even foreigners. Even those with different languages. No exceptions-but our three, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. They stood. They were noticed. They were reported. They were in trouble. The king gave them a second chance. What a nice guy! They didn't need a second chance. They knew. Their minds were made up. Here, there, anywhere, they were not about to bow to anyone but Jehovah. The king threatened. They dug their heels in. They weren't budging. They didn't know if God would rescue them or not. But even if not, they weren't selling out. No way. Not now, not ever. The worst thing the king could do was kill them. Death isn't the end. Death isn't the worst thing that can happen to a person. They understood. They truly believed.

There are parallels in this Daniel story and what we do each day.

1. Every child of God faces the harsh challenges of the world. The heat from the fiery furnace is felt when you walk down the hallway of high school. It's felt when you enter the conference room at work. Demands to be dishonest. The looks. The pressure. The whispers. The threat to report you. The threat to terminate you. The threat to ruin you. The fires of the furnace have not died down. They never will die down as long as light and darkness travel the same road. For some, the greatest challenges comes from their own family. The expression "home for the holidays," is not a warm, fuzzy feeling. Instead, it's guilt, finger pointing, accusations and fiery furnaces.

2. Every child of God faces the temptation to compromise what they believe in order to survive. Give in just a little. The three from Daniel may have reasoned that they were not in Jerusalem. They couldn't help it. But they didn't. They may have reasoned God will understand. But they didn't. They may have thought; we don't have a choice. But they did have a choice. They may have thought just one time won't hurt anything. But they didn't. They may have reasoned everyone else is doing it, I guess we should too. But they didn't. There is always a temptation to compromise beliefs. A little error with a little truth. Saving ourselves is a huge struggle. No one wants to lose their job, credibility, reputation, marriage, or family. Paul told the new Christians in Corinth that their unbelieving mates may leave them. If saving the marriage meant tossing the faith, then let the marriage go. That's hard. Not everyone can do this. Some will bow in order to keep things going. Some will bow to keep a job. Some will bow to keep friends. Some will bow so others will like them. Not the three from Daniel. When ordered to bow, they stood. Surviving was not an option if it meant bowing to another god.

3. Every child of God faces the possibility that God may not deliver them. The three from Daniel knew God saved Noah. They knew God provided a sacrifice for Abraham. They knew of the victories of Joshua. They knew that God was with Joseph while he remained imprisoned. But they didn't know for sure about their situation. No angel promised them safety. No

vision came that said you will be fine. They didn't know. However, they still would not buckle to the pressure of the Babylonian king. Even if they died, they would not bow. They knew what was right. They knew what they believed. Bow was wrong. There was no way it could be right. The Ten Commandments-"no other gods before me," was all they needed. Live or die, they were not turning their backs on God. Never.

The lesson of these three is more than a cool kids story for VBS or Bible classes. This is our story. This is as much about us as it is them. How do we face opposition? How do we face challenges? Do we fear job loss more than God? Do we concern ourselves more about how we look than our character and our faith? Every day we face far less serious challenges and everyday some will cower to the pressure. The young college student who listens to the dumb taunts of a godless professor who fears flunking over standing for God. The worker who will blindly do whatever the boss says, even if it is wrong, illegal, unethical, or simply rude and unkind. This is not how Christians treat others. Yet, bullied, and pressured, he will bow believing that he has to.

Every day there is the call to bow. Every day millions do. Blindly. Ignorantly. Thoughtlessly. Many who claim to be lovers of God. Many who will walk into a church building on Sunday. They do not see the connection between Thursday and Sunday. They do not understand that faith isn't a Sunday thing, it's an everyday, everywhere thing. If faith doesn't work at work, it probably won't work at home. Every day.

Isn't it time for you and me to stop bowing? Isn't it time for us to dig our heels in and say NO.? Isn't it time that we stand with God? Come what may-our allegiance is with God. It's not with a company, a town, a college, or even a nation. We are citizens of Heaven. We belong to Heaven. It's to Heaven that we go. So, stand. Stand up against the deafening cry for abortion, same-sex marriage, legalizing drugs that are just the beginning signs of a godless society that we are falling into.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus-is more than a song. It is it. It is what we must do and be. Stand or bow? Face a furnace or be safe? Follow God or cave in to the pressures of others?

We have our own fiery furnace. It's not easy for us. It scares us. We fear what might happen. How will we get by if we lose our job? What will happen if I draw the line and say "No?" The family might exclude me. They might. Times might get tough. They might. We may have to move. You may. This isn't right. No, it's not. It's not fair. No, it's not.

Bow or stand...the three from Daniel knew. There is no way that they would bow. How about you? What about today? Will you stand for what is right or will you bow with everyone else?

Editor's Note: The above article came from daily articles by Roger Shouse, which he calls "Jump Starts", which I receive via email. If you would like to receive them, you can be added to his list. Roger did not title this piece; I gave it its title.