

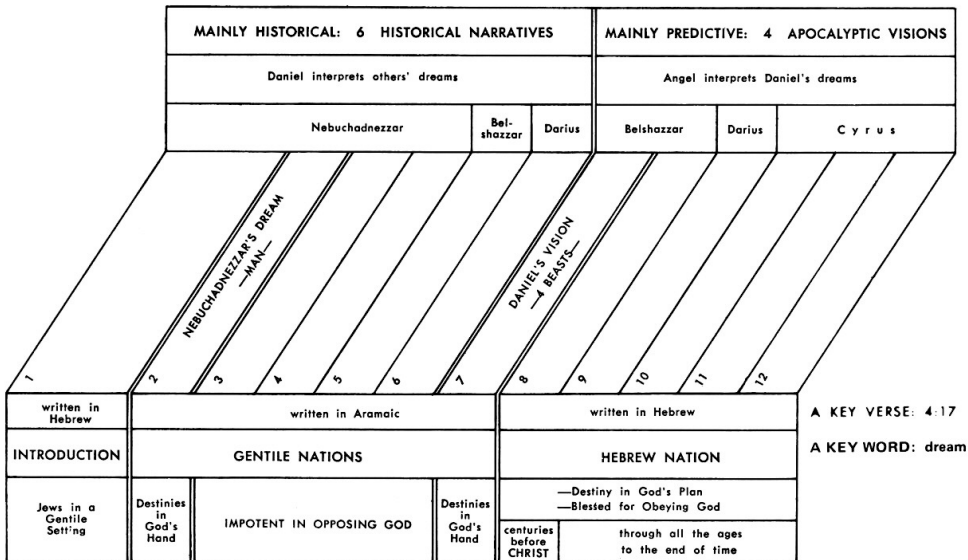
# Daniel 3 Commentary

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**Daniel 3:1 Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, the height of which was sixty cubits and its width six cubits; he set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon.**

- **made:** Da 2:31,32 5:23 Ex 20:23 32:2, 3, 4,31 Dt 7:25 Jdg 8:26,27 1Ki 12:28 2Ki 19:17,18 Ps 115:4, 5, 6, 7, 8 135:15 Isa 2:20 30:22 40:19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31 46:6 Jer 10:9 16:20 Ho 8:4 Hab 2:19 Ac 17:29 19:26 Rev 9:20
- **in the province:** Da 3:30 2:48 Es 1:1
- Daniel 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Image** - 15v all in Daniel - Dan 2:31-31, 34-35; 3:1-3, 5, 7, 10, 12, 14-15, 18-19 and translated expression(1), image(11), statue(5).

**Image** (06754)(Hebrew = **Tselem**) is a masculine noun which means image, likeness, statue, model, a drawing, a shadow. The first four uses of **tselem** all refer to mankind as made in the image of God (Ge 1:26, 27; 9:6). **Tselem** is used in the description of Adam's offspring Seth "in his own likeness, according to his **image** (tselem)" (Ge 5:3). The next 2 uses describe idols ("**likenesses** of your tumors and likenesses of your mice") (1Sa 6:5, 11), then the images of Baal (2Ki 11:18, 2Chr 23:17, cp Ezek 7:20 "the **images** of their abominations", description of how apostate, unfaithful Judah had made for themselves "male images" with which they might play the harlot = Ezek 16:17 - Talk about perversion!). Men are described as walking "about as a phantom," (Ps 39:6), in other words as shadows, descriptive of unknowing, senseless, fleeting beings carrying out the motions of life unless they have hope in God (see Ps. 39:7).

In Psalm 73 God tells Asaph he will "despise their form (tselem)" (Ps 73:20) referring to those who were well off and without monetary concerns in this passing world. In Amos the people are accused of carrying "images" (idols) which they had made (Amos 5:26, referred to in Stephen's sermon in Acts 7:43). In Ezekiel 23:14, this word refers to pictures of Babylonians that enticed the people of Israel into apostasy when they saw them.

**Tselem** (Hebrew) - 16x Ge 1:26, 27; 5:3; Ge 9:6; 1Sa 6:5, 11; 2Ki 11:18; 2Ch 23:17; Ps 39:6; 73:20; Eze 7:20; 16:17; 23:14; Am 5:26

The use that most directly relates Daniel's description is Exodus 20:4 where Moses records that...

You shall not make for yourself an **idol** (Hebrew = tselem), or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. (Ex 20:4, cp Dt 5:8, 9, 10)

**Comment:** The **NAS** rendering of "**idol**" is actually 2 words in the the Hebrew which is more literally rendered "**graven image**". Carved or graven figures are described frequently in the OT (Ex 20:4; Lv 26:1; Dt 4:16, 23, 25; 5:8; 27:15; Jdg 17:3, 4; 18:14, 17, 18, 20, 30, 31; 2Ki 21:7; 2Ch 33:7; Ps 97:7; Isa 40:19, 20; 42:17; 44:9, 10, 15, 17; 45:20; 48:5; Je10:14; 51:17; Na1:14; Hab2:18)

**Bob Deffinbaugh** notes that...

While there seems to be a connection between the statue of chapter 2 and the image of chapter 3, there are striking contrasts between these two representations. Consider these contrasts:

Images of Chapter 2: (a) divine origin; (b) a vision only; (c) made of different metals; (d) not an object of worship; (e) privately revealed to Nebuchadnezzar; (f) fairly well described; (g) prompted king to bow down. (h) Ended with the King acknowledging God as the God of gods and Lord of kings.

Images of Chapter 3: (a) human origin; (b) a reality; (c) made only of gold; (d) an object of worship; (e) revealed to all; (f) described only generally; (g) men commanded to bow down. (h) Ended with the King acknowledging God as the Most High God Who Alone is able to deliver...

What should Nebuchadnezzar have learned from his dream and the interpretation of Daniel, as recorded in Daniel 2? From that dream, he learned that the entire statue (the Gentile kingdoms) disintegrated because a stone struck the feet which were weak. The weakness, he was told, was due to a racial mixture in the last kingdom. Seeking to "fix the feet" by making an idol of solid gold and creating one religion, Nebuchadnezzar constructed the gold image and required every race and culture to worship it. Nebuchadnezzar may have hoped to change the course of history and prolong the glory of his kingdom.

Nebuchadnezzar was still a pagan though he had acknowledged the God of Daniel and his three friends as a God of wisdom and revelation. In chapter 3, he learned that the God of Israel was also the Deliverer of His people. What the king did not take seriously enough was the Stone, the real cause of the statue's destruction and the Creator of the new, eternal, kingdom which replaced Gentile rule. Rather than "fix the feet," he needed to fall at the feet of the "Stone," Jesus Christ. Nebuchadnezzar did not yet grasp the sovereignty of God over history. Although he was told the dream and its interpretation were trustworthy (2:45), he still believed he could change the course of history. ([Faith and the Furnace](#))

**Henry Morris** - The king, taken with his importance as the golden head of the prophetic image to influence and direct the entire sequence of kingdoms that would come after him, arrogantly constructed his manufactured image entirely of gold, in effect proclaiming himself as destined to be the greatest man in world history.

**Of gold** - Most likely this image was not solid gold but overlaid with gold, a practice described in Isa 40:19; Jer 10:3, 4. Some commentators feel that Nebuchadnezzar was deifying himself by making this image.

**Height... sixty cubits... width six cubits** - If a cubit is about 18" (elbow to tip of hand) the height would have been about 90' or higher than the average telephone pole and about 9 feet wide. Picture this image with a height to width ratio of 10 to 1 which would make it a very narrow image, analogous to an obelisk.

**Guzik** - The image was more like a stylized obelisk than a normal statue, being 90 feet high and 9 feet wide. Being so large, it is safe to say that it was not made of solid gold but probably wood overlaid with gold. This was a common method of construction in the ancient world. "On the plains of Dura there stands today, a rectilinear mound, about twenty feet high, an exact square of about forty-six feet at the base, resembling the pedestal of a colossal statue." (Heslop) ([Ref](#))

As an aside the dimensions of the statue are another substantiation that Daniel was written in the 6th Century BC, because the Babylonian system of mathematics was based upon 6's (See discussion of [sexagesimal \[base sixty\]](#)) whereas the Greek system was somewhat similar to our decimal system which uses 10's (See discussion of [Greek numerals](#)). It is intriguing that the Babylonian legacy of sexagesimal still survives in our day in the form of degrees (360° in a circle or 60° in an angle of an equilateral triangle), minutes (60 in an hour), and seconds (60 in a minute) in trigonometry and the measurement of time, although both of these systems are actually mixed radix. Recall how the statue of Daniel 2 was a "unit" composed of successive kingdoms, implying that various facets of each of these kingdoms endured to the "foot and toe stage" but which will be totally obliterated by the victorious return of Christ to defeat all Gentile powers and influence in new Messianic age.

It is also worth noting that the statue was **60** and **6** cubits, since most authorities agree that from a Biblical perspective **6** is the number of man who was created on the 6th day (Ge 1:26, 27) (see [Six: Man's Incompleteness, Human Will](#)), whereas **7** is the number of perfection or completion, leaving man always one integer short. And so it is not surprising that the last "world leader" of the Gentile kingdoms, the Antichrist, is identified in Revelation 13 by a series of "**6's**"...

Re 13:14-[note](#) And he (the [False Prophet](#)) deceives those who dwell on the earth ("[Earth Dwellers](#)") because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to **make an image to the beast** ([The Antichrist](#)) who had the wound of the sword and has come to life. [15-note](#) And there was given to him to give breath to **the image of the beast**, (see [Image of Beast](#)). Also see all 10 uses of "image" 8 verses in Revelation = Re 14:9-[note](#), Re 14:10-[note](#), Re 14:11-[note](#) [where *worship* = **proskuneo** is used in Septuagint of Da 3:5], Re 15:2-[note](#), Re 16:2-[note](#), Re 19:20-[note](#), Re 20:4-[note](#)) that the **image** of the beast might even speak and cause as many as do not worship the **image** of the beast to be killed. [16-note](#) And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand, or on their forehead, [17-note](#) and he provides that no one should be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name. [18-note](#) Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast (the Antichrist, for **the number is that of a man**; and his number is **six hundred and sixty-six (666)**).

**Comment:** Tony Garland observes that "Among the enemies of God marked by the number six: we find Goliath, whose height was six cubits, having six pieces of armor and a spear's head weighing six hundred

shekels of iron (1Sa 17:4, 5, 6, 7); Nebuchadnezzar, whose "image" was sixty cubits high and six cubits wide (Da 3:1); and Antichrist, whose number is six hundred and sixty-six (Re 13:18). Even Solomon at the height of his earthly glory received a mere six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold (1Ki 10:14) each year and sat on a throne of only six steps (1K. 10:19). Solomon, in his advanced human wisdom, great power and influence, but eventual drift from God, illustrates characteristics shared by the Antichrist of the end. Throughout history, the best that man can produce by every available means and effort of rebellious will is "666" which falls short of God's triune completeness ("777"). ([Six - Man's Incompleteness, Human Will](#))

Note that "**image**" (of the Antichrist) is a key word in the Revelation and for some who worshiped the **image** it resulted in **eternal death** (Re 14:11-[note](#)) and for others who refused to worship the image, it resulted in temporal death and eternal life (not that it "earned" them eternal life but demonstrated they had genuine saving faith) (Re 20:4-[note](#))

Revelation 13 tells us of a coming day when the pressure to "Bow or burn (be beheaded)" will be intense. At that time Daniel 3 will surely be a source of great encouragement to the faithful remnant who refuse to bow while most willingly worship the image of the Antichrist. Indeed, the faithful remnant will hearken to Christ's word's to...

Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life (Rev. 2:10-[note](#))

**Plain of Dura** ([plain of dura - pictures](#)) - **Dura** means "walked place". In such a flat location the statue would be unimpeded by hills or knolls and thus would be readily visible from quite a distance, an awesome site sparkling in the radiant sunlight. In 1863 the French archeologist Jules Oppert discovered a pedestal 6 miles SE of Babylon with dimensions of 45' square and 20' in height. Oppert felt that this was a possible site of Nebuchadnezzar's image, but there is no further evidence to substantiate this premise.

Keep the context in mind, recalling what Nebuchadnezzar "fell on his face and did homage (this is the same Aramaic word '**begid**' rendered worship in Da 3:5) in (Da 2:46) declaring to Daniel that "Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings." (Da 2:47). And in face of a God glorifying declaration, the king now seeks to glorify the golden image (possibly of himself although that his not clearly stated).

While not stated in the Aramaic, in the **Septuagint** the Jewish translators of this verse added a notation that may help us understand Nebuchadnezzar's actions, this notation suggesting that the events of Daniel 3 may be some 15 years after the events of Daniel 2. The **Septuagint** reads...

In his **eighteenth year** Nabuchodonosor the king made a golden image, its height was sixty cubits, its breadth six cubits: and he set it up in the plain of Deira, in the province of Babylon (**Brenton's English Translation** of the Septuagint of Theodoret)

Nebuchadnezzar assumed the throne of Babylon in about 605BC which (if one accepts the the**Septuagint** dating as accurate) would place the events in Daniel 3 in about 587 or 586BC very near the final destruction of Jerusalem (2Ki 25:8). The Net Bible note alludes to the Septuagint but then makes the comment that "there seems to be no real basis for associating the events of Daniel 3 with this date." Clearly, one has to be careful not to be dogmatic in dating Daniel 3 and in so doing miss the point that these events are clearly related to the "single great statue" of Daniel 2. The upshot is that since the time is not specified in the original Aramaic text, it is not critical for one's understanding of Daniel 3 (or God would have given it)! The statement in Da 3:12 that "There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the administration of the province of Babylon" support the fact that there was little time lapse between Daniel 2 and Daniel 3.

**C I Scofield** feels that...

The attempt of this great king of Babylon to unify the religions of his empire by self-deification will be repeated by the beast, the last head of the Gentile world-dominion Rev 13:11-15 See note on "Beast, the" Da 7:8" See Re 19:20" It has repeatedly characterized Gentile authority in the earth, e.g. Dan 6:7; Acts 12:22 and the later Roman emperors.

**Key Words** in Daniel 3 -

**Image** - 11x in 10v - Da 3:1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, 12, 14, 15, 18

**Set up** - 11x in 8v - Da 3:1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 12, 14, 18

**Fall down (fell down)** - 6x in 6v - Da 3:5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 15

**Worship (worshiped)** - 10x in 11v - Da 3:5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 18, 28

**Serve** - 5x in 5v - Da 3:12, 14, 17, 18, 28

**Horns**, etc ("Music") - 4x in 4v - Da 3:5, 7, 10, 15

Just from observing these key words and phrases one can see that one of the major themes of Daniel 3 has to do with **worship** and specifically **idol (image) worship**. Nebuchadnezzar is not just asking the leaders to physically bow down, but his goal is that they worship and serve his gods (Da 3:12, 14). He knows that what a person **worships** is intimately linked with the "god" that they **serve**. And so it is not surprising that in the Old Testament, we repeatedly see **idolatry** associated with **worship** and **serve** (Ex 20:5, 23:24, Dt 4:19, 5:9, 8:19, 11:16, 17:3, 29:26, 30:17, 1Ki 9:6, 9, 16:31, 22:53, 2Ki 10:23, 17:16, 21:3, 21, 2Chr 7:19, 22, 33:3, Je 8:2, 25:6, Da 3:12, 14, 18, 28). Notice also the important role of **music** in worship, in this case false worship. Does the modern church really recognize the vital role that **music** plays in preparing our hearts for worship of God **in spirit and in truth** (Jn 4:23, 24-note)? I fear the 21st century church in America is drifting away from the singing of theologically rich psalms and hymns and spiritual songs (Ep 5:19-note), failing to recognize the important role of "deeper" bibliocentric lyrics (which can still have a good beat!) in teaching sound doctrine to the saints (cp Col 3:16-note).

**Warren Wiersbe** - Nebuchadnezzar was wise to use instrumental music because it could stir the people's emotions and make it easy for him to manipulate them and win their submission and obedience. Throughout history, music and song have played an important role in strengthening nationalism, motivating conquest, and inspiring people to act. Music has the power so to grip human thoughts and emotions that people are transformed from being free agents into becoming mere puppets. The English poet William Congreave wrote that "music has charms to soothe a savage breast," but music also has power to release the savage in the breast. Music can be used as a wonderful tool and treasure from the Lord or as a destructive weapon from Satan. (Wiersbe, W. W. Be Resolute)

### BRIEF EXCURSUS ON IDOLATRY

**As we consider the response of the three Hebrew boys**, we need to remember that Judah was in captivity for two reasons: **(1) Not keeping the Sabbath years for 490 years** (2Chr 36:20, 21, Jer 25:11, 12, cp God's law Lv 25:3,4, God had prophesied their disobedience Lv 26:33, 34, 35) and **(2) Worshiping and serving idols** rather than being solely devoted to the living God (2Chr 36:14-17, speaking of Jeshurun = "Upright One" = Israel Dt 32:15, 16, 17, 18, 19 - Observe in v15 what predisposed Israel to pursuing idolatry). It is fascinating that the Jews wanted idols more than they wanted God and so God gave them what they wanted by giving them over to **Babylon**, the birthplace of idolatry, so that they might "get their fill" of their "heart's desire"! Beloved, if we as NT believers persist in pursuing what God warns us not to pursue, we run the danger (after His repeated warnings) that one day He no longer provides a remedy but gives us over to what we have been willfully, rebelliously pursuing! Woe!

The 3 Hebrew boys would also know that God had commanded Israel that...

You shall have **no other gods before Me**. You shall **not make for yourself an idol** (cp Nebuchadnezzar's golden image), or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not **worship** them or **serve** them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me. (Ex 20:3, 4, 5)

One of many dangers of idols is that in worshiping and serving them, we become like them, the psalmist declaring...

Those who make them will become like them, everyone who trusts in them. O Israel, trust in the LORD; He is their help and their shield. (Ps 115:8, 9)

Notice in this Psalm the "antidote" for not becoming like the godless idols is to **trust in Jehovah**.

In another psalm the writer plainly states the danger of idols...

And served their idols, which became a **snare** to them. They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons, and shed innocent blood, The blood of their sons and their daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; and the land was polluted with the blood. Thus they became unclean in their practices, and played the harlot in their deeds. (Ps 106:36, 37, 38, 39)

Idols are a snare or trap, and lure us into practices that are abominable to God, a veritable "stench in His nostrils"! Such unfaithful behavior is pictured in this psalm and throughout the OT as playing the harlot or going "a whoring" (Ex 34:15KJV, Ex 34:16KJV, Lev 17:7KJV, God's prophecy which Israel fulfilled - Dt 31:16KJV, Jdg 2:17KJV, 1Chr 5:25KJV, Ezek 33:30KJV)

The subtle attraction to images is dramatically illustrated in the familiar event in Numbers 21 when the children of God sinned causing God to send fiery serpents among them

So the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, because we have spoken against the LORD and

you; intercede with the LORD, that He may remove the serpents from us." And Moses interceded for the people. Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a standard; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he shall live. And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the standard; and it came about, that if a serpent bit any man, when he looked to the bronze serpent, he lived. (Nu 21:7, 8, 9).

Jesus referred to this OT shadow (**See Study of Biblical types**) as pointing to His being lifted up on the Cross...

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life. (Jn 3:14, 15)

In Numbers those who were bitten had to exercise faith and look (faith is an action verb) at the symbol in order to preserve their physical life. Jesus says that just as the Israelites did not die physically because of the exercise of their faith (that event did not convey spiritual rebirth), in a similar way, as men "bitten" by the sting suffered spiritual death, they could be "healed" by "looking" (cp Isa 45:22KJV) to Jesus, by believing in Him for eternal life. (Read **C H Spurgeon's** miraculous testimony of the new birth when he "looked" to Jesus!)

Some 700-800 years later we read the story of godly King Hezekiah of the southern kingdom of Judah (the 10 northern tribes = "Israel" had no godly kings) who...

removed the high places and broke down the sacred pillars and cut down the **Asherah** (the places where abominable acts of idolatrous "worship" were being performed, many of these acts associated with forbidden sexual practices common to the Canaanites - see discussion of association of **idolatry** with **immorality** - From idolatry to immorality is just one short step. If man is his own god, then he can do whatever he pleases and fulfill his desires without fear of judgment.). He also broke in pieces **the bronze serpent** that Moses had made, for until those days the sons of Israel burned incense to it; and it was called **Nehushtan** (a "worthless piece of brass"). (2Kings 18:4)

Thus we see the attraction of our fallen flesh to images and the perversion of what God intended to be a good thing, but which Israel had turned into idol worship for almost 800 years! And beloved, lest we be too hard on Israel for their foolish, rebellious behavior, we need to remember that Israel's behavior is often a picture of our own fallen flesh. Flesh in our modern world is just as evil as in ancient Israel. It's just that we have changed the names of our idols to things like plenty (money, wealth), possessions, pleasure (entertainment, sports, etc), people, pride (position, power, prestige), etc. We as NT believers must learn from Israel's sins (1Co 10:6, 11) and remember that...

the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. (Galatians 5:17-note)

And so it not surprising that the NT gives us clear commands regarding idols...

Therefore, my beloved, **flee** (present imperative = command to do this continually because we are continually prone to be ensnared by idols!) from idolatry (eidololatreia [word study]). (1Co 10:14)

**Come out** (aorist imperative = Command to do this now. Do it effectively. The command is urgent because the danger is great!) from their midst and be separate," says the Lord. "And **do not touch** (present imperative = command to do this continually because we are continually vulnerable to touch unclean things including idols!) what is unclean (including anything that smacks of idolatry) and I will welcome you. (2 Co 6:17).

Little children, **guard** (aorist imperative = Command to do this now. Do it effectively. The command is urgent because the danger is great!) yourselves from idols. (1Jn 5:21)

Remember that anything or anyone that comes between you and God is an idol. Anything or anyone you are more devoted to than God is an idol. We need to continually do a heart check (Pr 4:23-note) because to the corrupting, destructive effects of idolatry. I think the 3 Hebrew lads had done their heart check in this chapter. What idols are you worshipping dear believer? Cast them out. Repent. Seek His face and His forgiveness and He will welcome you with intimate communion.

Remember that your attitudes, choices and behavior will be determined by one of two "compasses", either **external pressure** or **internal principle**. These Hebrew lads were enabled to stand strong because they stood on internal (Biblically based) principles.

And in case you think you don't have any idols, note Paul's sweeping definition of idolatry...

Therefore **consider** (aorist imperative - Do this now! Do it effectively! It is urgent!) the members of your earthly body as **dead** to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to **idolatry**. (Colossians 3:5 -note)



As Paul explains **greed** or **covetousness** is synonymous with **idolatry** because it places **selfish desire** above **obedience to God**. The individual whose life is dominated by the desire to get things has set up things in the place of God and that is the essence of idolatry. Covetousness is also the root cause of all sin, because when people sin, it is basically people doing what they desire, rather than what God desires. This in turn amounts to worship of self rather than worship of God, and this is the very essence of **idolatry!**

#### Related Resources:

- [Idolatry - Dictionary Articles](#)
- Idolatry and Immorality - relationship and antidote
- Idols - eidolon - word study
- Idolatry - eidololatreia - word study
- Idolater - eidololatres - word study

**Romans 1** - Read and study Ro 1:19-32 (see notes) which explains the inevitable, inexorable spiritual devolution that ensues when one rejects the truth about God, truth He has made evident to every person. Man is made to worship and if he rejects God, he will inevitably worship false gods but not without significant spiritual/moral consequences - see esp Ro 1:25-note, Ro 1:26--note

## Torrey's Topic Idolatry

- **Forbidden** -Exodus 20:2,3; Deuteronomy 5:7

#### CONSISTS IN

- Bowing down to images -Exodus 20:5; Deuteronomy 5:9
- Worshipping images -Isaiah 44:17; Daniel 3:5,10,15
- Sacrificing to images -Psalms 106:38-note; Acts 7:41
- Worshipping other gods -Deuteronomy 30:17; Psalms 81:9-note
- Swearing by other gods -Exodus 23:13; Joshua 23:7
- Walking after other gods -Deuteronomy 8:19
- Speaking in the name of other gods -Deuteronomy 18:20
- Looking to other gods -Hosea 3:1
- Serving other gods -Deuteronomy 7:4; Jeremiah 5:19
- Fearing other gods -2 Kings 17:35
- Sacrificing to other gods -Exodus 22:20
- Worshipping the true God by an image, -Ex 32:4, 5, 6; Ps 106:19-note, Ps 106:20-note
- Worshipping angels -Colossians 2:18
- Worshipping the host of heaven -Deuteronomy 4:19; 17:3
- Worshipping demons -Matthew 4:9-10; Revelation 9:20
- Worshipping dead men -Psalms 106:28-note
- Setting up idols in the heart -Ezekiel 14:3,4
- Covetousness -Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 3:5
- Sensuality -Philippians 3:19
- Is changing the glory of God into an image -Romans 1:23; Acts 17:29
- Is changing the truth of God into a lie -Romans 1:25; Isaiah 44:20
- Is a work of the flesh -Galatians 5:19,20
- Incompatible with the service of God -Ge 35:2,3; Josh 24:23; 1Sa 7:3; 1Ki 18:21; 2Co 6:15,16

#### DESCRIBED AS

- An abomination to God -Deuteronomy 7:25
- Hateful to God -Deuteronomy 16:22; Jeremiah 44:4
- Vain and foolish -Psalms 115:4-8-note; Isaiah 44:19; Jeremiah 10:3
- Bloody -Ezekiel 23:39

- Abominable -1Pe 4:3
- Unprofitable -Judges 10:14; Isaiah 46:7
- Irrational -Acts 17:29; Ro 1:21, 22, 23
- Defiling -Ezekiel 20:7; 36:18

## THEY WHO PRACTICE

- Forget God -Deuteronomy 8:19; Jeremiah 18:15
- Go astray from God- Ezekiel 44:10
- Pollute the name of God -Ezekiel 20:39
- Defile the sanctuary of God -Ezekiel 5:11
- Are estranged from God -Ezekiel 14:5
- Forsake God -2 Kings 22:17; Jeremiah 16:11
- Hate God -2 Chronicles 19:2,3
- Provoke God -Deuteronomy 31:20; Isaiah 65:3; Jeremiah 25:6
- Are vain in their imaginations -Romans 1:21
- Are ignorant and foolish -Romans 1:21,22
- Inflame themselves -Isaiah 57:5
- Hold fast their deceit -Jeremiah 8:5
- Carried away by it -1 Corinthians 12:2
- Go after it in heart -Ezekiel 20:16
- Are mad upon it -Jeremiah 50:38
- Boast of it -Psalms 97:7 [note](#)
- Have fellowship with devils -Hosea 4:12
- Ask counsel of their idols -Hosea 4:12
- Look to idols for deliverance -Isaiah 44:17; 45:20
- Swear by their idols -Amos 8:14
- Objects of, numerous -1 Corinthians 8:5

## OBJECTS OF DESCRIBED AS

- Strange gods -Genesis 35:2,4; Joshua 24:20
- Other gods -Judges 2:12,17; 1 Kings 14:9
- New gods -Deuteronomy 32:17; Judges 5:8
- Gods that cannot save -Isaiah 45:20
- Gods that have not made the heavens -Jeremiah 10:11
- No gods -Jeremiah 5:7; Galatians 4:8
- Molten gods -Exodus 34:17; Leviticus 19:4
- Molten images -Deuteronomy 27:15; Habakkuk 2:18
- Graven images -Isaiah 45:20; Hosea 11:2
- Senseless idols -Deuteronomy 4:28; Ps 115:5 [note](#), Ps 115:7 [note](#)
- Dumb idols -Habakkuk 2:18
- Dumb Stones -Habakkuk 2:19
- Stocks -Jeremiah 3:9; Hosea 4:12
- Abominations -Isaiah 44:19; Jeremiah 32:34
- Images of abomination -Ezekiel 7:20
- Idols of abomination -Ezekiel 16:36
- Stumbling blocks -Ezekiel 14:3
- Teachers of lies -Habakkuk 2:18
- Wind and confusion -Isaiah 41:29
- Nothing -Isaiah 41:24; 1Co 8:4
- Helpless -Jeremiah 10:5
- Vanity -Jeremiah 18:15
- Vanities of the Gentiles -Je 14:22
- Making idols for purpose of, described and ridiculed -Is 44:10,11,12,13,14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20
- Obstinate sinners judicially given up to -Deut 4:28; 28:64; Ho 4:17
- Warnings against -Deuteronomy 4:15, 16, 17, 18, 19



- Exhortations to turn from -Ezekiel 14:6; 20:7; Acts 14:15
- Renounced on conversion -1Th 1:9
- Led to abominable sins -Ro 1:26-32; Acts 15:20

## **SAINTS SHOULD**

- Keep from -Joshua 23:7; 1Jn 5:21
- Flee from -1 Corinthians 10:14
- Not have anything connected with in their houses -Deut 7:26
- Not partake of any thing connected with -1Co 10:19,20
- Not have religious intercourse with those who practise -Josh 23:7; 1Co 5:11
- Not covenant with those who practise -Ex 34:12,15; Deuteronomy 7:2
- Not intermarry with those who practise -Ex 34:16; Deut 7:3
- Testify against -Acts 14:15; 19:26
- Refuse to engage in, though threatened with death -Daniel 3:18
- Saints preserved by God from -1 Kings 19:18; Romans 11:4
- Saints refuse to receive the worship of -Acts 10:25,26; 14:11-15
- Angels refuse to receive the worship of -Revelation 22:8,9
- Destruction of, promised -Ezekiel 36:25; Zechariah 13:2
- Everything connected with, should be destroyed -Ex 34:13; Deut 7:5; 2Sa 5:21; 2Ki 23:14
- Woe denounced against -Habakkuk 2:19
- Curse denounced against -Deuteronomy 27:15

## **PUNISHMENT OF**

- Judicial death -Deut 17:2, 3, 4, 5
- Dreadful judgments which end in death -Je 8:2; 16:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11
- Banishment -Jeremiah 8:3; Hosea 8:5-8; Amos 5:26,27
- Exclusion from heaven -1Co 6:9,10; Ep 5:5; Re 22:15
- Eternal torments -Revelation 14:9-11; 21:8

## **EXEMPLIFIED**

- Israel -Exodus 32:1; 2Ki 17:12
- Philistines -Judges 16:23
- Micah -Judges 17:4,5
- Jeroboam -1Kings 12:28
- Maachah -1Kings 15:13
- Ahab -1Kings 16:31
- Jezebel -1 Kings 18:19
- Sennacherib -2 Kings 19:37
- Manasseh -2 Kings 21:4, 5, 6, 7
- Amon -2 Kings 21:21
- Ahaz -2 Chronicles 28:3
- Judah -Jeremiah 11:13
- Nebuchadnezzar -Daniel 3:1
- Belshazzar -Daniel 5:23
- People of Lystra -Acts 14:11,12
- Athenians -Acts 17:16
- Ephesians -Acts 19:28

## **ZEAL AGAINST-EXEMPLIFIED**

- Asa -1 Kings 15:12
- Josiah -2 Kings 23:5
- Jehoshaphat -2 Chronicles 17:6
- Israel -2 Chronicles 31:1

- Manasseh -2 Chronicles 33:15
- All forms of, forbidden by the law of Moses -Ex 20:4,5
- All heathen nations given up to -Ps 96:5-note; Ro 1:23,25; 1Co 12:2
- Led the heathen to think that their gods visited the earth in Bodily shapes -Acts 14:11
- Led the heathen to consider their gods to have but a local Influence -1Ki 20:23; 2Ki 17:26

## OBJECTS OF

- The heavenly bodies -2 Kings 23:5; Acts 7:42
- Angels -Colossians 2:18
- Departed spirits -1 Samuel 28:14,15
- Earthly creatures -Romans 1:23
- Images -Deuteronomy 29:17; Ps 115:4-note; Isaiah 44:17
- Temples built for -Hosea 8:14
- Altars raised for -1 Kings 18:26; Hosea 8:11
- Accompanied by feasts -2 Kings 10:20; 1 Corinthians 10:27,28

## OBJECTS OF, WORSHIPPED

- With sacrifices -Numbers 22:40; 2 Kings 10:24
- With libations -Isaiah 57:6; Jeremiah 19:13
- With incense -Jeremiah 48:35
- With prayer -1 Kings 18:26; Is 44:17
- With singing and dancing -Ex 32:18,19; 1Ki 18:26; 1Co 10:7
- By bowing to them -1 Kings 19:18; 2 Kings 5:18
- By kissing them -1 Kings 19:18; Hosea 13:2
- By kissing the hand to them -Job 31:26,27
- By cutting the flesh -1 Kings 18:28
- By burning children -Deut 12:31; 2Chr 33:6; Je 19:4,5; Ezek 16:21
- In temples -2 Kings 5:18
- On high places -Numbers 22:41; Jeremiah 2:20
- In groves -Exodus 34:13
- Under trees -Isaiah 57:5; Jeremiah 2:20
- In private houses -Judges 17:4,5
- On the tops of houses -2 Kings 23:12; Zephaniah 1:5
- In secret places -Isaiah 57:8
- Rites of, obscene and impure -Ex 32:25; Nu 25:1-3; 2Ki 17:9; Is 57:6,8,9; 1Pe 4:3
- Divination connected with -2 Chronicles 33:6
- Victims sacrificed in, often adorned with garlands -Acts 14:13

## THE JEWS

- Practiced, in Egypt -Joshua 24:14; Ezekiel 23:3,19
- Brought, out of Egypt with them -Ezekiel 23:8; Acts 7:39, 40, 41
- Forbidden to practise -Exodus 20:1-5; 23:24
- Often mixed up, with God's worship -Ex 32:1, 2, 3, 4, 5; 1Ki 12:27,28
- Followed the Canaanites in -Judges 2:11, 12, 13; 1 Chronicles 5:25
- Followed the Moabites in -Numbers 25:1, 2, 3
- Followed the Assyrians in -Ezekiel 16:28, 29, 30; 23:5, 6, 7
- Followed the Syrians in -Judges 10:6
- Adopted by Solomon -1 Kings 11:5-8
- Adopted by the wicked kings -1Ki 21:26; 2Ki 21:21; 2Chr 28:2, 3, 4; 33:3,7
- Example of the kings encouraged Israel in -1Ki 12:30; 2Ki 21:11; 2Chr 33:9
- Great prevalence of, in Israel -Isaiah 2:8; Je 2:28; Ezek 8:10
- A virtual forsaking of God -Jeremiah 2:9, 10, 11, 12, 13
- The good kings of Judah endeavored to destroy -2Chr 15:16; 34:7
- Captivity of Israel on account of -2 Kings 17:6-18

- Captivity of Judah on account of -2 Kings 17:19, 20, 21, 22, 23

## NAVE'S TOPIC IDOLATRY

- **Wicked Practices of - Human sacrifices**, Lv 18:21; 20:2, 3, 4, 5; Dt. 12:31; 18:10; 2Ki 3:26, 27; 16:3; 17:17, 18; 21:6; 23:10; 2Chr. 28:3; 33:6; Ps 106:37, 38; Is 57:5; Je 7:31; 19:4, 5, 6, 7; 32:35; Ezek 16:20, 21; 20:26, 31; 23:37, 39; Mic 6:7; **practices of, relating to the dead**, Dt 14:1; **licentiousness of**, Ex. 32:6, 25; Nu 25:1, 2, 3; 1Ki 14:24; 15:12; 2Ki. 17:30 (Succoth-benoth - "tents of the daughters" probably indicating some deity worshiped by sexual orgies); 2Ki 23:7; Ezek. 16:17; 23:1-44; Hos 4:12, 13, 14; Amos 2:8; Mic 1:7; Ro 1:24, 26, 27; 1Co 10:7, 8; 1Pe 4:3, 4; Re 2:14, 20, 21, 22; 9:20, 21; 14:8; 17:1-6.
- **Other Customs of**
- **Offered burnt offerings**, Ex. 32:6; 1Ki 18:26; Acts 14:13; **libations**, Is 57:6; 65:11; Je 7:18; 19:13; 32:29; 44:17, 19, 25; Ezek 20:28; **of wine**, Dt 32:38; **of blood**, Ps 16:4; Zech 9:7; **grain offerings**, Is 57:6; Je 7:18; 44:17; Ezek 16:19; **peace offerings**, Ex. 32:6.
- **Incense burned on altars**, 1Ki 12:33; 2Chr 30:14; 34:25; Is 65:3; Je 1:16; 11:12, 17; 44:3; 48:35; Ezek 16:18; 23:41; Hos 11:2.
- **Prayers to idols**, Jdg 10:14; Isa. 44:17; 45:20; 46:7; Jonah 1:5. **Praise**, Jdg. 16:24; Da 5:4.
- **Singing and dancing**, Ex. 32:18, 19.
- **Music**, Da 3:5, 6, 7.
- **Cutting the flesh**, 1Ki 18:28; Jer. 41:5.
- **Kissing**, 1Ki 19:18; Hos. 13:2; Job 31:27.
- **Bowing**, 1Ki 19:18; 2Ki 5:18.
- **Tithes and gifts**, 2Ki 23:11; Da 11:38; Amos 4:4, 5.
- **Annual Feasts** 1Ki 12:32; Ezek. 18:6, 11, 12, 15; 22:9
- **Objects of -**
- **Sun, moon, and stars**, Dt 4:19; 2Ki 17:16; 21:3, 5; 2Chr 33:3, 5; Job 31:26, 27,28; Je 7:17, 18, 19, 20; 8:2; Ezek 8:15, 16; Zeph 1:4, 5; Acts 7:42.
- **Images of angels**, Col 2:18; **animals**, Ro 1:23.
- **Gods of Egypt**, Ex. 12:12.
- **Golden calf**, Ex. 32:4.
- **Brazen serpent**, 2Ki 18:4.
- **Net and drag**, Hab. 1:16.
- **Pictures**, Nu 33:52; Isa. 2:16.
- **Pictures on walls**, Ezek. 8:10.
- **Earrings**, Ge 35:4.
- **Denunciations Against -** Ge 35:2; Ex. 20:3-6, 23 Dt. 5:7-9. Ex. 23:13 1Co 10:7. Lv 19:4; 26:1, 30 Dt. 16:21, 22, 4:15, 16, 19, 15-23; 4:25, 26, 27, 28; 11:16, 17, 28; 28:15-68; 30:17, 18; 31:16-21, 29; 32:15-26; 1Ki 9:6-9. Dt. 12:31; 27:15 Ex. 34:17. 1Sa 15:23; Job 31:26, 27, 28; Ps 16:4; 44:20, 21; 59:8; 79:6; 81:9; 97:7; Is 42:17, 45:16. Joel 3:12; Jonah 2:8; Mic. 5:15; Hab 1:16; Ac 15:29, 20; 1Co 8:1-13. Ac 17:16; Ro 1:25; 1Co 6:9, 10; 1Co 10:14, 20, 21,22.; 1Jn 5:21; Re 21:8, 22:15.
- **Warnings Against, and Punishments of -** Dt. 17:2, 3, 4, 5; 2Chr. 28:23; Neh. 9:27-37; Ps 78:58-64; 106:34-42; Is 1:29-31; 2:6-22; 30:22; 57:3-13; 65:3-7; Jer. 1:15, 16; 3:1-11; 5:1-17; 7; 8:1, 2, 19; 13:9-27; 16; 17:1-6; 18:13, 14, 15; 19; 22:9; 32:35; 44; 48:8; Ezek 6:1ff; 7:19; 8:5-18; 9; 14:1-14; 16; 20; 22:4; 23; 44:10, 11, 12; Hos. 1:2; 2:2, 3, 4, 5; 4:12-19; 5:1, 2, 3; 8:5-14; 9:10; 10; 11:2; 12:11-14; 13:1-4; 14:8; Amos 3:14; 4:4, 5; 5:5; Mic. 1:1-9; 5:12-14; 6:16; Zeph 1:1ff; Mal. 2:11, 12, 13.
- **Prophecies Relating to -** Ex. 12:12 Nu 33:4. Is 2:18, 20, 31:7, 17:7, 8; 19:1; 27:9; Je 10:11, 15; 51:44, 47, 52; Is 21:9. Ezek 43:7, 8, 9; Hos. 10:2; Mic. 5:13; Zeph 2:11; Zech 13:2
- **Folly of -** Dt 4:28; 1Ki 18:27 Jdg. 6:31; 1Sa 5:3, 4. 2Chr 25:15 1Sa 12:21; 2Ki 3:13; Is 16:12; 36:18. 2Chr. 28:22, 23; Ps 115:4, 5, 8, 96:5; 135:15, 16, 17, 18; Is 2:8, 40:12-26; 41:23, 24, 26-29; 44:19, 9-20; 45:20; 46:1, 2, 6, 7; 47:12, 13, 14, 15; 2Ki 19:18; Isa. 37:19; Zech 10:2. Is 57:13; Je 2:28 Dt. 32:37, 38; Jdg. 10:14. Je 10:5, 3-16; 48:13; 51:17; Hab 2:18, 19. Je 11:12; 14:22; 16:19, 20; Ho 8:5, 6 Ex. 32:20; Ps 106:20. Ac 14:15; 17:22, 23, 29; Ro 1:22, 23; 1Co 8:4, 5; 10:19, 12:2; Gal. 4:8; Re 9:20 Dt 4:28; Da 5:23

Daniel 3:2 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent word to assemble the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates and all the rulers of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

- **sent:** Ex 32:4, 5, 6 Nu 25:2 Jdg 16:23 1Ki 12:32 Pr 29:12 Rev 17:2
- Daniel 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**King sent word to Assemble** - All the leaders in Babylon were required to be present and by some estimates the number was in the thousands (or even much higher). This was a call for these leaders to publicly acknowledge their absolute loyalty to the King by bowing to the image (possibly an image of the King himself).

**Satrap** - This is a Persian loan word meaning "protector of the realm." These were governors of main provinces.

**Daniel 3:3 Then the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates and all the rulers of the provinces were assembled for the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.**

- Es 3:12, etc.,
- **satrap.** Ps 82:1-8 Ac 19:34,35 Ro 1:21-28 3:11 1Co 1:24-26 Rev 13:13-16 Rev 17:13,17
- **treasurers:** Ezra 7:21
- Daniel 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**The stood before the image** - When the "king of kings" (Da 2:37, Ezek 26:7) called, all obediently responded, even the three Hebrew boys. In contrast to the false accusation in Da 3:12, they did not **disregard** Nebuchadnezzar's commands which did not call for compromising their faith or God's truth.

There is a time to disobey the king, and it would be when his commands clearly contradicted God's commands to not worship images. Here in Daniel 3 and in Acts 5:27, 28, 29 Scripture presents the clear guideline for when believers should not obey the authorities, Peter declaring "**We must obey God rather than men.**" We need to be very careful in the "gray areas" but idol worship is certainly not one of those areas. So the 3 boys were on good grounds and God honored their honoring of His law (Da 3:30). However, remember that when we have good grounds to disobey the authorities, we must be prepared to accept the consequences as were the 3 boys (cp flogging in Acts 5:40, 41, 42).

**Daniel 3:4 Then the herald loudly proclaimed: "To you the command is given, O peoples, nations and men of every language,**

- **loudly:** Da 4:14 Pr 9:13, 14, 15 Isa 40:9 58:1
- **command:** Ho 5:11 Mic 6:16
- **peoples:** Da 4:1 6:25 Es 8:9
- Daniel 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Herald loudly proclaimed** - No one could say "I didn't know". As clear as this pagan herald was regarding his call to false worship of dead gods, so should we be as God's heralds of the gospel of grace which leads to true worship of the living God (cp Jn 4:24).

**Daniel 3:5 that at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe and all kinds of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up.**

- **horn** Da 3:10,15
- Daniel 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**The horn, et al** - The fact that some of these instruments have Greek names does not necessarily support a late date for the authorship of Daniel, because Greek products and trading cities existed through much of western Asia as early as the sixth century B.C. Such instruments were common in Babylon at this time. In fact notice that the king's proclamation (Da 3:4) also acknowledged other languages in Babylon.

**Fall down** - An act of submission.

**Worship** - (Aramaic = **cegid**; Hebrew = **cagad** = to prostrate one's self in homage). The **Septuagint** translates **cegid** with the Greek

verb **proskuneo** which means to bow down, to prostrate oneself in homage before another in the sense of worship, not mere reverence or courtesy! Note that **worship** is a key word in Daniel 3 occurring some 10x in in 9v (Da 3:5; 3:6; 3:10; 3:11; 3:12; 3:14; 3:15; 3:18; 3:28 - all are translated in Greek with **proskuneo**). The call to worship indicates this is not just a command to show political allegiance but clearly has religious or spiritual overtones.

**The image** - Idolatry is image worship. Note the role of music in the practice of idolatry.

**Smith** writes that **idolatry** "strictly speaking denotes the worship of deity in a visible form, whether the images to which homage is paid are symbolical representations of the true God or of the false divinities which have been made the objects of worship in his stead. (Smith's Dictionary)

**Daniel 3:6 "But whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire."**

- **fall:** Da 3:11,15 Ex 20:5 Isa 44:17 Mt 4:9 Rev 13:15-17
- **shall be:** Da 2:5,12,13 Mk 6:27
- **furnace:** Ge 19:28 Jer 29:22 Eze 22:18, 19, 20, 21, 22 Mt 13:42,50 Rev 9:2 14:11
- Daniel 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **BOW OR BURN! COMPROMISE OR CONFLAGRATE!**

**Immediately** - No "due process" here, which is interesting because he did give the 3 Hebrews a "second chance" (Da 3:13, 14, 15). One has to believe God is behind the scenes, orchestrating the scenes He is behind!

**Cast into the midst of a furnace**- In short "**Bow or Burn**"! **Compromise or conflagrate!**

**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 worshiped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.**

- **when:** Da 3:10
- **all the peoples:** Jer 51:7 Ac 14:16 1Jn 5:19 Rev 12:9 13:3,8,14 17:8 19:20
- Daniel 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Therefore** - term of conclusion

**When all the peoples heard** - Guzik comments that this "literally reads as soon as they were hearing they were falling down. There was total and immediate obedience to Nebuchadnezzar's command!"

**Worshiped the golden image** - This is clearly idolatry. They feared the king (man), not God, for their **temporal lives** were at stake. Isn't it amazing that when we talk with men today about the fact that their **eternal lives** are at stake, they are so often apathetic or adversarial because there is no fear of God before their eyes (Ro 3:18-note)!

**How might these 3 Jewish boys have rationalized** (some might call it "situation ethics"!) **bowing or living by the dictum "When in Babylon, do as the Babylonians do."**? They might have rationalized it by saying we'll bow down physically but in our hearts, we remain "standing up". They may have reasoned that the king had been so good to them, it would be ungrateful not to bow. They may have justified bowing by reasoning that they were being forced against their will to bow and for that reason God would forgive. After all, no one in Jerusalem would ever know whether they bowed or not. The age old favorite is "Everyone is bowing down." Or they may have reasoned "If we don't, we'll be killed and God needs us in these positions of power to help His people."

**THOUGHT** - Let's be honest, for we all know that when we want to compromise, we can always find an excuse. On the other hand, when you set your heart to obey God, you don't need excuses. Imagine how they must have felt as they stood alone among hundreds or thousands of bowed bodies! Some in their vicinity undoubtedly must have shouted "Bow down or you'll burn!"

**Donald Campbell** tells this story of one who took a bold stand - When the Communists invaded a Korean village, they found a

young man with a vigorous Christian testimony who, regardless of their edicts to the contrary, continued to witness for Christ. Determining at last to make him a public example, the soldiers commanded the entire village to appear in the town square. A Communist soldier led the young Christian to the center of the crowd, put a pistol against his head, and shouted, "Denounce Jesus Christ and embrace Communism, or die!" The young man hesitated, looked around the gathered crowd, and saw some he had brought to faith in Christ. Then quickly he raised his gaze to heaven and cried, "I believe in Jesus Christ! I believe ... " Crack! And he was dead, inspired by a courage and faith similar to that of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. (Campbell, D. Daniel God's Man in a Secular Society)

**Wiersbe** - The difference between the true believer and the unbeliever isn't the **presence** of faith, because everybody lives by faith in something. The difference is in the **object** of that faith. The crowd *believed* the herald and the king, and therefore they *obeyed*. The three Hebrew men *believed* the commandment of God, so they *disobeyed*. The crowd had *credulous faith*, but the Jews had *confident faith*. (Ibid)

### Daniel 3:8 For this reason at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and brought charges against the Jews

- **charges:** Da 6:12,13 Ezra 4:12-16 Es 3:6,8,9 Ac 16:20, 21, 22 17:6, 7, 8 28:22 1Pe 4:3,4
- Daniel 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**For this reason** - Always pause and asked "What reason?"

**Brought charges against** (NIV = denounced) - The **NAS** rendering is not as strong as the Aramaic which literally means "ate the pieces of", a vivid idiom for slander (although 2 of their 3 charges were true - see Da 3:12). The **RSV** is better - "**maliciously accused.**"

What was their motive? **Jealousy**, the "jaundice of the soul" and it was a sin which quickly pounced on Abel (cp Ge 4:7) motivating him to murder his brother. Jealousy (Ge 37:11) led Joseph's brothers to sell him as a slave to the Midianite traders (Ge 37:26-28). Indeed as someone has well said jealousy is the raw material of murder. And of course the most horrendous crime motivated by envy was the betrayal and crucifixion of our Lord, Matthew recording...

For he (Pilate) knew that because of **envy** they had handed Him over. (Mt 27:18) (**Comment:** Thomas Manton said "There are two sins which were Christ's sorest enemies, covetousness and envy. Covetousness sold Christ and envy delivered Him.")

He that looks through a green glass sees no other color. - Thomas Adams

As a moth gnaws a garment, so does envy consume a man. - John Chrysostom

Envy eats nothing but its own heart.

The **Puritan Thomas Brooks** gives perhaps the best synopsis of this horrible "cancer" writing "Envy, it tortures the affections, it vexes the mind, it inflames the blood, it corrupts the heart, it wastes the spirits; and so it becomes man's tormentor and man's executioner at once.

**C H Spurgeon** - The cure for envy lies in living under a constant sense of the divine presence, worshipping God and communing with him all the day long, however long the day may seem.

**Today in the Word** notes that "You may find that obeying God and obeying the laws of men usually go hand in hand. But that isn't always the case. When legal or social mandates require you to compromise your faith, are you prepared to do the right thing ... and to do it in the right way? Ask the Lord to give you the strength to stand for what is right, but also the humility to avoid self-righteous grandstanding. Make sure you are disobeying for God's sake, not for your own publicity ([Devotional](#))

If God's Word guides your conscience,  
let your conscience be your guide.

### Daniel 3:9 They responded and said to Nebuchadnezzar the king: "O king, live forever!"

- **king:** Da 3:4,5
- **O King:** Da 2:4 5:10 6:6,21 Ro 13:7
- Daniel 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



**O king live forever** (like our more modern phrase "long live the king") - Da 2:4, 3:9, 5:10, 6:6, 6:21. Notice even Daniel used this mode of addressing the king in Da 6:21. However when Daniel said "live forever" one cannot help but believe there was a desire for King Darius to live eternally with the Messiah, the One of Whom Daniel spoke in Da 9:25. In contrast, the similar address by the pagans in Da 6:6 was only a formal way of addressing royalty.

**Daniel 3:10 "You, O king, have made a decree that every man who hears the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, and bagpipe and all kinds of music, is to fall down and worship the golden image.**

- **have made:** Da 3:4, 5, 6, 7 6:12 Ex 1:16,22 Es 3:12, 13, 14 Ps 94:20 Ec 3:16 Isa 10:1 Jn 11:57 Rev 13:16,17
- **the horn:** Ex 15:20,21 32:18,19 1Ch 15:16,28 16:5,6 25:1-6 2Ch 29:25 Ps 81:1, 2, 3 92:1, 2, 3 149:3,4 150:3, 4, 5, 6 Am 6:5
- Daniel 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**You, O King** - They are playing to his pride and authority.

**Daniel 3:11 "But whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire**

- Daniel 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**A furnace of blazing fire** - Fire and other forms of martyrdom have been the fate of many believers over the centuries who stood boldly for Christ and refused to compromise their conviction and their confession of their Lord.

The story is told of [John Hus \(or here\)](#) promoted John Wycliffe's teachings including the premise that people should be permitted to read the Bible in their own language, and they should oppose the tyranny of the established church that threatened the penalty of execution for anyone even possessing a non-Latin Bible. It is thus not surprising that Hus was condemned to burn at the stake. Apparently on the night before his execution while in his cell, he tested himself with a match and recoiled in pain. **Hus** is quoted as saying "*If I can't withstand the fire of a candle, how the stake?*" But the next day Hus not only endured the blazing flames (by some reports with Wycliffe's manuscript Bibles used as kindling!), he was enabled to die singing "*Christ, thou Son of the living God, have mercy upon me.*" God's grace was sufficient and he went through the flames in a manner that glorified His Father (Mt 5:14, 15, 16). According to one source, Hus' very last words are reported to have been "*in 100 years, God will raise up a man whose calls for reform cannot be suppressed.*" Hus was burned at the stake in **1415** and a little over a century later in **1517** Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses of Contention on the church door at Wittenberg, setting into motion the protestant reformation! Indeed the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.

You may have heard their names before, **Hugh Latimer, Nicholas Ridley and Thomas Cranmer**. We will meet them someday soon so it behooves us to know their story and be encouraged by their willingness to suffer for Christ's sake.

**Nicholas Ridley** had been raised Catholic but converted to Protestantism. **Hugh Latimer** became a great preacher and Ridley helped author the Book of Common Prayer. During the Protestant persecution by Queen Mary ("Bloody Mary") of 1553-55, both men were arrested and condemned to be burned at the stake. As the flames were being lit, Latimer cried out to his fellow-martyr, "*Be of good cheer, Master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England as shall never be put out.*" [Thomas Cranmer \(read his brief bio\)](#) watched them die in agony. At one time he had been the Archbishop of Canterbury. Later under great pressure he recanted his evangelical faith. But watching his two friends die seemed to give strength to his soul and a few months later he was condemned to die at the stake. As they lit the flames, he placed his right hand into the fire to show his tormentors that he was not afraid to die (cp "*a sign of destruction for them!*" Php 1:28-note). (For more detail see [Hugh Latimer, Bishop and Martyr](#)) (Related Resource: [Fox's Book of Martyrs](#))

**Dave Guzik** - The command is empowered by a naked threat. Nebuchadnezzar regarded refusing to worship the image as treason, not only as a religious offense. In this, Nebuchadnezzar is just like most politicians, who often seem willing to use religion to strengthen their grip on political power. Politicians are happy to blend together spiritual allegiance and national allegiance. An example of this was displayed in 1936 when Herr Baldur von Schirach, head of the youth program in Nazi Germany, said: "*If we act as true Germans we act according to the laws of God. Whoever serves Adolph Hitler, the fuehrer, serves Germany, and whoever serves Germany serves God.*" Another example comes from 1960 when the President of Ghana had a slightly larger than life-size statue of himself erected in front of the national house of Parliament. An inscription on the side of the statue read, "*Seek ye first the political kingdom and all other things shall be added unto you.*" (cp Jesus' words Mt 6:33!) The statue was destroyed after a bloodless coup in 1966. ([Ref](#))

**Today in the Word** notes that the stand of the 3 Hebrew lads in Daniel 3 "is a reminder that the means are sometimes more important than the end result. Many believers have made similar stands, only to be martyred without being rescued (**Ed**: see following examples). By doing the honorable thing, we can show the world the righteousness of God; only He can display His power. When this world tempts you to compromise your faith, be willing to accept the consequences that threaten your obedience. Our God is stronger than this world.

#### [How Firm a Foundation](#)

When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,  
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply:  
The flame shall not hurt thee, I only design  
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.  
-John Rippon

**Daniel 3:12 "There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the administration of the province of Babylon, namely Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. These men, O king, have disregarded you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up."**

- **certain**: Da 2:49 6:13 1Sa 18:7, 8, 9, 10, 11 Es 3:8 Pr 27:4 Ec 4:4
- **disregarded** Ac 5:28 17:7
- Daniel 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Certain Jews** - This phrase is used in a derogatory sense in this passage. Notice that the 3 Hebrew lads did not make a scene over their defiance. It took the tattling of "certain Chaldeans" to bring the matter to the king's attention.

**Appointed over the administration** - Envy (see discussion of envy) and/or jealousy (see discussion of jealousy) are dangerous emotions which often lead to destructive declarations as in the present case. As has been well said every time you turn green with envy you are ripe for trouble. Ultimately envy eats nothing but its own heart. Under the guise of showing their loyalty to the king, these Chaldeans were very happy to be the "whistle blowers" for these foreigners who had attained positions of power.

**Observe the three accusations against the "boys"** - (1) They were showing no respect for the king (not true); (2) they refused to serve Nebuchadnezzar's idolatrous gods (this was true) and (3) they refused to worship the golden image (this was also true).

**Spurgeon** - Though their actions were not public, neither were they hidden. These three Hebrew men must have known they would be discovered, yet they obeyed God rather than man. "You will not be able to go through life without being discovered: a lighted candle cannot be hid. There is a feeling among some good people that it will be wise to be very reticent, and hide their light under a bushel. They intend to lie low all the war time, and come out when the palms are being distributed. They hope to travel to heaven by the back lanes, and skulk into glory in disguise. Ah me, what a degenerate set!"

**Today in the Word** writes that "people who are willing to stake their lives on their theology are pretty serious about it. That was the case for the three young Hebrew men in Daniel 3. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego made a courageous, principled stand (**Ed**: Cp Our decisions are based either on "External Pressure" or "Internal Principle") against King Nebuchadnezzar's order to bow to his golden statue. At the heart of their commitment was their view of God. These young men, taken as captives from Israel to Babylon, took with them their knowledge of God's commands. From their very first days of captivity in this pagan country, these three and their pal Daniel decided that the most important thing they could do was obey God.

**Do not serve your gods** (Ex 20:1-5) - Bowing is not an innocent action, because what we bow to we end up serving.

**Serve your gods... or worship** - This statement makes the image more than just an innocent image, and strongly implies it was an image related to Nebuchadnezzar's god (possibly even self-deification!) (cp Da 3:28 where Nebuchadnezzar clearly links both verbs to idolatry -- "to **serve** or **worship** any god").

**Serve** ([06399](#))(Aramaic = **Pelach**) (Septuagint = **latreuo**) is clearly a key word in this chapter and also throughout this "middle" (Gentile) section of Daniel (8x in Daniel - Da 3:12, 14, 17, 18, 6:16, 20, 7:14, 27). Nebuchadnezzar understood the **spiritual dynamics of idolatry** and was calling not just for physical bowing down to an image but for a submission of one's heart to serve his gods. **What/who one serves is one's master and the one to whom he or she is enslaved or in bondage** Jesus taught this axiomatic principle in His Sermon on the Mount declaring that...

**No one** (Greek = absolute negation! No exceptions!) can (dunamai) serve (douleuo) two masters (kurios); for

either he will hate the one and love (agapao) the other, or he will be devoted to (hold to) (antechomai) one and despise (kataphroneo) the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (wealth) (mammonas). (Mt 6:24-note)

## Related Resources

- James 4:4 -James 4:4 Commentary
- 1Jn 2:15 - 1 John 2:15 Commentary
- 1Jn 2:16 -1 John 2:16 Commentary

OUR BEHAVIOR IS BASED ON...

EXTERNAL PRESSURE

OR

INTERNAL PRINCIPLE

**MacArthur** - Our decisions, our attitudes and our behaviors are determined by one of two things: **external pressure**, or **internal principle**... the battle is going on all the time in our lives between these two conflicting items. And we're very good at self-justification so a lot of times when we succumb to external pressure we define it as internal principle. But basically we have to come down to that bottom line. Do we do what we do, say what we say and act the way we act because we have **convictions** about it or because we feel the **pressure** from the outside? Are our convictions altered by pressures brought to bear upon us?

## MEN OF COMMITMENT

**Chuck Smith** reiterates the importance of **internal principle** discussing the parallel term "**Commitment**" noting that **commitment** "gives you the strength to go against... the current of this world (which is anti-God: "love not the world")... declaring the material is superior to the spiritual. Without real **commitment** you will be swept away (by) the "everybody is doing it" syndrome. Your **commitment** becomes an encouragement to others. "Give me some men who are stout hearted men... " Men who are **committed** are the men who change the world... Paul's **commitment**, "For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain." (Php 1:21-note) No wonder he was accused of turning the world upside down (Acts 17:6). Men of **commitment** cannot be stopped. Threats of death cannot dissuade them. **How does a person become so committed?** They had purposed in their hearts (Da 1:8)... more than a mind-set (for) it is easy to change the mind (instead) it is a matter of setting your heart. It is by the power of the Spirit, "not by might nor by (fleshly) power" (Zech 4:6). Peter's denial of the Lord (was because) he was trusting in his flesh. Peter's bold witness before the Sanhedrin (was because he was) ... "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 3:8, cp Acts 2:4). The result of their commitment (was that) the LORD stood with them (cp 2Ti 4:16, 17, 18-note). He will always stand **with** us, if we dare to stand **for** Him. ([Daniel 3:16-17 Commitment](#)) (cp Jesus' words Mt 6:24 - They remind me of an old song by Bob Dylan the theology of which is not bad![You Gotta Serve Somebody-Bob Dylan](#))

I saw the martyr at the stake,  
The flames could not his courage shake  
Nor death his soul appall.  
I asked him whence his strength was given,  
He looked triumphantly to heaven  
And answered, Christ is all.

Then come to Jesus, come today,  
Come, Father, Son and Spirit say,  
The Bride repeats the call;  
Come, He has blood for all your stains,  
Come He has balm for all your pains  
Come He is all in all.

-W A Williams

Nebuchadnezzar's threats could not cause these 3 young Jewish men to bow because they had already "bowed" their heart to Jehovah and now their "heart was fixed (prepared)...

Ps 57:7KJV "My heart is **fixed**, O God, my heart is **fixed**: I will sing and give praise." (Fixed = Hebrew word meaning something brought into incontrovertible existence and figuratively conveys the idea of one who is inwardly determined to stand firm and remain steadfast)

As a follower of Jesus, when everyone else is bowing to idols of pride or plenty or pleasure or possessions, etc, take your stand for

righteousness, for what is right. His promise is sure. He will be with you, even when you are the only one standing! (Cp Ps 23:4-[note](#), Ps 23:5-[note](#), Is 43:1, 2, 3, Mt 28:20)

**Matthew Henry** observes that "Good thoughts of God, and a **full assurance that He is with us while we are with Him, will help very much to carry us through sufferings**; and, if He be for us (Ro 8:31-note), we need not fear what man can do unto us (Mt 10:28, Lk 12:4, 5, cp Acts 5:41); let him do his worst. God will deliver us either **from death** or **in death** (through death's doorway into eternal life in His glorious presence! 2Co 5:8).

**When you take your stand for Christ,  
you will not stand alone.**

**Daniel 3:13 Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego; then these men were brought before the king.**

- **rage**: Da 3:19 2:12 Ge 4:5 1Sa 20:30-33 Es 3:5,6 Pr 17:12, 27:3, 29:22 Lk 6:11
- **Then**: Mt 10:18 Mk 13:9 Lk 21:12 Ac 5:25-27 24:24
- Daniel 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Then** - An expression of time which is a useful marker of the sequence of events.

**Rage and anger** - It takes two synonyms to convey the degree of the king's fury. He clearly had an anger problem, for after all he does not even know yet whether they are guilty of the charges. Anger is like that isn't it? It's more often a mindless **reaction** rather than a responsible **action** after thoughtful consideration.

King Nebuchadnezzar was a mighty general and much like Alexander the Great years later (the "Bronze" kingdom), these two great empire conquerors were sadly unable to conquer themselves (Alexander became an alcoholic and died at age 33).

**Solomon** - He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city. (Pr 16:32).

**Daniel 3:14 Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up?"**

- **true**: Ex 21:13,14
- **my gods**: Da 3:1, 4:8 Isa 46:1 Jer 50:2
- Daniel 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Is it true** - This shows that the king did not blindly accept the accusations of the Chaldeans. At first the king seems taken aback that they would have refused to bow, but his mood would soon change after they refused his "second chance" to bow.

**Matthew Henry** reads it this way - Was it designedly and deliberately done, or was it only through inadvertency, that you have not served my gods? What! you that I have nourished and brought up, that have been educated and maintained at my charge, that I have been so kind to and done so much for, you that have been in such reputation for wisdom, and therefore should better have known your duty to your prince; what! do not you serve my gods nor worship the golden image which I have set up?" Note, The faithfulness of God's servants to him has often been the wonder of their enemies and persecutors, who think it strange that they run not with them to the same excess of riot (1Peter 4:4-note).

**Guzik** makes a cogent point noting that "This (their answer to "Is it true?") was an even greater test for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. It is one thing to make a stand for God; it is a greater thing to stick to your stand when pointedly asked, "Is it true?" Peter could follow Jesus after His arrest, but he wilted and denied Jesus when asked, "Is it true?" ([Ref](#))

**C H Spurgeon** adds that "If, standing before the heart-searching God at this time, you cannot say, **It is true,**' how should you act? If you cannot say that you take Christ's cross, and are willing to follow Him at all hazards, then hearken to me and learn the truth. Do not make a profession at all. Do not talk about baptism or the Lord's Supper, nor of joining a church, nor of being a Christian; for if you do, you will lie against your own soul. **If it be not true that you renounce the world's idols, do not profess that it is so.** It is unnecessary that a man should profess to be what he is not; it is a sin of supererogation (act of performing more than is required by duty, obligation, or need), a superfluity of naughtiness. If you cannot be true to Christ, if your coward heart is recreant (unfaithful to duty) to your Lord, do not profess to be His disciple, I beseech you. **He that is married to the world, or flint hearted, had better**

return to his house, for he is of no service in this war.

**Serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up** - Can we not see Nebuchadnezzar's gigantic ego ("my... I") which causes him to brazenly declare what amounts to an antithesis of the first of the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:3) saying in essence "You shall have no other gods before my gods". Passages like this remind us of God's great mercy to sinners.

As **Spurgeon** says "We can imagine the enormous pressure on Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego to **compromise**. Everything in front of them - the king, the furnace, the music, their compatriots, their competitors - all of it conspired to convince them to compromise. Yet God was more real to them than any of those things. "Do not judge the situation by the king's threat and by the heat of the burning fiery furnace, but by the everlasting God and the eternal life which awaits you. Let not flute, harp, and sackbut fascinate you, but hearken to the music of the glorified. Men frown at you, but you can see God smiling on you, and so you are not moved.

**Daniel 3:15 "Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery and bagpipe and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, very well. But if you do not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?"**

- **hear:** Da 3:10
- **fall down:** Lk 4:7,8
- **but:** Da 3:17 Ex 32:32 Lk 13:9
- **who:** Da 3:28,29 6:16,20 Ex 5:2 2Ki 18:35 2Ch 32:15-17 Isa 36:20 37:23 Mt 27:43, Mt 10:19 Mk 13:11 Lk 12:11 21:14,15 Ac 4:8, 9, 10, 11, 12,19 5:29 6:15 Ac 24:10, 11, 12, 13
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## PRESSURE TO COMPROMISE

**Now if you are ready** - One more temptation to compromise. How often our enemies the flesh and the devil parrot these words "you just have one more chance to\_\_\_\_\_."

**Matthew Henry** - Thus does the matter lie in a little compass—Turn, or burn; and, because he knew they buoyed themselves up in their refusal with a confidence in their God, he insolently set him a defiance: "And who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands? Let him, if he can." Now he forgot what he himself once owned, that their God was a God of gods and a Lord of kings, ch. 2:47. Proud men are still ready to say, as Pharaoh, Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice? or, as Nebuchadnezzar, Who is the Lord, that I should fear his power?

**What god is there who is able to deliver** - Nebuchadnezzar clearly recognized the spiritual issues involved and knew full well that to bow was tantamount to submission to the Babylonian gods. The king had already learned that the God of Israel is able to reveal mysteries (Da 2:47) to His servants, but he doubted God's ability to save the three dissenters.

Observe that Nebuchadnezzar is placing himself above all gods, saying in a sense "I am more powerful than the gods". He must have forgotten that earlier he had said "**Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings**" (Da 2:47). He was like **Pharaoh** another prideful ruler who confronted another Jewish man Moses with the question...

Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, and besides, I will not let Israel go. (Ex 5:2)

**Walvoord** adds that "Rabshakeh made the same arrogant and blasphemous claim when threatening King Hezekiah (Isa 36:13-20)—the claim to the possession of a human power so great that there is no divine power to which the victim can turn for help. (Walvoord, J. F. Daniel: The Key To Prophetic Revelation)

**Guzik** makes an interesting observation that "Nebuchadnezzar thinks nothing of insulting all gods with this statement. He is more of a **secularist** or a **humanist** than a **theist**. The god he really believes in is himself, not the gods of Babylon." ([Ref](#))

**Deliver** (07804) (**sezab**) is an Aramaic verb meaning to deliver, to rescue. It refers consistently to rescuing or delivering a person from an impossible situation. The **Septuagint** translates **sezab** with the verb *exaireo* which literally means to take out and so to pluck out or draw out. In the middle voice (as in this use) *exaireo* means to deliver, to rescue or to set free (Acts 12:11). The idea of the latter sense is to deliver someone from peril or confining circumstance, as when Jehovah delivered His chosen people from their enslavement to the oppressive Egyptian ruler (Acts 7:34, cp Moses rescue Acts 7:10). *Exaireo* is used of God delivering believers

from this "present evil age." (Gal 1:4).

**Sezab** - 7v - Da 3:15, 17, 28; 6:14, 16, 20, 27

**Deliver** - This is a **key word** in the second half of Daniel 3 - Da 3:15, 17, 28, 29 (**Note**: Da 3:29 is not sezab but **nesal**, used in Daniel's deliverance from lion's den).

Note the effect of the steadfast (faith-filled) witness of these 3 Hebrew lads on Nebuchadnezzar's heart and mind. He goes from "**what god is there who can deliver**" (Da 3:15) to "**there is no other god** (like the Most High God) **who is able to deliver in this way**" (Da 3:29). Truly these three young men stand as shining examples of the charge by our Lord for us to be salt and light in our this passing world...

**You are the salt of the earth**; but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty again? It is good for nothing anymore, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. **You are the light of the world.** A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do men light a lamp, and put it under the peck-measure, but on the lampstand; and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. (Mt 5:13-note, Mt 5:14, 15, 16-note)

**Ray Pritchard** comments that "the three young men refused to bow because years earlier they had learned the Ten Commandments. **The First Commandment says there can be "no other gods" before the God of Israel.** (Ex 20:3) **The Second Commandment prohibits all forms of image-making and worship of idols.** (Ex 20:4) Simply put, these young men knew their Bible and that's why they wouldn't bow (Ed: Ex 20:5 says "You shall not worship them." The Lxx translated the Hebrew with **proskuneo** which means to bow down, to prostrate oneself in homage before another in the full sense of worship, not mere reverence or courtesy!). ([A Time to Disobey- Nov, 1999](#))

**EBC** - Like Sennacherib, who had derided Hezekiah's trust in God by boasting that none of the gods of the other nations had ever been able to save their people from the might of Assyria (2Kings 18:33, cp Ps 3:2-[note](#)), Nebuchadnezzar had converted his confrontation with men into a contest with the Lord God Almighty. Nebuchadnezzar's doom and fall were sure, even though he had earlier served God's purpose as a scourge to chasten God's apostate people (Jer 27:6-8). Ungratefully he had scoffed at the very God who had granted him success in battle; therefore he was to undergo one humiliation after another, till he groveled in the dust before Israel's God.

**Daniel 3:16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter.**

- Daniel 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**The righteous are bold as a lion.**

Proverbs 28:1

**We do not need to give you an answer** - There is nothing to say. In essence they admit their guilt and thus make no attempt to defend themselves. International Children's Bible - "Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves to you."

**Walvoord** - Such an answer by itself might be considered arrogant and disrespectful to the king; but coupled with the explanation, it is clear that they feel their case is not in their hands anyway. (Ibid)

The three may have read Isaiah's declaration (theoretically it was available as he prophesied 740-680BC) - Behold, God is my salvation. I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord God is my strength and song (Is 12:2)

**EBC** notes that "The Aramaic word order of Da 3:16 places an emphasis on the pronoun **'we'**," implying that it is the Lord Himself Who will deal with this king who thinks he is sovereign on earth. ([Gaebelein, F. Editor: Expositor's Bible Commentary OT 7 Volume Set: Books: Zondervan Publishing](#))

Remember that these three young men had not read the end of the chapter yet and thus had no idea that God was about to miraculously deliver them. They had not received any special revelation promising their deliverance. In short, as they stood before the king, they knew they might truly die.

These well-trained Hebrew lads undoubtedly knew God's clear command in Ex 20:3-5, and were not prepared to bow to anyone but the Almighty. Beloved, when we know God's Word and obey God's Word, His Spirit will fortify us so that we too can **be bold as a lion!** God's commandments always include His enablements! Our obedience may not cost us our life, but it may cost us our job,



some relationship, some possession (or desire for some possession), etc.

**Showers** observes that "they were not being arrogant. They were not saying, "We don't have to tell you anything." Instead, they were admitting that the charge against them was true; therefore, no defense or apology needed to be made. (The Most High God)

## **HOW TO STAND FIRM IN THE FIRE!**

**How were these three young men able to resist the temptation to bow to the image and compromise their integrity and their witness?** Ultimately they were enabled to stand by the all sufficient grace of God which is magnified in our times of weakness (2Cor 12:9-note, 2Co 12:10-note). **Man's extremity is God's "opportunity" to show Himself mighty!** Here are several factors (the list is not intended to be exhaustive!) that enabled them to stand firm against the schemes of the prideful king (cp Ep 6:11-note)...

(1) They knew God's Word and His clear command against idol worship (Ex 20:1-5). Remember that God never give us a commandment that He does not also give us the enablement (Spirit, grace) to obey the command!

(2) They knew that idol worship was one of the main reasons Judah was in captivity in Babylon (2Chr 36:14-16).

(3) They had experienced the delivering power of God's grace in Daniel 1 when they (concurring with Daniel, the spokesman) made a choice to refuse the king's choice food which would have defiled them (Da 1:8-note). In Daniel 2 they were delivered from being torn limb from limb (Da 2:12-note) when God revealed the mystery to Daniel in the prayer meeting with his three friends.

(4) They had been undoubtedly been taught God's Word including the truths of His past great deliverances such as: (1) **The Passover Deliverance** where Jehovah delivered Israel from Pharaoh and Egyptian bondage (Ex 12:11-14, 13:8, 9, 10); (2) **The Red Sea Deliverance** (problem = Ex 14:8,9; the faith of Moses = Ex 14:13, 14, the deliverance by God = Ex 14:21-30); (3) **The stones of remembrance** (Josh 4:1-5, esp Josh 4:6, 7, for context see Josh 3:1-17). In summary, they were taught the truth about God and this truth was used by His Spirit to increase and stabilize their faith (cp Ro 10:17-note).

In light of (3) and (4), the practical application for us as believers today is to make an effort to keep a written record ("journaling") of God's past deliverances in our life, so that we do not forget that He is able to deliver us (Da 3:17, Heb 2:18-note) when the crisis comes (cp Dt 6:10, 11, 12). Our hearts must be prepared before the crisis. The moment of crisis is too late to prepare our hearts.

(5) They feared God and trusted Him, and did not fear Nebuchadnezzar's raging (cp Pr 29:25). Fear of God is the best "antidote" for neutralizing fear of man and the worst that man can do to us (cp Jesus' command in Mt 10:28)

In short, when you go through the fire, cling fast to the truth you know about God, fixing your eyes on Jesus (Heb 12:2-note) - His promises (cp Isa 43:2), His past deliverances, His commandments that include His enablements, etc. When the fiery test comes, remember especially that God promises not to test us beyond what we are able to endure (1Cor 10:13-note). God had prepared the Hebrew lad's hearts for "such a time as this" (cp Esther 4:14)!

**Matthew Henry** - It was a matter of life and death, and one would think they might have considered awhile before they had resolved; life is desirable, and death is dreadful. But when the sin and duty that were in the case were immediately determined by the letter of the second commandment, and no room was left to question what was right, the life and death that were in the case were not to be considered. Note, Those that would avoid sin must not parley with temptation. When that which we are allured or affrighted to is manifestly evil the motion is rather to be rejected with indignation and abhorrence than reasoned with; stand not to pause about it, but say, as Christ has taught us, Get thee behind me, Satan. They needed no time to contrive how they should word it. While they were advocates for God, and were called out to witness in his cause, they doubted not but it should be given them in that same hour what they should speak, Mt. 10:19. They were not contriving an evasive answer, when a direct answer was expected from them; no, nor would they seem to court the king not to insist upon it. Here is nothing in their answer that looks like compliment; they begin not, as their accusers did, with, O king! live for ever, no artful insinuation—to put him into a good humour, but every thing that is plain and downright

**Wiersbe** - The three men could have compromised with the king and defended their disobedience by arguing, **'Everybody else is doing it,'** or **"Our office demands that we obey,"** or **"We'll bow our knees but we won't bow our hearts."** They might have said,

"We can do our people more good by being officers in the king's service than by being ashes in the king's furnace" But true faith doesn't look for loopholes; it simply obeys God and knows that He will do what is best. Faith rests on commands and promises, not on arguments and explanations. (Ibid)

**Pritchard** - So many Christians want to make deals with God. "Lord, I'll stand up for you as long as (pick one) A) I don't lose my job, B) my friends don't make fun of me, C) I still get that promotion, D) I don't get in trouble with my boss, E) I can still have a successful career." But God doesn't make deals with anyone. He calls us to be faithful and we are called to leave the results with him. He doesn't promise us an easy road if we decide to be faithful to him. And that's why these three young men said, "But if not." They knew God could save them but they knew he might have higher purposes in mind that would require their death. Therefore, they didn't try to back God into a corner by demanding that the Almighty work a miracle on their behalf. They accepted God's will in advance without knowing how things would work out. ([A Time to Disobey- Nov, 1999](#))

**C H Spurgeon** (Morning and Evening)...

The narrative of the manly courage and marvellous deliverance of the three holy children, or rather champions, is well calculated to excite in the minds of believers firmness and steadfastness in upholding the truth in the teeth of tyranny and in the very jaws of death. **Let young Christians especially learn from their example, both in matters of faith in religion, and matters of uprightness in business, never to sacrifice their consciences. Lose all rather than lose your integrity, and when all else is gone, still hold fast a clear conscience as the rarest jewel which can adorn the bosom of a mortal.**

Be not guided by the will-o'-the-wisp of policy, but by the **pole-star of divine authority**. Follow the right at all hazards. When you see no present advantage, walk by faith and not by sight (2Co 5:7). Do God the honour to trust Him when it comes to matters of loss for the sake of principle. See whether He will be your Debtor! See if He doth not even in this life prove His word that "Godliness, with contentment, is great gain," (1Ti 6:6) and that they who "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, shall have all these things added unto them." (Mt 6:33)

Should it happen that, in the providence of God, you are a loser by conscience, you shall find that if the Lord pays you not back in the silver of earthly prosperity, he will discharge His promise in the gold of spiritual joy. Remember that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of that which he possesseth (Lk 12:15). To wear a guileless spirit, to have a heart void of offence, to have the favour and smile of God, is greater riches than the mines of Ophir could yield, or the traffic of Tyre could win. "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and inward contention therewith." **An ounce of heart's-ease is worth a ton of gold**

**Daniel 3:17 "If it be so, our God Whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king.**

- **our God:** Da 4:35 6:20, 21, 22,27 Ge 17:1 18:14 1Sa 17:37, 1Sa 17:46 Job 5:19 34:29 Ps 27:1,2 62:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 73:20 115:3 121:5, 6, 7 18:10,11 Isa 12:2 26:3,4 Isa 54:14 Lk 1:37 Ac 20:24 21:13 27:20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 Ro 8:31 Heb 7:25
- Daniel 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **OUR GOD... HE IS ABLE**

**If it be so** - That is if they are thrown into the blazing fire.

**Our God... is able** (cp Da 4:37) - They affirm their confidence (faith, trust) in God's ability to deliver. Of that they were confident, but the "how" was less clear (they had not yet read the rest of the chapter!)

THOUGHT - When you are faced with the furnace, fix your face on the Father! Now play ["Our God" by Chris Tomlin](#).

**Able** (03202)(**yekel** - Aramaic) means to be capable to perform or carry out. The **Lxx** translates **yekel** in this passage with **dunatos**, which means capable or competent. In general sense **dunatos** means able, capable, powerful and is an attribute of God (Ro 9:22 "to make His **power** known"), Who is called "the Mighty One" (Lk 1:49).

**Yekel** - 11v - Dan 2:10, 27, 47; 3:17, 29; 4:18, 37; 5:16; 6:4, 20; 7:21. Nebuchadnezzar used **yekel** to describe Daniel's ability to interpret the dream, but he did give the glory to Daniel's God which is interesting - "Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of

kings and a revealer of mysteries, since you have been able to reveal this mystery." (Da 2:47)

(Luke 1:37) "For nothing will be impossible with God." (Literally - No word of God is devoid of power)

**Matthew Henry** - Their believing confidence in God and their dependence upon him, Da 3:17. It was this that enabled them to look with so much contempt upon death, death in pomp, death in all its terrors: they trusted in the living God, and by that faith chose rather to suffer than to sin; they therefore feared not the wrath of the king, but endured, because by faith they had an eye to Him that is invisible (He 11:25-note, He 11:27-note)

**Jesus** taught His disciples "**make** (**orist imperative** - A command we carry out but only by the enabling power of the Spirit) up your minds (more literally "place it upon your heart) not to prepare beforehand to defend (**apologeomai** - speak in your own defense against charges presumed to be false) yourselves (Why? How is this possible?) for (**term of explanation**) I will give you utterance (stoma = literally mouth) and wisdom which none (ou = absolute negation!) of your opponents (**antikeimai**) **will be able** (**dunamai**) to resist (**anistemi**) or refute. (Lk 21:14,15)

I love the phrase "**He is able**" and it is especially poignant in the book of Hebrews where we read...

For (**term of explanation** = What is he explaining? Heb 2:17) since He Himself (Jesus) was tempted (perfect tense = past completed action, ongoing effects, **it behooves us to study how Jesus fought temptation!** **Note role of Spirit and Word in** Mt 4:1-10) in that which He has suffered (Lk 22:44), **He is able** (**dunamai** in the present tense = continually has the inherent ability) **to come to the aid** (**boetheo** - to run to us on hearing our cry and to give assistance) of those who are (**peirazo** in the present tense = continually being) tempted (tested). (Heb 2:18-note)

Hence, also, **He** (Jesus) **is able** (**dunamai** - in the present tense = continuously able) to save forever (What is the "condition?") those who draw near (**proserchomai**) to God through Him (Our Great High Priest, the one mediator between God and man - Heb 4:14, 1Ti 2:45), since (You could substitute "because" - he explains Jesus' ability to save us forever) He always lives to make intercession for them. (Heb 7:25-note)

See related study - [GOD IS ABLE - preceptaustin](#)

#### [Come Ye Sinners Poor and Needy](#)

Weak and wounded, sick and sore;  
Jesus ready stands to save you,  
Full of pity, love, and power;  
**He is able, He is able,**  
He is willing, doubt no more.  
—J. Hart

**Honest doubt, if properly handled,  
can become the vestibule of faith!**

**Chuck Smith** writes about the importance of **commitment** in the daring decision by the lads...

We shall each face the fiery furnace. God never promised us immunity from trials, quite the opposite, "and they that live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2Ti 3:12-note). To pray "not my will, Thy will be done" (Lk 22:42, cp Mt 6:10-note) can sometimes involve a cross. My human nature would seek the easy path, but the easy path usually leads to nowhere. We observe some who have fallen by the wayside. "Ye did start well, what did hinder you?" (Gal 5:7) Some are like seed on the stony ground (Mk 4:5, 6, 16, 17). What is the problem? Lack of deep commitment. Their **commitment** came from their **confidence in God**... They knew He could deliver from... He will deliver us from your hand." One way or the other. Even if we burn in your fire we will be delivered from you. ([Daniel 3:16-17 Commitment](#))

Years earlier another **young Hebrew lad** took a bold stand in the face of overwhelming odds, a stand that was based upon his past experiences with Jehovah...

And David said, "The LORD (Jehovah) Who **delivered** me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will **deliver** me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and may the LORD be with you." (1Sa 17:37, cp 1Sa 17:46)

In some of his last written words the **apostle Paul** testified that our God is able declaring...

For this reason (Always pause and ask "What reason?" - See context = 2Ti 1:10, 11-note - ultimately for the

Gospel) I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know Whom I have believed and I am convinced that **He is able** to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day. (2Ti 1:12note)

[I Know Whom I Have Believed \(play\)](#)

(Acappello)

by Daniel Whittle

But I know Whom I have believed,  
And am persuaded that He is able  
To keep that which I've committed  
Unto Him against that day.

The **psalmist** puts it beautifully "The LORD (Jehovah) will protect you from all evil; He will keep your soul. The LORD (Jehovah) will guard your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forever. (Ps 121:7, 8 - notes)

**Out of your hand** - Remember that in Da 1:2, the Lord (Adonai) had delivered Judah into Nebuchadnezzar's **hand** and so He is fully capable of delivering out of the king's hand (hand speaks of power and authority).

**O king** - Notice that even in their refusal to obey the king, they were still respectful, which is a good lesson for us when we disagree with our pagan adversaries. So while they respected the king, they were not afraid of what he might or could do to them. These three young men clearly had a healthy **fear of God** which is the best antidote against the **fear of man**, for he that fears God fears nothing else (cp Pr 29:25).

As **Charles Bridges** says the fear of the LORD "is that affectionate reverence, by which the child of God bends himself humbly and carefully to his Father's law (in this case His prohibition against idol worship).

**John Calvin** - Nothing is more powerful to overcome temptation than the **fear of God**. (**Ed**: Read description of Job in Job 1:1 - **Why did he turn away from evil?**)

**Alan Redpath** rightly says that "**Reverent fear of God** is the key to **faithfulness** in any situation.

[He Is Able to Deliver Thee](#)

'Tis the grandest theme through the ages rung;  
'Tis the grandest theme for a mortal tongue;  
'Tis the grandest theme that the world e'er sung,  
Our God is able to deliver thee.

Refrain

He is able to deliver thee,  
He is able to deliver thee;  
Though by sin oppressed, go to Him for rest;  
Our God is able to deliver thee.

'Tis the grandest theme in the earth or main;  
'Tis the grandest theme for a mortal strain;  
'Tis the grandest theme, tell the world again,  
Our God is able to deliver thee.

Refrain

'Tis the grandest theme, let the tidings roll,  
To the guilty heart, to the sinful soul;  
Look to God in faith, He will make thee whole,  
Our God is able to deliver thee.

**Thomas Watson** explains how the 3 lads were able to take such an uncompromising stand writing that **Grace has a soul-strengthening excellency**. **Grace** enables a man to do that which exceeds the power of nature. **Grace** teaches us to mortify our sins, to love our enemies—and to prefer the glory of Christ before our own lives. Thus the three Hebrew children in Daniel, by the power of grace, marched in the face of death; neither the sound of the music could allure them—nor the heat of the furnace frighten them (Da 3:17). Grace is a Christian's armor, which does more than any other armor can—it not only defends him, but puts courage into him. Grace makes us not only bear suffering—but rejoice in suffering (Ro 5:3). A soul steeled and animated with grace, can tread upon the lion and adder (Psalm 91:13), and with the leviathan can laugh at the shaking of a spear (Job 41:29). Thus does

grace infuse a heroic spirit and drive strength into a man—making him act above the sphere of nature." ([The Beauty of Grace](#))

## NOT EVERY MAN HAS A PRICE!

**Donald Campbell** - Those who believe the saying, "**Every man has his price!**" should consider well the response of these men in this crisis when their lives were at stake. They could not be bought—for **any price!** (Ibid)

### Related Resources:

- [Maranatha! Singers - Oh Deliverer - YouTube](#)
- [Third Day - Our Deliverer - YouTube](#)
- [Chris Tomlin - My Deliverer - YouTube](#)
- [MY Deliverer - Rich Mullins](#)

**Daniel 3:18 "But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."**

- **be known:** Job 13:15 Pr 28:1 Isa 51:12,13 Mt 10:28,32,33,39 16:2 Lk 12:3-9 Ac 4:10-13,19 5:29, 30, 31, 32 Rev 2:10,11 12:11
- **that:** Ex 20:3-5 Lev 19:4
- Daniel 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**But** - This little word marks not a fearful but a faith-filled contrast!

We do not know if they knew Isaiah's words (they were spoken/written around 700BC, at least 100 years before this event in Daniel 3)

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze (Isaiah 43:2NIV).

**But even if He does not** - They were ready to burn rather than betray their God! Why? Because they had yielded their hearts to Him, which paved the way for them surrendering their physical bodies to Him for His purposes.

The three young Hebrew men chose **burning** in the fiery furnace, before **bowing** to the golden image!

Their faith "quenched the power of fire." (Heb 11:34)

These young men knew that **God could deliver** if that was His will for they knew that "**wisdom and power belong to Him**" (Da 2:20) and that He had "**granted Daniel** (and them) **favor**" and that He had given "**them knowledge and intelligence**" (Da 1:17). We too need to maintain a ready recall of **God's Word** and **His past deliverances**, so that we will be motivated and enabled to remain firm in our faith when the fiery trials and afflictions come upon us unexpectedly! An aid in remembering God's past presence and power in our lives is to keep a journal of His answers to prayer and a record of the times when He has delivered us in both "big" and "small" ways.

**The essence of Faith  
is the willingness to serve God  
without a guarantee.**

The three Hebrew lads believed that God could deliver them, **but** they would trust Him even if He did not. Here we see that the boys while not doubting God's ability to deliver them, **did not presume to know His will** in this specific matter, recognizing that God's way might be different than their desires. They recognized the **sovereignty** of God in their situation (cp "able to deliver out of your hand" Da 3:17 and Da 1:2 "into his hand"! ) Leaving the outcome in His hands is in every sense an act of trust in His character, especially His goodness, sovereignty and providence. God has a purpose for everything He does, no matter how it appears to us for **now we see in a mirror dimly** (1Co 13:12). Years earlier Job had voiced a similar affirmation declaring "*Though He slay me, I will hope* (wait on, trust) *in Him.*" (Job 13:15)

**Showers** - They declared that, if it were God's purpose to deliver them, He would deliver them; however, if it were not God's purpose to deliver them, they still would not offend Him by obeying the king's command. Here were saints who exercised implicit faith in God. (The Most High God: Commentary on the book of Daniel. Bellmawr, NJ: Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, Inc)

Jesus' word to His disciples is relevant for He declared **'do not fear** (present imperative + negative = stop fearing or don't begin fearing - He then explains that the worse men can do to us is only **temporal**) those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. (Mt 10:28)

**We are not going to serve your gods** - They had prepared their hearts. They had stood firm when challenged to eat impure foods (Da 1:8) and experienced God's hand of favor in response to their obedience (Da 1:9). They had experienced divine deliverance in Daniel 2. These past tests and divine deliverances gave them the courage to obey God now in the midst of their "fiery" trial. Their course was set. They swam against the current in contrast to their Hebrew counterparts (there is no mention of any other Hebrew lads not bowing). Decisions in the fire are based either on **external pressure** or **internal principle**. These 3 lads had established the principle that they would not compromise in the "small things" (king's food), which prepared them to remain uncompromising when the "big test" came. If you have been compromising in the "small things", don't deceive yourself with the thought that "I'll stand uncompromisingly when the big test comes."

**Leupold** - The quiet, modest, yet withal very positive attitude of faith that these three men display is one of the noblest examples in the Scriptures of faith fully resigned to the will of God. These men ask for no miracle; they expect none. Theirs is the faith that says: 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him,' Job 13:15.

The Psalmist's description would apply to them in that they were not...

like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that did not **prepare its heart**, and whose spirit was not faithful to God. (Ps 78:8)

**EBC** - Ford (p108) makes the following observation: "Had the story been the invention that many have suggested; had it originated in the days of the Maccabees to nerve the faithful against Gentile oppression, it is unlikely that the chief hero would have been omitted. Reality transcends fiction, and the very 'incompleteness' of this account testifies to its fidelity." It is hard to see how the force of this deduction can be successfully evaded. There is no psychological reason for an idealizing romancer to leave Daniel out of this exciting episode. The only way to account for this omission is that in point of fact he was not personally in attendance at this important function ([Gaebelein, F, Editor: Expositor's Bible Commentary OT 7 Volume Set: Books: Zondervan Publishing](#))

**Matthew Henry** observes that the Hebrew boys may have had another reason to believe that God might deliver them explaining that "partly because, in such a vast appearance of idolaters, it would be very much for the honour of his great name to deliver them, and partly because Nebuchadnezzar had defied Him to do it (Da 3:15b). God sometimes appears wonderfully for the silencing of the blasphemies of the enemy, as well as for the answering of the prayers of His people, Ps 74:18, 19, 20, 21, 22; Dt 32:27.

**Chuck Smith** writes that their "commitment came from dedication of purpose... They committed themselves to worship and serve only God. They like Daniel in Da 1:8 had purposed in their heart not to be defiled by the king's command to worship idols... How can you stop these kind of men?... God did not deliver them **from** the furnace... God delivered them **in** the furnace (cp the similar truth of 1Co 10:13-note). ([Daniel 3:16-17 Commitment](#))

**Oswald Chambers** in his often somewhat enigmatic manner of stating things adds "The fiery furnaces are there by God's direct permission. It is misleading to imagine that we are developed in spite of our circumstances, we are developed because of them. It is mastery in circumstances that is needed, not mastery over them.

## **BEWARE OF BOWING LEST YOU BECOME BOUND!**

Notice that what you "**bow**" to (fall down and worship) will eventually be what you are "**bound**" to, for it will become your master and you will serve it (like a slave). God alluded to this spiritual dynamic when He encouraged Elijah...

Yet I will leave 7,000 in Israel, all the knees that have not **bowed** to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him. (1Kings 19:18)

**When are we to make the choice not to obey man?** In the book of Acts we find an example of "not bowing", Luke recording that the Jewish council and high priest

gave... strict orders not to continue teaching in this Name, and behold, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this Man's blood upon us." But Peter and the apostles answered and said, "We must obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:28, 29)

When man's laws clearly conflict with God's laws, you are to obey God BUT be ready for the consequences. Peter and the apostles continued to speak the Name before the Jewish council and high priest and so

they flogged them and ordered them to speak no more in the name of Jesus, and then released them. So they



went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name." (Acts 5:40, 41)

What if a law is passed that says we can't share our faith on the job or with a classmate during lunch? What if all public evangelism is prohibited by law (cp Acts 5:28, 29)? What if proclaiming Christ becomes a "hate crime"? If these situations arise in our lifetime, then we need to recall the principles in Daniel 3. We need to remember that while God promises to take care of us, that doesn't guarantee that standing up for what is right will turn out the way we might prefer. Our charge is not to guess what will happen but to be faithful to God's clearly revealed will (and law), allowing Him to take care of the results. Yes, sometimes God does protect us from the fire but other times He protects through the fire. God may intervene to deliver us but he is not obligated to do so.

## **STAND WITH JESUS AND JESUS WILL STAND WITH YOU**

**When we stand for Jesus, the world will stand against us but He will stand with us**, even as Paul experienced in his last recorded words...

At my first defense **no one supported me**, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them. 17 But **the Lord stood with me**, and strengthened me, in order that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the lion's mouth. 18 The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed, and (**here is our ultimate deliverance**) will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen. (2Ti 4:16, 17, 18-note)

[Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus \(play\)](#)

by George Duffield, Jr

**Stand up, stand up for Jesus**, ye soldiers of the cross;  
Lift high His royal banner, it must not suffer loss.  
From victory unto victory His army shall He lead,  
Till every foe is vanquished, and Christ is Lord indeed.

**Stand up, stand up for Jesus**, the solemn watchword hear;  
If while ye sleep He suffers, away with shame and fear;  
Where'er ye meet with evil, within you or without,  
Charge for the God of battles, and put the foe to rout.

**Stand up, stand up for Jesus**, the trumpet call obey;  
Forth to the mighty conflict, in this His glorious day.  
Ye that are brave now serve Him against unnumbered foes;  
Let courage rise with danger, and strength to strength oppose.

**Stand up, stand up for Jesus**, stand in His strength alone;  
The arm of flesh will fail you, ye dare not trust your own.  
Put on the Gospel armor, each piece put on with prayer;  
Where duty calls or danger, be never wanting there.

**Stand up, stand up for Jesus**, each soldier to his post,  
Close up the broken column, and shout through all the host:  
Make good the loss so heavy, in those that still remain,  
And prove to all around you that death itself is gain.

**Stand up, stand up for Jesus**, the strife will not be long;  
This day the noise of battle, the next the victor's song.  
To those who vanquish evil a crown of life shall be;  
They with the King of Glory shall reign eternally.

**Guzik** points out that the 3 Hebrew lads do not make any excuses in the face of this extreme test...

They might have said, "There is nothing to gain by resisting; wouldn't we do more good by living?" It is easy to say, "we must live," but in reality, we all must die - so why not die making a stand for God?

They might have said, "We are in a different place; in Rome, do as the Romans do." Yet they knew that God

has unlimited jurisdiction. We must do more than "perform" acts of religious obedience when we have an audience.

They might have said, "We will lose our jobs and our standard of living." Often when God blesses us we make the blessing an idol and compromise God to keep what we have.

They might have said, "After all, we are not being called to renounce our God." They did not have a super-elastic conscience that said "we are not bowing down to the idol, but in respect for the king, or to the music." Excuses like this are common but prove the principle that anything will serve as an excuse, when the heart is bent on compromise.

They might have said, "Everybody else is doing it." Instead they cultivated brave personalities, willing to stand alone with God

They might have said, "It is only for once, and not for very long. Ten minutes, just for the king. It is stupid to throw our lives away for ten minutes." These men knew that ten minutes could change an entire life. Ten minutes can chart the course for your eternity.

They might have said, "This is more than can be expected of us; God will understand just this once." It is true that God understands our struggle with sin - that is why He loves the sinner and made provision at the cross for freedom from the penalty, power, and presence of sin. Knowing that "God understands" should be a spur to obedience, not a license to sin.

"I am glad that the three holy children were not 'careful to answer,' [the KJV has, "we are not careful to answer thee" here] or they might have fallen upon some crooked policy or lame excuse for compromise. What have we to do with consequences? It is ours to do the right, and leave results with the Lord." ([Ref](#))

**Albert Lee** writes that...

Loving God is easy when He grants our requests and provides what we desire. Loving Him in difficult circumstances tests our faith... There's a lesson in this for all of us. Is God all-powerful? Yes. Is He able to deliver us from all our problems? Yes. Does God always deliver us from our difficulties? No. We may not fully comprehend God's purpose in our difficulty and suffering, but we must not cease to love Him. We must trust Him and hope in Him in spite of the trials that threaten to overwhelm us. Genuine faith stays strong when deliverance seems distant.

I have learned to love my Savior,  
And I trust Him more each day;  
For no matter what the trial,  
He will always be my stay. —Hess

**Thomas Watson** - The three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace were humble; they gave the king his title of honor—but they were not sordidly timorous. Daniel 3:18, "Be it known unto you, O king, that we will not serve your gods!" Though they showed reverence to the king's person—yet no reverence to the idol he had set up. A godly Christian will not do anything below himself—nor ever cater to men's lusts. He is humble (there he shows the innocence of the dove); but not base (there he shows the wisdom of the serpent). ([Wise as Serpents](#))

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**TESTED AND TRUE** -When doctors perform surgery, the attending nurse must keep careful tab of the number of hemostats and sponges used, so that an incision is not closed until each item has been removed. A young nurse on her first day with this duty told the surgeon he had used twelve sponges, but she could account for only eleven. The doctor curtly announced that he had removed them all. The young woman insisted that one was missing, but the doctor grimly declared he would proceed with the suturing. The nurse, her eyes blazing, said, "You can't do that! Think of the patient!" The doctor smiled and, lifting his foot, showed the nurse the twelfth sponge which he had deliberately dropped to the floor. "You'll do!" he said. He had been testing her to see if she had the courage and integrity to carry out the duties of her position!

Daniel's three friends were also tested by King Nebuchadnezzar's evil edict. They knew that their refusal to worship the image of gold might result in their death. However, they never wavered but proved they were true to God by standing firm in the face of the enemy's threats.

The Lord still permits trials and temptations to enter the lives of his children. The challenge may come as an invitation to gratify the lusts of the flesh, or as a series of disheartening circumstances. Whatever form it assumes, you must not yield, or you will experience spiritual defeat. However, overcoming the temptation will strengthen you and enable you to reach a new plateau in your

Christian life.

Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin,  
Each vict'ry will help you some other to win;  
Fight manfully onward, dark passions subdue,  
Look ever to Jesus, He will carry you through.  
—H. R. Palmer

**A gem cannot be polished without friction,  
nor a man perfected without trial!**

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**John Bunyan**, the author of **Pilgrim's Progress**, was afraid when he was in prison for his commitment to Christ. "My imprisonment," he wrote, "might end on the gallows." We can understand his fear, can't we? No one wants to face the prospect of being hanged. But, a change took place in Bunyan's life one day. He became ashamed of being afraid. He said, "Me thought I was ashamed to die with a pale face and tottering knees for such a cause as this." William Barclay comments, "Bunyan finally came to a conclusion as he thought of himself climbing up the ladder to the scaffold: 'Wherefore, thought I, I am going on and venturing my eternal state with Christ whether I have comfort here or no; if God doth not come in, I will leap off the ladder even blindfold into eternity. Lord Jesus, if Thou wilt catch me, do; if not, I will venture for Thy name.'" (Morning Glory, August 19, 1993)

The psalmist's words are apropos...

For you have made the Lord, my refuge,  
Even the **Most High** (Da 3:26), your dwelling place.  
No evil will befall you,  
Nor will any plague come near your tent.  
For He will give His angels charge concerning you,  
To guard you in all your ways.  
They will bear you up in their hands,  
That you do not strike your foot against a stone.  
(Ps 91:9-12-[note](#))

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**Spurgeon** comments that...

It is impossible that any ill should happen to the man who is beloved of the Lord; the most crushing calamities can only shorten his journey and hasten him to his reward. Ill to him is no ill, but only good in a mysterious form. Losses enrich him, sickness is his medicine, reproach is his honour, death is his gain. No evil in the strict sense of the word can happen to him, for everything is overruled for good. Happy is he who is in such a case. He is secure where others are in peril, he lives where others die.

It is a security in the very midst of evils. Not like the security of angels -- safety in a world of safety, quiet in a calm; but it is quiet in a storm; safety amid desolation and the elements of destruction, deliverance where everything else is going to wreck. Cicaties Bradley, 1840.

(Commenting on) **To keep thee in all thy ways**. To be a bodyguard, a garrison to the body, soul, and spirit of the saint. The limit of this protection "in all thy ways" is yet no limit to the heart which is right with God. It is not the way of the believer to go out of his way. He keeps in the way, and then the angels keep him. The protection here promised is exceeding broad as to place, for it refers to all our ways, and what do we wish for more? How angels thus keep us we cannot tell. Whether they repel demons, counteract spiritual plots, or even ward off the more subtle physical forces of disease, we do not know. Perhaps we shall one day stand amazed at the multiplied services which the unseen bands have rendered to us.

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**Matthew Henry** notes that the three boys...

know they must obey God rather than man; they must rather suffer than sin, and must not do evil that good may come. And therefore none of these things move them; they are resolved rather to die in their integrity than live in their iniquity. While their brethren, who yet remained in their own land, were worshipping images by

choice, they in Babylon would not be brought to it by constraint, but, as if they were good by antiperistasis, were most zealous against idolatry in an idolatrous country. **And truly, all things considered, the saving of them from this sinful compliance was as great a miracle in the kingdom of grace as the saving of them out of the fiery furnace was in the kingdom of nature.** These were those who formerly resolved not to defile themselves with the king's meat, and now they as bravely resolve not to defile themselves with his gods. Note, A steadfast self-denying adherence to God and duty in less instances will qualify and prepare us for the like in greater. And in this we must be resolute, never, under any pretence whatsoever, to worship images, or to say "A confederacy" with those that do so.

**Daniel 3:19 Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with wrath, and his facial expression was altered toward Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. He answered by giving orders to heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated.**

- **was:** Da 3:13 Pr 21:24 Isa 51:23 Lk 12:4,5 Ac 5:33 7:54
- **facial expression:** Da 5:6 Ge 4:5,6 31:2
- **answered:** Ex 15:9,10 1Ki 20:10,11 2Ki 19:27,28 Ps 76:10 Pr 16:14 27:3,4
- **seven:** Da 6:24 Lev 26:18,21,24,28
- **than:** 1Ki 18:33, 34, 35 Mt 27:63, 64, 65, 66
- Daniel 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Then** - This is an **expression of time** which marks sequence of events - always take note of this word as it will help you decipher the "dynamics" of the passage. This word is often very instructive in prophetic passages, marking events that follow other events, etc.

**Filled with wrath** - What fills a person, controls a person as it controlled the king and resulted in certain actions consistent with the wrath with which he was filled. The **lesson** for us is to be very aware of the danger of making declarations and decisions which impact others when we are controlled by our emotions (be they anger, fear, grief, etc).

Solomon warned about the anger of kings - "The king's wrath is like the roaring of a lion, but his favor is like dew on the grass. (Pr 19:12)

**Nebuchadnezzar** was playing the fool for **Solomon** says that...

He who is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who is quick-tempered exalts **folly**. (Pr 14:29)

Do not be eager in your heart to be angry, for anger resides in the bosom of **fools**. (Ec 7:9)

**Matthew Henry** - How little was it the honour of this mighty prince that he had rule over so many nations when at the same time he had no rule over his own spirit, that there were so many who were subjects and captives to him when he was himself a perfect slave to his own brutish passions and led captive by them! How unfit was he to rule reasonable men who could not himself be ruled by reason!

The following cross references with the phrase "**filled with**" make an interesting study on the importance of the concept of "**being filled**" -- Lk 1:15 referring to the John the Baptist, Lk 1:41, 42, Lk 1:67, 68ff, Lk 4:28, 29 [context = Lk 4:24, 25, 26, 27], Lk 5:26 [context = Lk 5:24, 25], Lk 6:11 [context = Lk 6:7, 8, 9, 10], Acts 2:4, 4:8, 9, 10, 4:31, 32, 33, Acts 5:17, 18, Ac 9:17, 13:9, 10, 11, 12, Acts 13:45 [jealousy], Ac 13:52, Ac 19:28, 29 [context = Ac 19:26, 27], Ro 1:28, 29, Ro 15:14, 2Co 7:4, Ep 5:18, see the effects/evidence in Ep 5:19, 20, 21, Col 1:9).

Here is the complete (Old and New Testament) list of passages in the NAS that have the phrase "**filled with**" -

Gen 6:11, 13; Ex 1:7; 16:12; Num 14:21; Deut 34:9; 1 Kgs 7:14; 2 Kgs 3:17, 20; 2 Chr 5:13; 16:14; Esth 3:5; 5:9; Ps 38:7; 71:8; 72:19; 78:59, 62; 107:9; 123:3f; 126:2; Prov 3:10; 5:10; 12:21; 20:17; 24:4; Eccl 1:8; Isa 2:6ff; 30:27; 34:6; Jer 13:12; Lam 3:30; Ezek 9:9; 10:4; 23:33; 28:16; 36:38; Da 3:19; Amos 2:13; Mic 3:8; Hab 2:14, 16; Zech 8:5; Matt 22:10; Luke 1:15, 41, 67; 4:28; 5:26; 6:11; John 12:3; Acts 2:4; 3:10; 4:8, 31; 5:17; 9:17; 13:9, 45, 52; 19:28f; Rom 1:29; 15:14; 2 Cor 7:4; Eph 5:18; Phil 1:11; Col 1:9; 2 Tim 1:4; Rev 15:8; 19:21

**Facial expression was altered** - Imagine his face! Bright red! Nostrils flaring. Features distorted. Anger is an ugly thing not to mention that a distorted face (from anger) usually results in distorted judgment. The only thing hotter than his face for the superheated furnace!

**Seven times** - This is probably not literal but figurative language conveying the idea that the fire was to be made as hot as was

physically possible. The number **seven** is frequently used in Scripture to speak of completion or perfection (Ge 2:2, 3, Pr 24:16; Pr 26:16, Re 3:1-[note](#), Re 4:5-[note](#)). His order shows the irrationality of one who is angry, because a lower temperature fire would have actually prolonged their agony! To heat the furnace even hotter would have lengthened their time on "death row" at least a few minutes. It is difficult to imagine what was going through their mind and I look forward to asking them in eternity future. I would not be surprised to hear them say something like Psalm 23:4-[note](#) or Psalm 27-[note](#)!

**Related Resource:** Tony Garland on [Seven-Perfection, Completeness](#).

**Geoffrey King** comments on filled with wrath noting that...

then he lost his temper! That is always the mark of a little man. His furnace was hot, but he himself got hotter! And when a man gets full of **fury**, he gets full of **folly** (Pr 14:29, Ec 7:9). **There is no fool on earth like a man who has lost his temper.** And Nebuchadnezzar did a stupid thing. He ought to have cooled the furnace seven times less if he had wanted to hurt them; but instead of that in his fury he heated it seven times more. (**Ed:** And hurt himself, losing some of his best soldiers to the blaze!)

**Spurgeon** comments that "Despite the intense intimidation, the men stayed courageous in their confession of faith... Remember also that by yielding to the fear of man you are demeaning yourself (cp Pr 29:25). There shall come a day when the man that was **ashamed of Christ** will himself be **ashamed** (Mk 8:38, Lk 9:26, 1Pe 4:16): he will wonder where he can hide his guilty head. Look at him! There he is! The traitor who denied his Lord! The Christ was spat upon and nailed to the cross, and this man was afraid to own Him. To win the smile of a silly maid, to escape the jest of a coarse fellow, to win a few pieces of silver, to stand respectable among his fellow-men, he turned his back upon his Redeemer and sold his Lord; and now what can be said for him? Who can excuse him? The angels shun him as a man who was ashamed of the Lord of glory (1Co 2:8). He is clothed with shame and everlasting contempt (Da 12:2KJV). Even the lost in hell get away from him, for many of them were more honest than he. Is there such a man as this before me? I summon him in the name of the living God to answer for his cowardice! Let him come forth and own his crime, and humbly seek forgiveness at the hands of the gracious Savior.

**Daniel 3:20 He commanded certain valiant warriors who were in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego in order to cast them into the furnace of blazing fire.**

- **Tie:** Da 3:15 Ac 12:4,5 16:23,25
- Daniel 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

He commanded some of his best, elite, strongest men to bind the boys. He would soon see the folly of this angry command in conjunction with the "superheating" of the furnace.

One has to marvel at the mind of an angry man, binding them up as if they were actually going to be able to escape!

**Daniel 3:21 Then these men were tied up in their trousers, their coats, their caps and their other clothes, and were cast into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire.**

- Daniel 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Trousers** - The Greek historian Herodotus says the Babylonian dress was a linen tunic, another of woolen, a white short cloak, and a turban.

**Showers** makes the cogent observation that "Three things should be noted about the punishment. **First**, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego were thrown into the furnace with highly flammable clothing. **Second**, the fire in the furnace was such a raging inferno that it killed the soldiers when they got close enough to cast in the Jews. **Third**, the Jews were bound so well that they could not move when they were dropped into the fire. All three points emphasize the miracle about to take place. (Ibid)

**Daniel 3:22 For this reason, because the king's command was urgent and the furnace had been made extremely hot, the flame of the fire slew those men who carried up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego.**

- **urgent:** Ex 12:33

- **slew**: Da 6:24 Pr 11:8 21:18 Zec 12:2,3 Mt 27:5 Ac 12:19
- Daniel 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Slew those men** - The irony is that while the earthly **king of kings** (Da 2:37, Ezek 26:7) could not protect his **valiant warriors**, the **God of heaven** (Da 2:18, 19, 37, 44), the true **King of kings** (Re 17:14-[note](#), Re 19:16-[note](#)), was able to protect His valiant warriors of faith!

**Athanasius**, Bishop of Alexandria, opposed the heretical teaching of **Arius** who denied the deity of Christ. He was exiled five times for his opposition to Arius. They brought **Athanasius** before Emperor Theodosius who mandated that he cease his opposition to Arius. The Emperor sharply reproved him and said, "Do you not realize that all the world is against you?" Athanasius answered, "Then I am against all the world!" ([Ref](#))

**Carried up** - Just imagine the thoughts of these three men as their fate in the furnace neared. There is little doubt (in my mind) that they were experiencing the peace that passes all human understanding. They were not unaware of the potential that they might die but they had a sure and steadfast belief that they were in God's hands, in life or through death, for either way they would be delivered! The test of their faith extended up to the edge of the flaming furnace. O, to be imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. (Hebrews 6:12)

**Tony Garland** - It is impossible to meditate upon the events of this chapter without bringing to mind the disturbing historical parallel between the "burning fiery furnace" constructed by Nebuchadnezzar and the ovens the Nazis used during the Holocaust. Of all the peoples of history, no other nation has seen approximately one-third of their number perish at the hands of their enemies—most having been incinerated in ovens.

**Daniel 3:23 But these three men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, fell into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire still tied up.**

- **fell**: Da 6:16,17 Ps 34:19 66:11,12 124:1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Jer 38:6 La 3:52, 53, 54 2Co 1:8, 9, 10, 4:17 1Pe 4:12,13
- Daniel 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**But** - This conjunction emphasizes the contrasting fates of the king's men versus God's men, and indeed serves as a foreshadowing of the fate of every person ever born, for all will either experience the eternal fires of Gehenna and separation from God or the eternal presence of God Who delivers believers from the wrath to come.

**Still tied up** ("bound" in Da 3:24) - A small detail the significance of which becomes apparent in succeeding verses.

## SUFFICIENT GRACE FOR EVERY "FIERY FURNACE"

**Fell into the midst of the furnace** - Perhaps you are thinking "I could never be able to endure such a test!". We need to remember that for **"various (poikilos) trials"** (1Pe 1:7-note) God gives **"manifold (poikilos) grace"** (1Pe 4:10-note), truth that is the testimony of many believers throughout this present evil age. Just the exact amount of grace needed, just in the "nick of time", fully sufficient for the trial at hand! That is our great and awesome Father!

So let us ask again, how were they able to endure this incredible test of their faith? **Trouble** and the **grace to bear it** come in the same package. **Annie Johnson Flint** (see more poems) put it this way...

He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater,  
 He sendeth more strength when the labors increase;  
 To added affliction He addeth His mercy,  
 To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace.  
 --Annie Johnson Flint (click for more poems)

**Pritchard** makes an interesting point "Here is the ultimate paradox. The three Hebrews were safer in the furnace than when they were standing in front of the king. If they had not been thrown in the fire, they would surely have been killed some other way. But since the furnace was God's will for them, they were safer in the flames than anywhere else. (Ibid)

**THE BELIEVER'S  
 FIERY FURNACES**



**The furnace of blazing fire** - While we as believers are unlikely to experience a literal fiery furnace, there are a number of "fiery furnaces" for which we must be prepared...

**(1) The fire of persecution - This is the furnace men prepare for us.**

indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. (2Ti 3:12)

**Comment:** This is one of the "promises" of God we would rather not "claim"!

For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake (Php 1:29-note)

And you will be hated by all on account of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved. But whenever they persecute you in this city, flee to the next; for truly I say to you, you shall not finish going through the cities of Israel, until the Son of Man comes. A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. (Mt 10:22, 23, 24)

If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. (John 15:18, 19)

For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps (1Pe 2:20-note, 1Pe 2:21-note)

Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. (Acts 14:22b)

Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Mt 5:10, 11, 12-note)

No temptation (test) has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted (tested) beyond what you are able, but with the temptation (test) will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it. (1Co 10:13-note)

**Comment:** God has promised that the test will not be too great and that He will always be with us, whether we are delivered or martyred. The Hebrew lads were delivered while the Spirit filled believer Stephen was martyred (Acts 7:57, 58, 59, 60). In both circumstances these saints experienced the presence of the Lord in a special way. Even if we don't have the same experiences, we can be assured that He will never leave us nor forsake us.

Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin—  
Each victory will help you some other to win;  
Fight manfully onward, dark passions subdue,  
Look ever to Jesus, He will carry you through.  
—Palmer

**John MacArthur** observes that "Self-centered Christians who serve the Lord halfheartedly seldom have to pay a price for their faith. They are of little threat to Satan's work because they are of little benefit to Christ's."

**(2) The fiery missiles of the evil one - This is the furnace Satan prepares for us** and is manifest as spiritual warfare described by Paul who exhorts us that...

in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. (Eph 6:16-note)

**(3) The furnace of fiery trials - This furnace is prepared by God** and refers to those trials the Omniscient God allows for our good and His glory, as described repeatedly in the NT...

**Consider** (**aoist imperative** = command to do this now. Don't delay!) it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. (Jas 1:2-note, Jas 1:3, 4-note)

Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through

whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; 5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. (Ro 5:1, 2-note, Ro 5:3-note, Ro 5:4, 5-note)

In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; (1Pe 1:6-note, 1Pe 1:7-note)

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation. (1Pe 4:12, 13-note)

Through many **tribulations** (**thlipsis** [**words study**]-conveys the idea of being squeezed or placed under pressure) we must (note the verb **dei** [**word study**] = suffering is not optional) enter the kingdom of God. (Acts 14:22b)

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world. (Jn 16:33)

**Let us pray for furnace grace...**  
**That we may be like the three Hebrew lads.**

**Deffinbaugh** - It is at this point in the text that Greek versions include a long addition: a prayer, a prose description of their deliverance and a hymn, commonly known as the Benedicite, supposedly sung from the furnace by the three men, or by Azariah alone (according to Theodotion). Evidence from Qumran has shown conclusively that these additions were not part of the original. Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1978), p. 106. ([Faith and the Furnace](#))

A puritan wrote that "of all graces, faith renders the soul most invincible; and therefore you should labor above all to be rich in faith. It renders the soul invincible and unconquerable under all the hardships and trials which it meets with in this world. Faith makes a man triumph in all the changes and conditions of this life. It was their faith which made them invincible in Daniel 3:16-18." ([The Unsearchable Riches of Christ](#))

**Daniel 3:24** Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up in haste; he said to his high officials, "Was it not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire?" They replied to the king, "Certainly, O king."

- **astounded**: Da 5:6 Ac 5:23, 24, 25 9:6 12:13
- **officials**: Da 3:2,3
- **O king**: Da 3:9,10,17 4:22,27 5:18 6:7,22 1Sa 17:55 Ac 26:13,27
- Daniel 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

The **Septuagint** is interesting in that it reads the king "**heard them singing praises**". If this singing in the furnace did in fact transpire, it reminds us of two other suffering saints Paul and Silas singing in the midst of the Philippian jail (Acts 16:25). Surely these are men who are controlled by the Holy Spirit, as their song is a "supernatural" song.

The **ESV Study Bible** notes that...

the various Greek OT versions add *The Song of the Three Young Men*, which is an effort to elaborate the men's experience of deliverance in the furnace. (This addition to Daniel is also included in the Apocrypha).

**Astounded** - Startled, alarmed. The Aramaic **tevahh** is related to the Hebrew word **tamahh** which is a root word meaning to be astounded, dumbfounded, bewildered with an element of fear, whether because of an amazing or fearful sight or a terrifying sound.

**Stood up in haste** - Can't you picture this? Smugly confident that he had dealt definitively with the 3 upstarts to his kingdom authority, but wait! What's this? And up he jumps.

**William Dryer** alludes to Nebuchadnezzar's astonishment in his treatise on God's Wrath noting that "First of all, this day will be a day of ASTONISHMENT to the wicked and ungodly, as it is said, Dt 28:28, "The Lord shall smite them with madness and blindness,

and astonishment of heart!" Oh, it will be with the wicked, as it was with Nebuchadnezzar, who was astonished to behold the works and wonders of God which the Lord wrought for the deliverance of those that put their trust in him (Daniel 3:24-25)... Oh, sinners! do but see here how this proud Nebuchadnezzar was astonished at the beholding of this sight!" ([The Great Day of Gods Wrath](#))

**Daniel 3:25 He said, "Look! I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!"**

- **Without harm:** Ps 91:3, 4, 5, 6,7, 8, 9 Mk 16:18 Ac 28:5 1Pe 3:13
- **a son:** Da 3:18,28 Job 1:6 38:7 Ps 34:7 Pr 30:4 Lk 1:35 Jn 19:7,8 Ro 1:4
- Daniel 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **"FIERY FURNACES" CAN LOOSE OUR BONDS AND SET US FREE!**

**Loosed** - Bound in Da 3:23, 24. Literally they were set free in the fiery affliction. Fire has a way of removing the "dross" in our life (Job 23:10-note). Afflictions and trials are often effective in break the ties that bind us and set us free, free even from a "false confidence" in **our own** sufficiency (2Cor 3:5, 6) and when this happens, we then we are able to live in the power and strength of God (cp 2Cor 12:9-note; 2Co 12:10-note).

**Showers** observes that - Five things startled Nebuchadnezzar. **First**, there were four persons instead of three in the furnace. **Second**, not one of the persons was bound. **Third**, all four persons were walking around in the fire—none was lying down. **Fourth**, all four persons were unhurt. **Fifth**, the fourth person looked "like a son of the gods." (Ibid)

**Spurgeon** - Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego lost something in the fire—not their coats, not one hair of their heads. The fire did not hurt them, but it snapped their bonds. Blessed loss! A true Christian's losses are gains in another shape. Many of God's servants never know the fulness of spiritual liberty till they are cast into the midst of the furnace.

The psalmist alluded to the "**loosening**" effect of **fiery trials**...

Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep Thy word. (Ps 119:67 [note](#))

It is good for me that I was afflicted, That I may learn Thy statutes. (Ps 119:71 [note](#))

**Isaiah** recorded God's encouragement to Israel (cp Isa 43:1) and perhaps a promise that the three Hebrew lads were aware of (since Isaiah prophesied from 740-680BC and the events of chapter 3 most likely take place between 605-586BC) and indeed may have "claimed"...

But now, thus says the LORD, your Creator, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel, '**Do not fear**, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine! When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they will not overflow you. **When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, nor will the flame burn you.** (Isa 43:1, 2)

**Man's extremity is God's opportunity;  
Man's security is Satan's opportunity.**

The preservation of the 3 Hebrew young men is a clear testament to the truth of God's Word to His people that in their fiery trials and afflictions, they would not be utterly overwhelmed. The testimonies of many martyrs throughout the church age is that even when being burned at the stake, they received mysterious and miraculous power to sing and testify even as the flames took hold of them! Let this "**great cloud of witnesses**" encourage us to "lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of faith, (Heb 12:1-note, He 12:2-note)

**Wiersbe** adds that "Faith means obeying God regardless of the feelings within us, the circumstances around us, or the consequences before us... True faith isn't frightened by threats, impressed by crowds, or swayed by superstitious ceremonies. True faith obeys the Lord and trusts Him to work out the consequences. These three Jewish men know the law of God—"You shall have no other gods before Me ... You shall not bow down to them nor serve them" (Ex. 20:3, 5). Once the Lord has spoken on a matter, the matter is settled and there's no room for discussion or need for compromise. To bow before the image even once, no matter what excuse they might give, would have destroyed their witness and broken their fellowship with God. The tense of the Greek verb in Matthew 4:9 indicates that Satan asked Jesus to worship him only one time, and the Savior refused. Shadrach, Meshach, and

Abednego would not bow down to the golden image even once because it would lead to serving Nebuchadnezzar's false gods for the rest of their lives. (Ibid)

In **Hebrews 13** God promises...

I WILL NEVER (absolutely never by no means - see comment) DESERT (I will not let go of you. I will not relax my hold on you.) YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU," so that we confidently say, "THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT SHALL MAN DO TO ME?" (He 13:5b, He 13:6)

**Comment:** Note in He 13:5b we have the promise of God's **presence** and in He 13:6 the promise of His **power** in our hour of need. Note also the incredibly strong negation using five Greek words that each convey negation. And so more literally God emphatic promises "I will **never, never** desert you. I will **never, no, never** leave thee."

## A SON OF THE GODS... THE SON OF GOD

**Like a son of the gods** - By using the term of comparison "like" the king was saying that there was something different, even something divine about the fourth figure.

**A son of the gods** - The KJV renders it "**the Son of God**" but the more literal translation is "a son of the gods". The **Septuagint** (Theodoret's version) renders it "Son of God."

While not everyone agrees, most conservative commentators interpret the fourth figure as more than a created angelic messenger, and that this was a Christophany, a visual manifestation of the Creator Himself (Jesus was the Agent of Creation - Jn 1:2-3, Col 1:16, Heb 1:2), designated elsewhere in the OT as the **Angel of the LORD (see discussion of OT appearances of Christ)**, the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Christophanies** (appearances of Christ) were not uncommon in the OT, one of the most dramatic occurring to Hagar who had been banished from Abram's family and was met by the "Angel of the LORD" in the wilderness...

7 Now the **Angel of the LORD** found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. (**Comment:** "Angel" = Hebrew mal'ak = one who is sent = a messenger)

8 And **He** said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from and where are you going?" And she said, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai."

9 Then the **Angel of the LORD** said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself to her authority."

10 Moreover, the **Angel of the LORD** said to her, "**I** will greatly multiply your descendants so that they shall be too many to count." (This is not a promise a created angel would make!)

11 The **Angel of the LORD** said to her further, "Behold, you are with child, and you shall bear a son; and you shall call his name Ishmael, because the LORD has given heed to your affliction.

12 "And he will be a wild donkey of a man. His hand will be against everyone, and everyone's hand will be against him; and he will live to the east of all his brothers."

13 Then she called the name of the **LORD Who** spoke to her, "**Thou** art a **God Who** sees" (See study of **EI Roi: God Who Sees**); for she said, "Have I even remained alive here after seeing **Him**?"

14 Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered.

15 So Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael.

16 And Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him.

**Spurgeon** comments that - You must go into the furnace if you would have the nearest and dearest dealings with Christ Jesus. Whenever the Lord appears, it is to his people when they are in a militant posture. Moses saw God at Horeb, but it was in a burning bush (Ex 3:1, 2, 3, 4). Joshua saw him, but it was with a drawn sword in his hand, to show that his people are still a militant people (Josh 5:13, 14, 15). And here where the saints saw their Savior, it was as Himself being in the furnace. **The richest thought that a Christian perhaps can live on is this, that Christ is in the furnace with him. When you suffer, Christ suffers.** (Acts 9:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 - cp Study of Covenant and God's Commitment to Defend His Own)

**H A Ironside** is dogmatic on the identity (and I am in agreement) - The blessed Son of God was there with His dear servants in their hour of trial.

**Wiersbe** takes a similar stance writing that "the fourth person in the furnace was Jesus Christ in one of His preincarnate appearances in the Old Testament." (Ibid).

**Campbell** writes that Nebuchadnezzar did not see "what he expected; rather, he was shocked to see not three men in the fire, but four; not bound prisoners, but free men; not individuals who were motionless and unconscious, but who were moving about in the fire; not men writhing in pain, but instead showing no symptom of any injury; and most startling, the appearance of the fourth not like the rest, but like "a son of the gods... most Bible students do believe that this was a preincarnate appearance of Christ, who also appeared to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, who walked with Enoch, who feasted with Abraham, who wrestled with Jacob, who spoke to Moses in the burning bush, who appeared to Joshua as Captain of the Lord's host, who spent the night with Daniel in the lions' den, and who came to be born in a stable. God manifest in the flesh! (Ibid)

**C H Spurgeon** - Many a time before his incarnation, he descended to this lower earth in the similitude of a man; on the plains of Mamre (Gen. 18), by the brook of Jabbok (Ge 32:24-30), beneath the walls of Jericho (Jos. 5:13), and in the fiery furnace of Babylon (Da 3:19, 25), the Son of Man visited his people.

**William MacDonald** - We believe that it was indeed the Son of God, no matter how the king viewed Him. The Lord either saves us out of troubles or He is with us in the troubles.

**J Dwight Pentecost** - This One was probably the preincarnate Christ (Ed: cp Ge 16:11, 13 where "Angel" = Messenger). Though Nebuchadnezzar did not know of the Son of God, he did recognize that the Person appearing with the three looked supernatural.

**John MacArthur** - The fourth person could possibly have been the second person of the Godhead (Jesus Christ) in a pre-incarnate appearance

**Charles Ryrie**- It may have been an angel or possibly a preincarnate appearance of Christ, though the king would not have known who He was.

Notice that Jesus never manifests himself except inside the furnace, at the very moment when he was needed the most. Beloved, has it not been your experience that it is in the fires of life that you have experienced the presence of Christ most powerfully. Our Lord is always there, but He makes Himself known most often when we are "in a fiery furnace"!

**John Trapp** quotes an English martyr's words as he was burnt at the stake "O ye Papists, behold ye look for miracles; here now you may see a miracle; for in this fire I feel no more pain than as if I were in a bed of down; but it is to me as a bed of roses."

**F B Meyer** observes that...

**There was no doubt about their being bound.** Their turbans, mantles, and other garments had bound their limbs so tightly, that when first they reached the furnace they fell down bound in its midst. Whatever else the fire could not do, it at least freed them, so that they walked loose; and the dewy glades of Paradise were not more fragrant and delightful than were those white-hot cinders.

**This is what trial has often done for us.** We had become conscious of the binding effect of our own habits which we had permitted as comparatively innocent; but gradually the conviction grew that they were amongst the weights that should be laid aside. Yet they clung to us until some fiery trial befell us, and from that hour, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, we were free. Do not fear the fire. It cannot hurt one hair of your head, or leave the smell of burning on you; but it will eat out the alloy, and gnaw away the iron bands that bound you.

Beat on, true heart, for ever!  
Shine bright, strong golden chain;  
And bless the cleansing fire  
And the furnace of living pain.

**But Jesus never allows His beloved to walk the fire alone.** If it is heated seven times hotter than its wont, this is only the reason for his becoming more real, as our living and glorious Friend. There always goes beside the tried saint, though not always patent even to the eye of the spirit, another whose aspect is that of the Son of God. Reach out thy hands to Him, beloved—He is there. The Refiner not only watches the crucible, He is in it with thee. In all thy affliction He is afflicted.

**Warren Wiersbe** -When God puts His own people into the furnace, He keeps His eye on the clock and His hand on the thermostat. He knows how long and how much. (If we rebel, He may have to reset the clock; but if we submit, He will not permit us to suffer one minute too long. The important thing is that we learn the lesson He wants to teach us and that we bring glory to Him alone.) We may question why He does it to begin with, or why He doesn't turn down the heat or even turn it off; but our questions are only evidences of unbelief. (Job 23:10-note) is the answer: "But He knows the way that I take; when He has tested me, I shall come forth as

gold" (NKJV). Gold does not fear the fire. The furnace can only make the gold purer and brighter." (Wiersbe, W. Be Patient. An Old Testament study. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books)

**Daniel 3:26** Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the furnace of blazing fire; he responded and said, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, come out, you servants of the Most High God, and come here!" Then Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego came out of the midst of the fire.

- **servants:** Da 3:17 2:47 6:20 Ezra 5:11 Ac 16:17 27:23 Ga 1:10 Rev 19:5
- **Most High God** - Ge 14:18
- **Come here** - Jos 3:17 4:10,16-18 Isa 28:16 52:12 Ac 16:37
- Daniel 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Then** - marks sequence of events.

**Came near to the door** - One wonders how he was able to come near in view of what happened to his soldiers (Da 3:23).

**Servants** (Lxx = **doulos**) - Notice that Nebuchadnezzar recognizes that the three lads serve the **Most High God** even before they are out of the furnace.

**Most High God** - See discussion of **El Elyon: Most High God - Sovereign Over All**. (Most High God is repeated in Da 3:26, 4:2, 17; Da 4:24, 25, 32, 34; Da 5:18, 21; Da 7:25)

**Come here... came out** - They could not obey the king's godless request to worship the image, but do not hesitate to obey his command in this instance.

**THOUGHT** - The actions of the 3 Hebrews validated what they said they believed. Do I see trials and afflictions as opportunities to bring God glory (cause others to see Him as He really is) or do I view them with irritation and questions ("Why me Lord?")?

#### THE TWO SUFFICIENTS

Evil shall pass with the day that brought it,

As the sea is stayed by the barrier land;

When the Giver of Good shall say, "No farther,"

And bid the foeman restrain his hand;

But the grace of the Lord outstays the evil,

Outlasts the darkness, outruns the morn,

Outwatches the stars in their nightly vigil,

And the foe that returns with the day re-born,

As he left it unwearied, shall find it unworn.

--Annie Johnson Flint (click for more poems)

**Daniel 3:27** The satraps, the prefects, the governors and the king's high officials gathered around and saw in regard to these men that the fire had no effect on the bodies of these men nor was the hair of their head singed, nor were their trousers damaged, nor had the smell of fire even come upon them.

- **Satraps** - Da 3:2,3 1Sa 17:46,47 2Ki 19:19 Ps 83:18 96:7, 8, 9 Isa 26:11 Ac 2:6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 26:26
- **on the bodies:** Isa 43:2
- **hair:** Mt 10:30 Lk 21:17,18 Ac 27:34
- Daniel 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



## **GOD'S DELIVERANCE IS COMPLETE!**

**The satraps, et al** - These pagan leaders **saw** (and thus could bear witness to) a miracle in that **the fire had no effect!**

Three men walked by faith and not by sight (2Cor 5:7) and became living epistles (2Cor 3:2) that pointed to a supernatural God Who even the **king of kings** was forced to acknowledge as **the Most High God!**

**THOUGHT** - When we stand for Christ, He stands with us (whether we feel like He is there or not - His promise is sure = Heb 13:5,6-note) and the world receives a witness through our stand, regardless or whether they surrender to Him or not. What an encouraging example for each of us to stand fast like these three did. By their one act of steadfast faith they became witnesses of the true and living God to the entire Babylonian Empire! May their tribe increase in our world which desperately needs to see supernatural evidence of the Living God lived out in and through His children!

**The fire had no effect on the bodies** - This could be the event referred to by the writer of Hebrews who records that men of old "quenched the power of fire" (Heb 11:34-note), and they did so not by might nor by power but by His Spirit and by faith (Heb 11:33-note) in God's faithfulness and His faithful Word of deliverance either in or through the fire.

**Four things were unchanged in the fiery furnace** - (1) They were not burned in any way; (2) Their hair was not singed; (3) Their garments were not altered (no soot); and (4) There was no smell of fire. The only changed was the removal of the rope that bound them!

**Bob Deffinbaugh** makes an important observation and application of this section noting first that...

Theirs was a complete deliverance, because God accomplished it. They were not merely delivered **from** the fire; they were delivered **through** the fire. They were delivered **through** the fire which brought death to their executioners and in a way that destroyed only their bonds. They were delivered **from** sizzling, singeing, and even the scent of smoke. **That is complete deliverance.**

The deliverance which God has accomplished for us is like that described in Daniel 3. It is, first and foremost, God's deliverance. It is not a deliverance from all suffering and trials, but one which exists because God Himself experienced the fire. As the fourth person was present with the Hebrews in the furnace, Christ has endured the wrath of God, in our place. We are delivered from God's eternal wrath because Jesus Christ, the Son of God, suffered for us, in our place. Deliverance, all deliverance, has been accomplished on the cross of Calvary.

I doubt that you and I fully grasp the extent of the deliverance we have in Christ. We say we believe that God has delivered us from Satan, sin, hell and death, but do we really believe it? Why do Christians frantically seek deliverance from drugs, addictions, fear, guilt, and bitterness in sources other than the shed blood of Jesus Christ? We do not fathom or experience the totality of the deliverance which God has for us now, let alone in eternity. God's deliverance is complete deliverance. ([Faith and the Furnace](#))

**Comment:** As an aside, you might want to study the passages in the Psalms which use the words **deliver**, **Deliverer**, **deliverance**, etc, most referring to Divine Deliverance (most positive, some negative) - Ps 3:2; 7:1, 2; 17:13; 18:1, 2, 17, 43, 48, 50; 22:1, 4, 5, 8, 20; 25:20; 27:12; 31:1, 15; 32:7; 33:16f, 19; 34:4, 17, 19; 35:10; 37:40; 39:8; 40:13, 17; 41:1; 43:1; 50:22; 51:14; 54:7; 56:13; 59:1f; 60:5, 11; 63:10; 68:20; 69:14; 70:1, 5; 71:2, 11; 72:12; 74:12, 19; 78:62; 79:9; 82:4; 86:13; 89:48; 91:3, 14; 97:10; 106:43; 107:6, 20; 108:6, 12; 109:21; 119:170; 120:2; 142:6; 143:9; 144:2, 7, 11. Listen to Chris Tomlin's song The Everlasting God as you ponder and praise Him for being our Strong Deliverer - [Everlasting God](#)

**Walvoord** has an interesting thought writing that "Just as the reign of Nebuchadnezzar is symbolic of the entire period of the times of the Gentiles, so the deliverance of Daniel's three companions is typical of the deliverance of Israel during the period of Gentile domination (Lk 21:24). Particularly at the end of the Gentile period Israel will be in fiery affliction (cp Da 12:1) (Ibid).

**Comment:** A number of commentators take a similar approach to using the events in Daniel 3 as a foreshadowing of the future of Israel during the Tribulation or **Daniel's Seventieth Week**, identifying Nebuchadnezzar with Antichrist (I would take issue with this genre of interpretation because Antichrist never speaks of the true God in such exalting language as did Nebuchadnezzar, not to mention that in Daniel 4 we read the story of his likely conversion!), his image like the one in Revelation 13, the fiery furnace like the **Great Tribulation**, the 3 Hebrews like the believing Jewish remnant who come through the Great Tribulation, the executioners like those kings who align with Antichrist but are destroyed when Christ returns and the mysterious absence of Daniel as a picture of the absence of the church during the Tribulation. While there are

undoubtedly parallels between these events (especially the image of the beast in Revelation 13-[see notes above](#)). Whether this was one of God's intended purposes of Daniel 3, the reader will have to decide applying the principles of the Bereans (Acts 17:11-note), remembering that the field of **typology** has been subject to extremes pro and con (see **Typology - Study of Biblical types**) The danger of focusing on this type of typological (pun intended) interpretation is that one might miss some of the profound principles for living an uncompromising, unbending life of faith fully surrendered to God in the face of intense peer pressure to conform to a godless, idol worshipping culture like our country in the "post-Christian" era!

**Spurgeon** - A man who has been in the furnace and has come out of it is a marked man. I think I should know Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego even now if I were to meet them. Though the smell of fire had not passed on them, I feel sure that it left a glow on their countenances and a glory on their persons which we find nowhere else. They are henceforth called "the three holy children."

**Nor had the smell of fire** - They passed the smoke test! This was one of the first **"No Smoking"** facilities, yet this one was decreed to be such by the Almighty God! This detail emphasizes the completeness of their Divine deliverance and the truth Paul proclaimed in Romans...

MORE THAN CONQUERORS IN CHRIST

**But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. (Ro 8:37+)**

[A Mighty Fortress Is Our God](#)

by Martin Luther

That word above all earthly powers, no thanks to them, abideth;  
The Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him who with us sideth:  
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;  
The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still,  
His kingdom is forever

**Thomas Watson** applies Daniel 3:27 **Jesus Christ went into the furnace of His Father's wrath** - "Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come." 1Thes 1:10. Christ is the only screen to stand between us and the wrath of God; He felt God's wrath—that those who believe in Him should never feel it. **Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace was a type of God's wrath**, and that furnace did not singe the garments of the three Hebrew children, nor did they have "the smell of fire upon them." Daniel 3:27. Jesus Christ went into the furnace of His Father's wrath—and the smell of the fire of hell shall never pass upon those who believe in Him! To you who have a well-grounded hope that you shall not feel this wrath, which you have deserved—let me exhort you to be very thankful to God, who has given His Son to save you from this tremendous wrath. The Lamb of God was scorched in the fire of God's wrath for you! Christ felt the wrath which He did not deserve—that you might escape the wrath which you have deserved!

**C H Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook - Nor Had the Smell of Fire Even Come Upon Them** - I see a pair of balances. I see on one scale the loss of a beloved relative, but I perceive on the other scale the great love of Christ. Now we will see which weighs the most. If Jesus lifts the light affliction, all is well. But if the trouble outweighs Jesus, then it is indeed ill for us. If you are so depressed by your trials that you cannot rejoice, even though your name is written in heaven, then I think you do not love Jesus as you should. Get delightful thoughts of Him, and you will feel as if you lost a pebble but preserved a diamond. If you have a high sense of your Master's preciousness, you will rejoice in the deepest distress. The sweet love of Christ, when placed on the deepest wound the soul can ever know, heals at once. A drop of the precious medicine of Jesus' love chases away all heart pain. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. Be within us, and we will make no choice of situations. Put us in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace (Dan. 3:20); if Jesus walks the glowing coals as our companion, the fire will have no power, the hairs of our heads will not be singed, our garments will not be affected, and even the smell of fire will not be on them (Dan. 3:27).

**Daniel 3:28 Nebuchadnezzar responded and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, who has sent His **Angel** and delivered His servants who put their trust in Him, violating the king's command, and yielded up their bodies so as not to serve or worship any god except their own God.**

- **Blessed:** Da 2:47, 4:34, 6:26 Ge 9:26 Ezra 1:3 7:23-28
- **has sent:** Da 3:25 6:22,23 Ge 19:15,16 2Ch 32:21 Ps 34:7,8 103:20 Isa 37:36 Ac 5:19 12:7, 8, 9, 10, 11 Heb 1:14
- **trust:** 1Ch 5:20 2Ch 20:20 Ps 22:4,5 33:18,21 34:22 62:8 84:11,12 Ps 146:5,6 147:11 Isa 26:3,4 Jer 17:7,8 2Co 1:9,10 Eph 1:12,13 1Pe 1:21
- **and have:** Ezra 6:11 Ac 4:19

- **yielded:** Ro 12:1 14:7,8 Php 1:20 Heb 11:37 Rev 12:11
- **serve:** Da 3:16, 17, 18 Ex 20:5 Mt 4:10
- Daniel 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## IMPACT OF SUFFERING IN THE FIERY TRIAL

May should note well the lesson that pagans are greatly impacted (either positively as the King or negatively) when they see us in "**fiery trials**", walking around not panicking. That is when they begin to see our Jesus living in and through us and they will either be drawn to Him or shrink away from Him (Jn 3:19, 20, 21)

In Daniel 2:47 after the miraculous revelation of his dream and the interpretation, King Nebuchadnezzar "answered Daniel and said, "Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, since you have been able to reveal this mystery."

**Blessed be the God** - The pagan, idol worshipping king, Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges the supremacy of God. In chapter 2 he acknowledged God as the "**revealer of mysteries**" (Da 2:47 - What a great Name of God!) and here as the God **Who is able to deliver**" (Da 3:29). Indeed, He is truly worthy to be blessed and to be worshiped in spirit and in truth (Jn 4:24 [note on what it means to worship in spirit and in truth.](#))

**His angel** - **Angel** means messenger so this is God's Messenger, which is very compatible with this being Jesus, who is called the **Messenger of the Covenant** (Malachi 3:1). The Greek **Septuagint** does not read literally "**an** angel" but "**the** angel" (definite article identifying Him as "the" specific angel, not just any angel - further support this is the **Angel of the LORD**).

**Angel of the LORD** - This phrase is used 56x in 52v in the OT -

Ge 16:7, 9, 10, 11; 22:11, 15; Ex 3:2; Nu 22:22, 23, 24, 31, 32, 34, 35; Jdg 2:1, 4; 5:23; 6:11, 12, 21, 22; 13:3, 13, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21; 2Sa 24:16; 1Ki 19:7; 2Ki 1:3, 15; 19:35; 1Chr 21:12, 15, 16, 18, 30; Ps 34:7; 35:5, 6; Is 37:36; Zech 1:11,12; 3:1, 5, 6; 12:8; Mt 1:20, 24; 2:13, 19; 28:2; Lk 1:11; 2:9; Jn 5:4; Ac 5:19; 8:26; 12:7, 23.

**Delivered His servants** (Deliver = key word 5x in 4v = Da 3:15, 17, 28, 29) - The king answers his own question in Da 3:15 clearly manifesting a change of mind. In other words we see some glimmers of repentance in King Nebuchadnezzar.

**Guzik** sums up what the king knows and acknowledges about the **Most High God**...

- He is the God of the Hebrews (the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego)
- He is the God who sends a Savior (who sent His Angel)
- He is the God of great power (delivered His servants)
- He is the God worthy of trust (who trusted in Him)
- He is the God worthy of full surrender (frustrated the king's word, and yielded their bodies)
- He is the God who demands exclusive allegiance (that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God)

One application of these truths is that a person can know a lot about God and yet fail to know Him personally as Savior and Lord. Knowing about God will bring no one into heaven, for even the demons know about Him and believe He is one (Jas 2:19-note).

**Put their trust in Him** - The affirmation of their trust (faith) in God in Da 3:17, 18 was not in word only but was manifest by their obedience, in this case their willingness to give their life for what they believed, regardless of whether God chose to save them or not. Faith is an "action verb". Don't tell me you believe. Show me. Don't misunderstand. Faith alone saves, but the faith that genuinely saves is not alone. Thus Nebuchadnezzar "saw" their faith in action and it greatly impacted his "spiritual persona" although not yet to the point of conversion (but read Daniel 4). If you are a believer, you can be sure that the pagan world is watching your actions to see whether or not your actions validate your affirmation of faith in Christ.

**Yielded up their bodies** - They first surrendered their heart and then they surrendered their bodies.

What a beautiful OT example these Hebrew lads provide for the surrender to which Paul calls all believers in Romans 12...

Therefore (in a sense a conclusion based on all of the great truths in Romans 1-11) I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present (surrender, yield to the disposal of another) your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And **do not be conformed** (suschematizo in the **present imperative** + a negative = stop being poured into the mold of this godless world - a world which constantly cries "Bow or Burn!") to this world, but **be transformed** (metaschematizo in the present imperative = command to make this one's lifestyle, being continually changed into the image of His

Son, cp 2Co 3:18) by the renewing of your mind (by the Word, cp Jn 17:17, 1Pe 2:2-note), so that you may prove (dokimazo) what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. (Ro 12:1-note, Ro 12:2-note)

**Daniel 3:29 "Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation or tongue that speaks anything offensive against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego shall be torn limb from limb and their houses reduced to a rubbish heap, inasmuch as there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way." (**

- **Therefore:** Da 6:26, 27
- **The God** - Da 3:15,17,28
- **Torn** - Da 2:5
- **Inasmuch** - Da 6:27 De 32:31 Ps 3:8 76:10
- Daniel 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**I make a decree** - After God delivered the three Hebrew lads, the king's decree guaranteed religious freedom to the Jews. The faithfulness of three brought freedom of religion for all Jews in Babylon.

**THOUGHT** - This truth should encourage all believers to stand for righteousness regardless of the consequences, for we do not know what impact our stand might have on others around us, both believers and non-believers! I am reminded of Paul's great exhortation to...

**Be on the alert, stand firm** in the faith, **act like men** (be brave), **be strong**. Let all that you do **be done** in love. (1Cor 16:13, 14)

**Comment:** All 5 verbs in these 2 concluding verses are **present imperatives** and thus are commands for these attitudes and actions to be our continual goal, our virtual lifestyle. Why? Because in this short life we are in an unceasing life and death struggle with our intractable foes, the world, the flesh and the devil, and must remain continually vigilant and dependent on God's grace and Spirit to enable us to experience the victory Christ wrought for each of us on the Cross.

**No other god** - Nebuchadnezzar is beginning to get a correct opinion of the Living God because of the "good works" of the three Hebrew lads. When we live with a similar commitment to God and His Word, others will see our good works of commitment and will be led to glorify (give a proper opinion of) Him (Mt 5:16-note).

Nebuchadnezzar still does not understand God and is much like the NFL head coach who kept a minister on the sidelines during games. Why asked why he retorted "I'm not even sure if I believe in God, but in case there is one, I want Him on my side!"

**There is no other god who is able to deliver this way**- "There is none like Him"! Good theology Nebuchadnezzar!

**Able to deliver** (Deliver in Da 3:15, 17, 28, 29) - The Septuagint translates "deliver" with the Greek verb **rhuomai** [**word study**], which means to rescue from a situation of potentially great harm. **Rhuomai** emphasizes greatness of peril from which deliverance is given by a mighty act of power and in the NT **rhuomai** is always associated with God as the Deliverer and with a person as the object of His deliverance. (Study the 17 uses of rhuomai in 15v in the NT - Mt. 6:13; 27:43; Lk 1:74; Ro 7:24; 11:26; 15:31; 2Co. 1:10; Col 1:13; 1Th 1:10; 2Th 3:2; 2Ti 3:11; 4:17, 18; 2Pe 2:7, 9) **Rhuomai** was used in a secular writing to describe a soldier going to a wounded comrade on the battlefield and carrying him to safety (he runs to the cry of his comrade to rescue him from the hands of the enemy).

**To summarize:** God is the only Deliverer. Deliverance comes from God, to the people of God. Deliverance is complete and able to bring us through the fire of tribulation and adversity. Our God is able to deliver us **from, in** or **through** the fire.

**Daniel 3:30 Then the king caused Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego to prosper in the province of Babylon**

- **king:** 1Sa 2:30 Ps 91:14 Jn 12:26 Ro 8:31
- Ps 1:3
- Daniel 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**To prosper** - Those who honor God will be honored (in this life and/or the one to come, cp 1Ti 4:8+). The Septuagint says that the

king "advanced them, and gave them authority to rule over all the Jews who were in his kingdom."

**Jesus** promised...

Blessed (fully satisfied independent of the circumstances) are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Mt 5:11, 12<sup>+</sup>)

**C H Spurgeon** - The unfaltering fidelity of the three holy children is worthy of our imitation. They never hesitated or parleyed with the tyrant. Fixed were their hearts in God (cp He 12:2-note), and confidently stayed on him; and so they conquered the proud monarch; yea, and vanquished death itself, quenching the violence of the flames. Rich was their reward. Jesus walked the glowing coals with them, and turned the furnace into a fair pavilion. In His name let us also abide by the truth without flinching, and no evil shall come nigh unto us. Never let us debate or question, but for God and His holy gospel let us be bold to sacrifice even life itself. May the sons of this family be such young men as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. Amen. (The Interpreter: Spurgeon's Devotional Bible)

**Wiersbe** rightly observes that "As we move toward the end of the age, the furnace of opposition will be heated seven times hotter and the pressure to conform will become stronger and stronger. It will take a great deal of grace, prayer, courage, and faith for God's people to stand tall for Christ while others are bowing the knee to the gods of this world. The Book of Daniel is a great source of encouragement, because it reminds us that God cares for His people and honors them when they are true to Him. (Ibid)

In **first Samuel** we read this eternal principle...

'Far be it from Me-- for **those who honor Me I will honor**, and those who despise Me will be lightly esteemed." (1Sa 2:30b, cp Pr 3:9, 10, 14:31)

**Jesus** echoed this truth declaring that...

If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall My servant also be; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him. (John 12:26)

Tempted and persecuted here,  
Afflicted and distress'd,  
With steadfast faith we persevere,  
And stand the fiery test:

The fire shall all our bands consume,  
And in the furnace tried,  
Out of the flames we soon shall come,  
Unhurt and purified.

Throughout my sinful soul I feel  
The strength of pride invincible;  
But thou th' Almighty God of grace  
Can all my haughty thoughts abase.

All things are possible to thee,  
Display thy humbling grace in me;  
And in thy tender love impart  
My Saviour's lowliness of heart.

I freely feed them now  
With tokens of my love;  
But richer pastures I prepare,  
And sweeter streams above.

Unnumber'd years of bliss  
I to my sheep will give  
And, while my throne unshaken stands,  
Shall all my chosen live.

This tried almighty hand  
Is raised for their defence;  
Where is the power shall reach them there?

Or what shall force them thence?

Your harps, ye trembling saints,  
Down from the willows take:  
Loud to the praise of love divine,  
Bid every string awake.

Though in a foreign land,  
We are not far from home;  
And nearer to our house above  
We every moment come.

**Blest is the man, O God,  
That stays himself on Thee!  
Who waits for Thy salvation, Lord,  
Shall Thy salvation see.**

## Tony Garland

### Lessons for Living from Daniel 3

The third chapter of Daniel contains numerous lessons we can apply in our own lives.

#### • Persecution Serves God's Purpose -

In our Christian walk, we can become comfortable in the world and begin to forget that we are not of this world (Mark 4:19; Rom. 12:2; Eph. 2:2; Col. 3:1-3).<sup>259</sup> The following words of Jesus must always echo in our ears: If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you (John 15:18-19). Just as Israel would like to assimilate among the Gentile nations, but God says it will never come to pass, so too believers will find it impossible to remain friends with both the world and God (Jas.4:4). Sometimes God uses persecution to remind us of Who we belong to and bring us back to our spiritual senses. Although persecution is never pleasant, we need to recognize the purposes it serves in God's hands. "Nothing is plainer than that the Holy Ghost never acknowledges the Christian in any way except as separate from the world,—the object of its animosity and persecution, cast out, despised, unknown, by the world. Such is our place as recognized by the word of God. It is for Christians to account for the fact that they have lost it; for clearly what I have been describing does not, somehow or another, apply at the present time. Is it that the world is getting better, or that they themselves have become worse?"<sup>260</sup> "Why [is persecution] permitted? Among the reasons why it has been permitted may be the following: (a) To show the power and reality of religion. It seemed desirable to subject it to 'all kinds' of trial, in order to show that its existence could not be accounted for except on the supposition that it is from God. If men had never been called on to 'suffer' on account of religion, it would have been easy for the enemies of religion to allege that there was little evidence that it was genuine, or was of value, for it had never been tried. Compare Job 1:9-11. As it is, it has been subjected to 'every form' of trial which wicked men could devise, and has shown itself to be adapted to meet them all. The work of the martyrs has been well done; and religion in the times of martyrdom has shown itself to be all that it is desirable it should be. (b) In order to promote its spread in the world. 'The blood of the martyrs' has been 'the seed of the church;' and it is probable that religion in past times has owed much of its purity, and of its diffusion, to the fact that it has been persecuted. (c) To fit the sufferers for an exalted place in heaven. They who have suffered persecution needed trials as well as others, for 'all' Christians need them - and 'theirs' came in this form. Some of the most lovely traits of Christian character have been brought out in connection with persecution, and some of the most triumphant exhibitions of preparation for heaven have been made at the stake."<sup>261</sup> "This purpose is not merely to set forth God's power in being able to protect His own but specifically the fact that 'the world power cannot imperil the safety of God's saints.' Throughout the ages the world power has manifested its character of deep hostility against God's people. In certain periods of the world's history this character of the world power had to become quiescent. It may burst into activity at any moment. God's people should be kept aware of this."<sup>262</sup> "There sounds the admonition to every right-meaning young man, however prosperous he may be, to prepare for fiery times. The world is under an erring rule ... Envious and malicious eyes are watching you, and eager to show their superior devotion by accusing you and bringing you into trouble. The way of faithfulness often lies through the fiery furnace, heated seven-fold to consume you. Therefore prepare for fiery times, and think it not strange when they come."<sup>263</sup>

#### • Church and State -

As Christians, we are subject to God and to the ruling authority. We need to be intimately familiar with God's Word so that we can



rightly discern how to walk in a way that honors and pleases God: able to identify situations when God's law (higher law) is being violated by the civil authority and its (lower) law. We also need to carefully understand whether such a violation by the state seeks to force us, personally, to follow suit. In cases where God's law is broken by the state and if, to remain subject to the state, we personally would have to break God's law, then we must participate in civil obedience. Where we carefully, prayerfully, determine this to be so, we must be willing to yield our lives, if need be, and trust God's sovereign will for the results. We must understand there is a clear distinction between the things that are Caesar's and the things that are God's alone (Mat. 22:21; Mark 12:17; Luke 20:25). "When Caesar arrogates to himself the things that are the Lord's, then, and in such cases, his authority is to be resisted. God does not desire Caesar's things; Caesar must not have the things of God."<sup>264</sup> "The Judeans' accommodation in chapters 1 and 2 [of Daniel] shows that believers can and should respect and obey human authorities in the civil realm (Mat. 22:21; Rom. 13:1-7) as long as such obedience does not involve a compromise or denial of faith in the one true God. However, Daniel 3+ (like Daniel 6+) will show that believers are obligated to disobey human authorities when they require idolatry or other forms of compromise or denial of the one true faith. Taken together, chapters 1-3 therefore show the distinction between the civil realm and the religious realm, the distinction between church and state. As much as possible, believers live as law-abiding citizens of their state, but as members of the kingdom of God, their highest allegiance is to God. When required by human authorities to compromise their faith, they must 'obey God rather than men' (Acts 5:29)."<sup>265</sup> "The business of the Christian is to show respect to all who are in authority, to pay honor to whom honor is due, owing no man anything save love. What makes this so particularly strong, is, that the emperor then reigning was one of the worst and most cruel men that ever filled the throne of the Caesars. And yet there is no reserve or qualification, nay the very reverse of an insinuation that, if the emperor ordered what was good, the Christians were to obey, but, that if not, they were free from their allegiance. The Christian is called to obey—not always Nero or Nebuchadnezzar, but God evermore. The consequence is, that this at once delivers from the very smallest real ground for charging a godly person with being a rebel."<sup>266</sup> See Civil Disobedience and the Christian.

#### • Against Situational Ethics -

The Christian is to live according to principle, not pragmatism. It is not our responsibility to evaluate moral trade-offs to choose the lesser of several evils in an attempt to control the results of a difficult situation. Imagine how this chapter might have turned out if the three Jewish men applied situational ethics? "If these three young Hebrews were living today and were facing the same test, if they sought the advice of the religious leaders of our day, they would be advised to 'go along' with the king, bow to the image, 'coexist' with the idolaters, and, by so doing, perhaps lead the king into a better life."<sup>267</sup> Situational ethics opens the door to temptation, compromise, and our powerful ability to rationalize. "Wouldn't it better [for the Jews] to just quickly bow down ... and be able to continue being an influence for God in this pagan kingdom? Why throw away their God-given positions when a second or two of necessary compromise would allow them to continue serving God in the kingdom?"<sup>268</sup> We are never called to adopt an ungodly method (e.g., deception, lying) to live in a way which pleases God. Whenever we might feel a temptation to resort to such an approach, we should immediately recognize our greater sin of lack of trust in the sovereign control of God over the affairs of our life. Our job is to walk according to His principles and then, having done so, leave the results in His hands. "If I do a thing, ever so right in itself, on the mere ground that I have a right to disobey man under certain circumstances, I am doing the lesser of two evils. The principle for a Christian man is never to do evil at all. He may fail, as I do not deny; but I do not understand a man quietly settling down that he must accept any evil whatever. It is a heathenish idea. An idolater that had not the revealed light of God could know no better. Yet you will find Christian persons using the present confession of the condition of the Church as an excuse for persevering in known evil, and saying, Of two evils we must choose the lesser! But I maintain that, whatever the difficulty may be, there is always the path of God for the godly to walk in. Why then do I find practical difficulty? Because I wish to spare myself. If I compound for even a little evil, the broad way of ease and honor lies open, but I sacrifice God and come under the power of Satan."<sup>269</sup> "This is 'the religion of principle;' and when we consider the circumstances of those who made this reply; when we remember their comparative youth, and the few opportunities which they had for instruction in the nature of religion, and that they were captives in a distant land, and that they stood before the most absolute monarch of the earth, with no powerful friends to support them, and with the most horrid kind of death threatening them, we may well admire the grace of that God who could so amply furnish them for such a trial, and love that religion which enabled them to take a stand so noble and so bold... [The religion of principle] is founded mainly on two things - an intelligent view of duty, and fixed principle. (a) An intelligent view of duty; an acquaintance with what is right, and what is wrong. These young men had made up their minds intelligently, that it was right to worship God, and that it was wrong to render homage to an idol... The religion of principle is always found where there is an intelligent view of what is right, and a man can give a 'reason' for what he does. (b) This religion is founded on a determination to 'do' what is right, and 'not' to do what is wrong. The question is not what is expedient, or popular, or honorable, or lucrative, or pleasant, but what is right... It is the only kind [of religion] in which there is any fixed and certain standard. If a man regulates his opinions and conduct from expediency, or from respect to the opinions of others, or from feeling, or from popular impulses, there is no standard; there is nothing settled or definite. Now one thing is popular, now another; today the feelings may prompt to one thing, tomorrow to another; at one time expediency will suggest one course, at another a different course."<sup>270</sup>

#### • Exclusivity of the Christian Worldview -

Pagan beliefs are generally quick to accommodate other views. In our day, this idea can be seen in the popular sticker attached to the bumper of some cars featuring the words COEXIST or TOLERANCE, the letters being rendered using symbols of various religions. The prevalent idea behind this ancient view is, "I'm OK. You're OK. Let's all just get along." While this philosophy sounds friendly enough, it denies the reality of objective truth—the idea that there is One God Who Alone is True and Who has defined acceptable ethical behavior. As those whom God has separated to Himself, our very existence is a testimony against this religious pluralism and moral relativism. Thus, we are "thorns in the side" of paganism and humanism. If we remain true to God, we will become the subjects of controversy and persecution because we testify against the pluralistic world view. "According to the prevailing views, no mode of religion could be tolerated which would maintain that 'all' the gods that were worshipped were false. Religion was supposed to be identified with the best interests of the state, and was recognized by the laws, and protected by the laws. To deny the claim, therefore, of any and of all the gods that were worshipped; to maintain that all were false alike; to call on men to forsake their idols, and to embrace a new religion - all this was regarded as an attack on the state. This was the attitude which Christianity assumed toward the religions of the Roman empire, and it was this which led to the fiery persecutions which prevailed there. While Rome could consistently tolerate any form of idolatry that would recognize the religion established by the state, it could not tolerate a system which maintained that 'all' idolatry was wrong."<sup>271</sup> See commentary on Daniel 3:5.

### • Fallen Man's Response to Revelation -

One of the surprising aspects of this chapter is the very first verse. Nebuchadnezzar had seen the power of God at work through Daniel in chapter 2, but now he acts in a way completely at odds with the revelation God graciously provided in his dream. "Why should we be surprised that Nebuchadnezzar failed to understand the revelation from God in chapter 2? Apart from the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the natural man will never grasp what God is saying or doing. Nebuchadnezzar is an example of what Paul taught ... For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man. For who has known the mind of the Lord, that He should instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:6-16). Apart from the ministry of the Spirit, we will distort and pervert the Scriptures as badly as the pagan Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar."<sup>272</sup> We must understand that those who are not yet born-again will distort and mishandle the things of God until they receive God's Spirit and are born again (John 3:7).

### • The Preservation of Israel -

All attempts to destroy the Jews and their nation will ultimately fail. "The prophetic lesson set forth concerns Israel among the Gentiles until 'the times of the Gentiles' comes to an end. The three young Hebrews are a picture of the nation Israel, moving in the furnace of Gentile power but never consumed. From the human standpoint and by human standards, Israel should have been wiped out as a nation; but God has miraculously preserved that nation in the fiery furnace of race hatred and persecution... even in the furnaces of Adolph Hitler where literally millions of them were cremated. In spite of persecutions down through the centuries, the Jew marches on. Israel is God's covenant nation, and will finally be miraculously delivered and exalted among the nations. This is the deeper prophetic teaching of the fiery furnace episode... In spite of Pharaoh's attempt to drown Israel ... in spite of Haman's gallows, Caesar's guillotine, Mussolini's hatred, Stalin's wholesale butchering and Hitler's ovens, Israel lives on, moves on, and will ... fulfill God's ultimate aim for them."<sup>273</sup> See Preservation of Israel.

• Learning to Stand on Our Own - Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego were unable to look to Daniel to help them navigate the difficulties they faced in this chapter. While there may be a season in our Christian walk where we benefit from the guidance and example of a mature brother or sister in the Lord, we should expect, sooner or later, that we'll need to be able stand on our own two feet. "You'll have a believer you respect, a believer that's mature, a Christian leader that you look up to and people will tend to cluster around that person. And when God thinks that these believers have enough of the Word of God He will remove that person from them and then try a test on them to see whether they're leaning on the Word of God or whether in fact they are leaning upon the other person. You see, Christian friends who are mature, who are your leaders, people you respect very much can themselves be very dangerous idols for you. So therefore God will put you in a situation where you won't have the opportunity to have another more mature believer around to consult, cry on their shoulder or do something else."<sup>274</sup>

### • Our Reason for Living -

The Christian world view leads us to conclude that the greatest goal of living is to glorify God. The primary way we glorify God is by dedicating our lives to His service. In other words, we yield our lives for His purposes, whatever they might be. If we allow our love for this world to eclipse our service of God, then we effectively take ourselves back off the altar and no longer behave as willing

sacrifices (Rom. 12:1). If done to preserve our life, then we are negating the ultimate purpose in living (Luke 17:33). "For of what use is life except to serve God's glory? But we lose that object in life for the sake of the life itself — that is, by desiring to live entirely to the world, we lose the very purpose of living!"<sup>275</sup> See commentary on Daniel 3:28.

#### • God is Sovereign -

In our view, this is the foundational principle among all those listed here. Unless we come to a place in our Christian maturity where we grasp this important truth, our trust in God will remain conditional. Unless we believe that God is in control of all the affairs of life, from the largest galaxy to the smallest subatomic particle, then we will be unable to walk according to His principles or rest in His peace when a storm rages around us (Isa. 26:3; Php. 4:6-7; Col. 3:14-15; Rom. 5:1; 8:6). "It has been often found by experience; the martyrs have often showed plainly that the peace and calm of their minds were undisturbed in the midst of the greatest bodily torment, and have sometimes rejoiced and sung praises upon the rack and in the fire. If Christ is pleased to send forth his Spirit to manifest his love, and speaks friendly to the soul, it will support it even in the greatest outward torment that man can inflict."<sup>276</sup> "Here is a pertinent lesson for believers today. Does God have all power? Yes. Is God able to deliver believers from all problems and trials? Yes. But does God deliver believers from all trials? No. God may allow trials to come into the lives of his people to build character or for a number of other reasons (Rom. 5). The purpose for trials may not always be understood, but God simply asks that his children trust him—even when it is not easy."<sup>277</sup> "We must never forget that God's will is very individualistic. What the Lord does for one of His children does not dictate what He will do for another. The difference in His dealings does not reflect a greater love for one child, nor does it necessarily mean a greater godliness in a child of God. For example, God chose to let godly James die but delivered godly Peter (cf. Acts 12:1-11). Why didn't God send the angel who released Peter from prison to do the same for James? Or why was it the Lord's will to allow John to live a long life while Peter's life would be "prematurely terminated (John 21:21-22)? The Lord is the Good Shepherd of His sheep and he leads according to His absolute wisdom, sovereignty and goodness."<sup>278</sup>

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## The Fear of Man or Woman

- by Elisabeth Elliot - Taken From: Keep A Quiet Heart

"The majority of men have thought of women as sublime separately but horrible as a herd," noted the wise G. K. Chesterton. Alas. Are we so formidable? Robert Bly, in his best-selling IRON JOHN, declares that men are petrified of female anger. Then there's a TIME correspondent named Sam Allis who says "Women are often daunting obstacles to male peace of mind, and for all their brave talk, men remain utterly flummoxed by the situation."

"The fear of man bringeth a snare," according to God's Word. Meseemeth the fear of woman bringeth a worse one. These comments have set me thinking (again) about fear in general. If men and women were surer of their God there would be more genuine manliness, womanliness, and godliness in the world, and a whole lot less fear of each other.

Jesus told us not to fear those who can kill only the body, but rather to fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell--in other words, fear God and fear nothing else. Moses, by faith, "left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible" (Hebrews 11:27NIV). When Daniel learned of King Darius's decree forbidding prayer to any god or man except the king himself, he proceeded with his regular manner of worship, on his knees, windows open, "just as he had done before," and was caught in the act (Daniel 6). He feared God; therefore, he feared neither the king nor the lions. His three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, faced with the choice between two evils, worshipping a golden image or burning to a crisp in a furnace, made an instant decision (Daniel 3). Fear of God made worship of an idol unthinkable. Fear of the fire was, by comparison, thinkable. That's manliness.

Uzziah, who became king of Judah when he was sixteen, was taught by Zechariah to fear God. A child who is not taught to fear wrongdoing when he is small will have great difficulty learning to fear God when he is a man. "Freedom from fear" is what Russell Kirk calls "a silly piece of demagogic sophistry," for we all have "a natural yearning for the challenge of the dreadful."

One of the nicest things any of the listeners to my broadcast, has written to me came from a little girl: "You make me brave." Sometimes I wonder what has happened to words like courage and endurance. What reason is there in our feel-comfortable society ever to be brave? Very little, and, when you think about it, we miss it, don't we? To be really brave is to lay oneself open to charges of hypocrisy, of being "in denial," or out of touch with one's feelings. Moses charged Joshua to be strong and very courageous. Courage is not the absence of fear but the willingness to do the thing we fear. Go straight into the furnace or the lion's den. Were those men out of touch with their feelings or with reality? No. Nor was the psalmist who said, "When I am afraid, I will trust" (Psalm 56:3, NIV). There's a big difference between feeling and willing.

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**TODAY IN THE WORD** - Daniel 3:1-15 - They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up. - Daniel 3:12

Upon discovering the formula for measuring the flow of electric current through a wire, high school teacher Georg Ohm thought he might earn himself a collegiate professor position. Although his formula would later be known as Ohm's Law, at the time it was roundly rejected in the science community and he was fired from his existing job. Sometimes being the only one in the right leads to unfair punishment.

Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah stood out from the pack because of their godliness. Up to this point, the group known more commonly by their Babylonian names of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had their faithfulness rewarded with positions of esteem and power. But that treatment took a serious turn for the worse when a direct order of the king came into blatant conflict with the laws of God. Their faith was put to a very simple but crucial test: either worship God or worship Nebuchadnezzar.

You might be wondering where Daniel fits into this story, and the simple answer is that we don't know. We know from the end of chapter 2 that Daniel was placed in a position distinct from that of his friends. But his absence from this story reminds us that Daniel is not the true hero of this book—God is. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had a lot to lose, and very little to gain, it would appear. These three men had positions of authority. The dedication of the statue seems to be a sort of national leadership meeting (v. 3). It's also clear that these men certainly knew the penalty for disobedience (v. 6).

Note that the men didn't make a spectacle of their defiance. It took the tattling of some astrologers to bring the matter to the king's attention. The Aramaic phrase translated "denounced" in the NIV is particularly strong, literally meaning "ate the pieces of." Perhaps these other rulers were jealous of the Jews' quick ascension to power and picked the three easiest targets for their wrath. Tomorrow we'll discover that positions of power meant very little to these three servants of God.

**TODAY ALONG THE WAY** - You may find that obeying God and obeying the laws of men usually go hand in hand. But that isn't always the case. When legal or social mandates require you to compromise your faith, are you prepared to do the right thing ... and to do it in the right way? Ask the Lord to give you the strength to stand for what is right, but also the humility to avoid self-righteous grandstanding. Make sure you are disobeying for God's sake, not for your own publicity.

## Daniel 3 - The Fiery Furnace

J. R. Miller

"As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes 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." Daniel 3:5-6

Every child knows this story. It is one of the classics of Christian households. It would be well if all our modern Christians had the sublime moral courage of these "three Hebrew children." We will never have to meet precisely the same trial of faith, that these young men had to meet; but we need just as heroic a spirit - in order to be faithful.

Imposing images are set up even now in many a place - and all are expected to bow down to them - and woe to him who does not kneel!

We all have opportunity enough to be heroic. The popular religion is inclined to limpness of the knees. We have grown wonderfully tolerant in these modern days! We bow to almost anything - if it happens to be fashionable. It would not do us any harm if we were to take a good lesson from the example of these "three Hebrew children."

As Nebuchadnezzar grew great - he grew proud. He knew no God. There was no one to whom he thought of bowing down. He exalted himself as God. He demanded that all men should pay homage to him. That is the meaning of this strange story of folly. His people obeyed his command. "Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp and all kinds of music - all the peoples, nations and men of every language fell down and worshiped the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up."

But there were some whose knees did not bend! Quickly the king was informed by anxious spies, that certain Jews did not worship the golden image he had set up. Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury, commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Here we see a great king - in a very bad temper! That was certainly an unkingly mood. No man is fit to rule others - who has not learned to rule his own spirit. Peter the Great made a law that if any nobleman beat his slaves - he should be looked upon as insane, and a guardian should be appointed to take care of his person and his estate. This great monarch once struck his gardener, who then died in a few days. Peter, hearing of the man's death, exclaimed, with tears in his eyes, "Alas! I have civilized my own subjects; I have conquered other nations; yet have I not been able to conquer or civilize myself!"

There are Christian people who would do well to think a little of this matter. Self-control is the mark of completeness in Christian culture. It is the lesson of peace perfectly learned. Bad temper is always a sad blemish in disposition and conduct. To get into a rage - is a mark of lingering barbarism in the character. Self-mastery is Christlike.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were all young men who were in peculiar circumstances. They were away from home, out from under parental influence and restraints, and exposed to very strong temptation. They had now their choice between duty - and the fiery furnace! We should study this lesson for its example of heroic devotion to duty, regardless of consequences. Even yet, the world's promotion is obtainable oftentimes - only at the price of a trampled conscience!

**There are several things to note in these young men.**

**Note their calmness;** they displayed no excitement, no heat of passion. The peace of God ruled in their hearts.

**Note also, their sublime courage.** They had a contempt of death. They feared only one thing - sin.

**Note also, their trust in God.** They committed the matter utterly into His hands. They did not know what He would do - but they were sure it would be the right thing.

The king did not want to destroy these young men, and repeated his command. "Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes 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?"

The king wanted to give them another chance, as he preferred not to burn such useful servants; but they told him there was no need for a second opportunity. They would have no other answer to give. They could make no possible change in their decision. The thing that was demanded of them was contrary to the plain law of their God - and that settled it forever. There was no room for discussion or for deliberation or for persuasion - when it was the law of God that was concerned. They could burn - but they could not turn!

It would save many people a great deal of weighing, balancing, and discussing of fine points - if they would act always on this principle - that the Word of God is final in all matters of duty. When a thing is forbidden in the Word - that should be the end of it.

But too many people keep questions of duty open, waiting for new light, secretly hoping that by some logical process it may become possible for them to avoid making the sacrifice, and to do the thing that now appears to be wrong. So they parley with the matter, and weigh the pros and cons, and wonder if they are mistaken in their sense of duty - and usually end in yielding to sin. It is never safe to parley with temptation! There is no need for it. Duty is final, and no process of reasoning can change it. There is no new light possible on a divine command. It would save many of us much trouble if we fixed it in our mind - that God's Word settles some things, settles them finally and forever, and that we have no need to consider them - but should obey them without parley or question!

The answer of the young men was given promptly. "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace." There is a wonderful majesty in these words. About the whole of the creed of these men was in the words, "Our God." God was theirs—and they were God's. He was taking care of them, and therefore they had no need to concern themselves about their own safety.

It is a great thing to be able to call God OURS, and to say, **God is our refuge!**" (cp 2Sa 22:3, Ps 62:7, 73:28 [note the choice the psalmist made! And the purpose!], Ps 91:2, 9, [Read entire Psalm 91:1-16] Ps 94:22, 142:5, Jer 16:19, 17:17) "The Lord is my Shepherd." **When we can really say this—we are ready for anything. No danger can terrify us. It is not the assurance of personal safety which gives us confidence; it is the fact that we are in God's hands, that we belong to Him, and that He is taking care of us! We do not need to know just what He will do with us—or for us; whether He will deliver us—or let us suffer. The ground of the confidence is that we are in His hands—and that He will do the right thing. It is not the highest trust that merely believes in being brought out of the trouble—or being delivered from danger. Perhaps we shall not be delivered. God may permit us to suffer. Very well—our trust does not depend on deliverance. It has no condition. It is simply trust without stipulation or suggestion. The highest confidence is that which suggests nothing—but lies in God's hands, and leaves Him to decide the manner of the care and the blessing.**

The next three words are almost equally important: **"Whom we serve."** There are plenty of people who like to cry to God in time of trouble or danger—but they have never been willing to obey or serve Him—when there is danger. They even scoff at Him in the sunshine; but when the storm arises—they fall down on their knees and pray to Him!

These Hebrew young men were not of this class. They could cast themselves upon God's protection in this time of danger without shame, because they had been God's loyal friends and had been serving Him before the danger came. **If we want to be able to call God ours and commit ourselves to His care when trial or peril comes—we must not only believe in Him—but must obey His will.**

True religion is not all creed; it has also a very practical side, and we ought not to overlook this word **serve.** **"We must serve God—as well as trust Him.** We must be willing to serve Him, too, even if it costs and hurts and burns. We must continue to serve Him though He brings no earthly deliverance. **"The Christian who lazily looks for nothing but His personal comfort—will never look at fiery furnaces with composure."** So if we would be without fear in the day of danger—we must be God's loyal and faithful servants without condition.

Then comes the expression of the faith of these men. Our God is able to deliver us!" They did not say He would deliver them from the fiery furnace. They did not know that He would. They knew that He could—and that if it were best—He would. There they rested the matter.

God's power ought to be a strong comfort to us in trouble or danger. He is able to deliver us—there is no doubt about that. No combination is too strong for Him. He can easily do whatever He pleases. Men say there are no miracles in these days—but God can always find a way to work any deliverance He desires to work for His people. He is never handicapped in His own world. And since He is our Father, and loves us and is taking care of us—we should know that if it is best that we should be delivered—He will surely do it. If He does not deliver us—we should know that it is because it is better for us and for His glory that we should suffer. True Christian faith is willing to leave to God—just whatever He shall do, confident in God's power and in God's love.

**"But if not." They made no condition of loyalty to God.** They would obey Him just as loyally—if He did not deliver them. There are some people who call themselves Christians who never get above self-interest even in their religion. They believe it will be best for them in the end—if not just at present, to be Christians and to be faithful to God. Their consolation in losses and sacrifices is that God will more than compensate them in some way. They like to quote, "To those who love God—we know that all things work together for good." This is true. We shall never lose anything in the long run—by doing right. God's service brings great reward. Yet even this should not be the condition of serving God. We should serve Him for Himself, even if we know that serving Him will bring loss that never can be made up to us.

There is a legend of one in the old times, who walked the streets of Alexandria bearing in one hand a torch and in the other hand a vessel of water, crying, "With this water I will put out hell, and with this torch I will burn up heaven—that God may be served for Himself alone." It surely is not the highest kind of faith—which always thinks of the benefit to ourselves; it is far higher if we say, as these men said, "Whether God shall deliver us or not from the furnace—we will serve Him!" Or as Job, **"Though He slays me—yet will I trust (hope) in Him!"** (Job 13:15)

The king was angered by the quiet determination of the young Hebrew children, and commanded that no time should be lost, and that their punishment should be as terrible as possible. "So these men, in their trousers, robes, head coverings, and other clothes—were tied up and thrown into the furnace of blazing fire!"



There are furnaces burning yet all over the world, and faithful ones are continually being cast into them.

**There are furnaces of physical pain and suffering**, in which saintly ones lie, sometimes for years. But they are not destroyed by the fire. The only result is—that they become more saintly. The sin and the earthliness are burnt out of their lives—and the pure gold remains.

**There are furnaces of trial, too**, in which men suffer loss for being true and loyal to God. We must not suppose that a holy life is always an easy one. Says one: "**God's judgments—it may be the very sternest and most irremediable of them—come, many a time, in the guise, not of affliction—but of immense earthly prosperity and ease.**"

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**The Road Uphill** by Mrs. Charles E. Cowman (Streams in the Desert)

Daniel 3:25 = "Walking in the midst of the fire"

The fire did not arrest their motion; they walked in the midst of it. It was one of the streets through which they moved to their destiny. The comfort of Christ's revelation is not that it teaches emancipation from sorrow, but emancipation through sorrow.

O my God, teach me, when the shadows have gathered, that I am only in a tunnel. It is enough for me to know that it will be all right some day.

They tell me that I shall stand upon the peaks of Olivet, the heights of resurrection glory. But I want more, O my Father; I want Calvary to lead up to it. I want to know that the shadows of this world are the shades of an avenue the avenue to the house of my Father. Tell me I am only forced to climb because Thy house is on the hill! I shall receive no hurt from sorrow if I shall walk in the midst of the fire. --George Matheson

"The road is too rough,' I said;  
'It is uphill all the way;  
No flowers, but thorns instead;  
And the skies over head are grey.'  
But One took my hand at the entrance dim,  
And sweet is the road that I walk with Him.

"The cross is too great,' I cried--  
'More than the back can bear,  
So rough and heavy and wide,  
And nobody by to care.'  
And One stooped softly and touched my hand:  
'I know. I care. And I understand.'

"Then why do we fret and sigh;  
Cross-bearers all we go:  
But the road ends by-and-by  
In the dearest place we know,  
And every step in the journey we  
May take in the Lord's own company."

## Day by Day - From The Frying Pan To... "

Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was usually heated. **Daniel 3:19**

Our children who go to Sunday school are acquainted with the story from which today's text for the Daily Devotion is taken.

They know how the Lord preserved Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the over-heated furnace.

Now it would seem, figuratively speaking, there are Christians in the same spot. In Sudan's Darfur region there are three

predominantly Christian tribes who are being persecuted. So far, 300,000 have been killed and another 2.5 million forced to flee. According to the International Criminal Court in The Hague, the surviving victims have been subjected to repeated rape and torture.

Now that body has issued an arrest warrant for the country's president, Omar Bashir.

With China, the African Union, and the Arab League on Bashir's side, little can be done to enforce that warrant. Instead, Bashir, like Nebuchadnezzar, has turned up the heat in the furnace.

He has ordered 13 international aid agencies out of the Sudan. Those are the 13 agencies responsible for 60 percent of the humanitarian aid getting through to the people in Darfur.

Short of a miracle, which the Lord has shown He can do, there is little earthly hope for these -- our brothers and sisters.

It is for such a miracle that we will pray at the end of our devotion. First, however, let us ask the Lord to sustain these people in their faith. May the crucified and risen Lord enable them to withstand the forces of hatred, prejudice, and persecution. Second, let us come to the Lord and ask Him, if such be His will, to intervene for those who are being tortured and tormented.

## Daniel 3: Through Floods and Flames

C H Spurgeon

There are many dear children, both boys and girls, who have not been ashamed in their early days to come forward and confess the Lord Jesus Christ. God bless the dear children! I rejoice in them. I am sure that the church will never have to be ashamed of having admitted them. They, at least, show no cowardice. They take a solemn delight in being numbered with the people of God, counting it an honor to be associated with Christ and His church. Shame on you older ones who still hold back! What ails you, that babes and sucklings are braver than you? By the love you bear to Christ, I charge you: come forth and confess His name among this evil and perverse generation.

Is it true? Then joyfully accept the trial which comes with it. Shrink not from the flames. Settle it in your minds that-by divine grace-no loss, nor cross, nor shame, nor suffering shall make you play the coward. Say, like the holy children, **"We have no need to answer you in this matter"** ( Daniel 3:16 ). They did not cringe before the king and cry, "We beseech you, do not throw us into the fiery furnace. Let us have a consultation with you, O king, that we may arrange terms. There may be some method by which we can please you and yet keep our religion." No! They said:

*16We have no need to answer you in this matter. 17If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver from your hand, O king. 18But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the golden image which you have set up.(Daniel 3:16-18)*

Dear friends, let us be ready to suffer for Christ's sake. Some will say, "Do not be imprudent." It is always prudent to do your duty. We do not have enough nowadays of the virtue nicknamed imprudence. I would like to see a display of old-fashioned imprudence in these cold, calculating, selfish days. Oh, for the days of zeal, the days when men counted not their lives dear to them that they might win Christ! At present, men sit down and reckon what it will cost them to do right, weighing their conduct as a matter of profit and loss. Then they call such wicked calculations prudence. It is sheer selfishness. Do right, if it costs you your life.

Where would England have been if the men who won our liberties in former ages had haggled with the world for gain? If they had saved their skins, they would have lost their souls and ruined the cause of God in England. He loves not Christ who does not love Him more than all things. Oh, for men of principle, who know no loss but loss of faith, and desire no gain except the glory of God! Be this your cry:

**Through floods or flames, if Jesus leads  
I'll follow where He goes**

You may lose a great deal for Christ, but you will never lose anything by Christ. You may lose for the present time, but you will gain for eternity. The loss is transient, but the gain is everlasting. You will be a gainer by Christ, even if you have to go to heaven by the way of persecution, poverty, and slander. Never mind the way. The end will make full amends. The treasures of Egypt are mere dross compared with the riches of endless bliss.

If it is true that you are willing thus to follow Christ, reckon upon deliverance. Nebuchadnezzar may put you into the fire, but he cannot keep you there, nor can he make the fire burn you. The enemy casts you into the furnace bound, but the fire will loosen your bonds, and you will walk at liberty amid the glowing coals. You will gain by your losses, you will rise by your down-castings.

Many prosperous men owe their present position to the fact that they were faithful when they were in humble employments. They were honest, and for the moment they displeased their employers, but in the end earned their esteem. When Adam Clarke was apprenticed to a tailor, his master showed him how to stretch the cloth when it was a little short, but Adam could not find in his heart to do it. Such a fool of a boy must be sent home to his mother. His godly mother was glad that her boy was such a fool that he could not stoop to a dishonest trick. You know what he became. He might have missed his way in life if he had not been true to his principles in his youth.

Your first loss may be a lifelong gain. Dear young fellow, you may be fired from your situation, but the Lord will turn the curse into a blessing. If all should go softly with you, you might decline in character. By doing a little wrong, you learn to do yet more and more, so losing your integrity, and with it all hope of ever lifting your nose from the grindstone. Do right for Christ's sake, without considering any consequences, and the consequences will be right enough

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