



THE PROPHECY OF DANIEL

Lesson Number 12

TRANSLATION LEGEND: ASV=American Standard Version, BBE=Bible in Basic English, DRA=Douay-Rheims KJV=King James Version, NKJV=New King James Version, NAB=New American Bible, NASB=New American Standard Bible, NAU=New American Standard Bible 1995, NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version, NJB=New Jerusalem Bible, NLT=New Living Translation, NRSV=New Revised Standard Version, RSV=Revised Standard Version, YLT=Young's Literal Translation.

----- Bible Translation Codes with Identification -----



DELIVERED FROM THE FURNACE and PROMOTED BY THE KING

^{3:24-30} Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. ²⁵ He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. ²⁶ Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire. ²⁷ And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them. ²⁸ Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God. ²⁹ Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort. ³⁰ Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon. ^{KJV} (Daniel 3:24-30)

INTRODUCTION

In a fit of rage, Nebuchadnezzar has commanded the strongest men in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and throw them into a burning fiery furnace. At his command, the furnace was heated seven times hotter

than it had ever been before. Apparently this was done while the three young men were being bound, causing the flames to leap forth, slaying the mighty men who threw the three into the fire. It is at once obvious that no one could withstand this

furnace by natural means. With all hope according to the flesh destroyed, the three, who refused to bow before the image set up by the king, fell down in the middle of the fiery furnace, where the flames were the hottest.

Furnaces Made By Men Cannot Destroy Faith that Comes from God. He Delivers AND Promotes, by Given O. Blakely

OUTLINE

- ▶ AN ASTONISHED KING (3:24)
- ▶ LOOSE AND WALKING WITH A FOURTH MAN (3:25)
- ▶ COME FORTH (3:26)
- ▶ A PUBLIC TESTIMONY (3:27)
- ▶ BLESSED BE THE GOD (3:28a)
- ▶ CHANGING, YIELDING, AND SERVING (3:28b)
- ▶ A NEW DECREE IS MADE (3:29)
- ▶ PROMOTION FROM THE LORD (3:30)
- ▶ CAN THIS HAPPEN TODAY?

IMPOSSIBLE THINGS WROUGHT

There is a fundamental lesson being taught in this account. It is something to be learned by all generations. It is food for faith and fuel for hope. It comes in the form of a two-sided coin. It moves us to consider the deliverance of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fiery furnace and shout, *“But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible”* (Matt 19:26). It must move us to say with the angelic messenger, *“For with God nothing shall be impossible”* (Luke 1:37).

It is essential to see that throughout history, God has dried up human possibility before He illumined Divine ability. This is not a matter of learning theology, but of discerning the ways of God. Ponder these revealed human epochs in which all hope in man was reduced to ashes. **It was then, and only then, that a Divine remedy was revealed.**

- ▶ The recovery of man from the fall (Rom 5:12-19).
- ▶ The establishing a godly remnant in the days of Noah (Gen 6:8).
- ▶ Surviving a global flood (Heb 11:7).
- ▶ A vast nation coming from Abraham and Sarah (Rom 4:19).
- ▶ A conquering Savior coming through Abraham and Sarah (Heb 11:12).
- ▶ The Messianic Seed coming through Isaac, whose wife was barren (Gen 25:21).
- ▶ The Messianic Seed coming from

Jacob, whose wife was barren (Gen 29:31).

- ▶ Young Joseph being placed on the throne in Egypt (Gen 45:9).
- ▶ A Savior coming through the nation of Israel (Isa 5:4; 9:6-7).
- ▶ The infant Moses surviving the edict of Pharaoh (Ex 2:3).
- ▶ Israel’s deliverance from Egypt (Ex 13:3).
- ▶ Israel; walking through the Red Sea on dry land (Ex 14:29).
- ▶ Israel surviving the attacking Army of Pharaoh (Ex 14:8-9,23).
- ▶ Israel receiving daily sustenance in the wilderness (Ex 16:35).
- ▶ Israel obtaining water from a rock (Ex 17:6).
- ▶ The conquering of Jericho (Josh 6:3-20; Heb 11:30).
- ▶ A shepherd boy being vaulted to the great king of Israel (2 Sam 7:8).
- ▶ Israel surviving Sennacherib’s attack (2 Kgs 19:35).
- ▶ Young David slaying Goliath of Gath (1 Sam 17:23-50).
- ▶ Israel conquering the Philistines in Samson’s time (Judges 16).
- ▶ Israel defeating the Midianites in Gideon’s time (Judges 7:1-7,24,25).
- ▶ Four Hebrew slaves becoming officials in the nation who took them captive (Dan 2-3).
- ▶ Zechariah and Elizabeth having the forerunner of Jesus (Luke 1:7-36).
- ▶ The Savior born of a virgin (Isa 7:14; Matt 1:23).
- ▶ A Pharisee breathing our threats against the church becoming the Apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 7:38; 8:1-3; 9:1-30).

In which of these cases was any facet of human strength or ability prominent? Which of these things could man – any man – have accomplished. Is there a single one of them that could have been achieved by a group of men. What possible role could the

statistician have played in their accomplishment? What worldly wise man could have contributed to their success – even one weightless mote? Could human logic have produced the smallest ray of hope? Was there any human strength, individual or collective, that could have achieved even one small aspect of these things?

A resounding **“God forbid!”** is shouted to every one of the foregoing questions. **Fleshly hope was dried up BEFORE God went to work.** Man had to see the futility of his own strength before he could see or appreciate *“the mighty God”* (Isa 9:6; Jer 32:18). In fact, **no real need for God is perceived until the weakness of man is seen and acknowledged.**

This is designed to confirm the reality of what is proclaimed in the New Covenant.

- ▶ Enemies are reconciled to God (Rom 5:10).
- ▶ Those dead in trespasses and sins are quickened toward God (Eph 2:1).
- ▶ Those who were alienated are reconciled (Col 1:21).
- ▶ Those whose lives have been ruined are born again (1 Pet 1:23).
- ▶ That the past of sordid sinners could be removed (1 Cor 6:9-11).
- ▶ Those who were not a people could become the people of God (1 Pet 2:10a).
- ▶ Those who had not obtained mercy would obtain mercy (1 Pet 2:10b).
- ▶ Those upon whom the wrath of God abode would become the sons of God (John 3:35; 1 John 3:1-2).
- ▶ The guilty would be justified (Acts 13:39).
- ▶ Those having no hope would abound in hope (Eph 2:12; Rom 15:13).
- ▶ Those who sat in darkness would see a great light (Matt 4:16).

WHAT POSSIBLE ROLE COULD THE STATISTICIAN HAVE PLAYED IN THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENT? WHAT WORLDLY WISE MAN COULD HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THEIR SUCCESS – EVEN ONE WEIGHTLESS MOTE? COULD HUMAN LOGIC HAVE PRODUCED THE SMALLEST RAY OF HOPE?

- ☐ Those who were “without God” would be indwelt by God (Eph 2:12; 2 Cor 6:16).

The Plague of Problem Definers

One of the plagues of our time is the smallness of the problems men acknowledge. The self-appointed problem definers and solvers do not uncover the real impediment, but deal only with frothy symptoms. There is no glaring need for the Living God, or the conquering Christ, or the empowering Spirit. The schools of men can give the problem solvers what they need. Some exposure to the books of

his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD” (Jer 9:23-24).

If we fail to see this, the account before us will bring us no lasting profit. It is imperative that we see there are things that are “impossible” with men – things that cannot be

eventually be redeemed, even though at this present time we struggle with the fickleness of our souls (Psa 42:5), and the recalcitrance of our bodies (1 Cor 9:27). Until our bodies are raised from the dead – *the redemption of the purchased possession*” – we must learn to relate the whole of our lives to the Lord, calling Him into our difficulties and challenges.

Although they lived in a time when these things were not fully known, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had learned to associate their difficulties with their God, depending upon Him in the midst of all manner of trial. Faith will do no less for us. It is imperative that this be seen, acknowledged, and made a part of our conscious lives. It is one thing to say this, it is quite another to do it. It will not be long for any of us until we will see how much faith is required to live in this posture.

Challenges Tend to Increase

By Divine design, our challenges tend to increase. We have made significant progress in the faith when we are able to perceive this. We see it in Daniel and his three companions.

- ☐ First, they are challenged with being captured by a hostile king.
- ☐ Second, they are challenged by being ordered to conform to heathen standards.
- ☐ Third, they were subjected to the scrutiny of the king, who compared their appearance and abilities with others.
- ☐ Fourth, they were tested by the king’s mandate to slay all of the wise men.
- ☐ Fifth, they stood the test of whether they would seek the Lord in the hour of crisis.
- ☐ Sixth, they were challenged to compromise their faith by bowing down to an image made by the king.
- ☐ Seventh, their faith was challenged with the threat of a special death.
- ☐ Eighth, they were actually thrown into a fire so robust, it killed the men who threw them into it.

With each faithful response, the strength of these young men was increasing. Their faith grew as it was used, and their determination grew as it was governed by their faith. Due consideration of their case will help us to respond honorable to circumstance.

THOSE WHO OVERSIMPLIFY OUR PROBLEMS PUT THE RESOLUTION OF THEM FURTHER FROM US. IN THE LIFE OF FAITH, WHEN WE ARE PRESENTED WITH SOLUTIONS ORIGINATING WITH MEN, THE VERY NEED FOR THE LORD IS DIMINISHED, AND WE ARE BROUGHT TO CONSIDER OURSELVES AND OUR PEERS TO BE STRONGER AND WISER THAN WE REALLY ARE.

human wisdom will suffice for them.

However, of what value would these pretenders be to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? What philosophy would have brought comfort to them? What book of statistics could have consoled their hearts? Were there any compilations of survivors of burning fiery furnaces? Were there any precedents in the history books of men who could have offered them hope? Of course, we know all of these questions are mere rhetoric. There is no substance to them at all. The Lord so orchestrated this matter so that every one would see there was no hope in human wisdom, strength, or riches. No one could talk these men out of the furnace! No one was strong enough to enter the furnace and rescue them from its destructive burning. There was no man rich enough to buy deliverance for the young men. If ever there was a time for Jeremiah’s words, it was now. “*Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in*

accomplished with human wisdom, strength, or riches. **There are challenges that exceed the ability of men.** There are forces aligned against us that are stronger than we. It is only “*He that is in us*” that is “*greater than he that is in the world*” (1 John 4:4).

Those who oversimplify our problems put the resolution of them further from us. In the life of faith, when we are presented with solutions originating with men, the very need for the Lord is diminished, and we are brought to consider ourselves and our peers to be stronger and wiser than we really are.

We dare not assess our difficulties from a purely human point of view. First, to do so dishonors our Lord, who has purchased us, for we are “*bought with a price*” (1 Cor 6:20; 7:23). It is the entirety of our persons that has been “*bought*” – spirit, soul, and body. For those in Christ Jesus, every part will

It should not surprise us that these young men are delivered. God is honored by delivering those who put their

trust in Him, refusing to waver or bend in the strong winds of trial. **Those who vacillate in trial are only guaranteeing**

their fall. They will not be able to stand who compromise their convictions, or bow to the gods of this present evil world.

AN ASTONISHED KING

“^{3:24} Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counselors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king.” Even though Nebuchadnezzar had consigned these men to a fiery furnace, it is obvious that he was curious about them. He seemed to sense these were no ordinary men. The boldness of their faith had no doubt provoked him to a sober reflection of his confrontation of them earlier – when they proved superior to all of his wise men. He must have also recalled his own readiness to promote them when Daniel had declared his dream and the interpretation of it. Their light had been shining, and the king had witnessed it first hand. Now there is something within that provokes him to peer into the furnace. Under ordinary circumstances, he would have had no such inclinations. After all, the flames that leaped out of the furnace killed the strongest men of his army who had thrown the three faithful servants of God into the fire. Surely such a judgment as this would not, under ordinary circumstances, have provoked the king to see if his word was effective. *But these are no ordinary circumstances!* God is in this matter, orchestrating the affairs for His own glory and our edification.

There are at least two things to learn from this verse.

First, those who walk by faith will “*shine as lights in the world*” (Phil 2:15). Due note will be taken of their manner of life, even though it may often appear this is not true. There will come a time when the enemies of the faithful will ponder their conduct – a time when they will recall the firmness of the faith and resolution of the saints of God. Peter said such an occasion would provoke the enemies to “*be ashamed*” (1 Pet 3:16). He also said some would, by the “*good works*”

of the faithful, “*glorify God in the day of visitation*” (1 Pet 2:12). This will be lived out in our text.

Second, the Lord will vindicate the faith of His people, even though He “*bears long with them*” (Luke 18:7). **When the time is appropriate, and it will best serve His glory and our eternal**

king was alarmed that his edict had been reversed, and his decree dashed to the ground.

Other Renderings

The LXX (Septuagint, Hebrew Scriptures in Greek) has an interesting translation of this verse. “*And it was when the king heard them singing praises,*

HE SEEMED TO SENSE THESE WERE NO ORDINARY MEN. THE BOLDNESS OF THEIR FAITH HAD NO DOUBT PROVOKED HIM TO A SOBER REFLECTION OF HIS CONFRONTATION OF THEM EARLIER – WHEN THEY PROVED SUPERIOR TO ALL OF HIS WISE MEN.

interests, our God will deliver us. We must ever remember the truth of David’s confession: “*My times are in Thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me*” (Psa 31:15). Armed with that knowledge, there is no trial we cannot face, or furnace in which we cannot survive. Your faith must take hold of this, refusing to doubt its truth.

ASTONISHMENT

“*Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake . . .*” Other translations say the king was “*astonished*,”^{NKJV} “*astounded*,”^{NASB} and “*leaped to his feet in amazement*.”^{NIV} The word used here is a significant one meaning to be startled or alarmed. Some linguists say the word carries the idea of being “swept to ruin.” It also includes the idea of being devastated and brought to ruin.^{STRONGS} There is also the idea of trembling, as though the Lord was forcing the king to admit his own inferiority. **That is, the**

and stood and saw them living, then was Nebuchadnezzar the king astonished and rose up hastily . . .” Theodotion, another translator of the Old Testament after the Septuagint Version rendered this verse this way: “*And Nebuchadnezzar heard them singing praises, and marveled, and rose up in haste.*”

The mighty God of heaven had made Nebuchadnezzar’s word of none effect, and he was startled that it was so. The text also indicates there is an element of fear in being “astonished,” because one is confronting a power superior to his own. It moved the king to quickly get up and inquire about the events attending the condemnation of the three men. Until this time, he had thought himself invincible, but now he was beginning to see this was not at all the case.

Thus the Lord moves the king to make this spectacle public. Because it is a miracle of God, it must not be kept private. Nebuchadnezzar will now bring his counselors into the matter. From his

viewpoint, he is seeking further verification. From heaven's viewpoint, a public demonstration will be given of God's superiority. These men refused to bow to the king's golden image, which was nothing more than a vain idol. The refusal of the young men to bow to that idol was made public. Now, their deliverance will also be made public.

VERIFICATION

“... and said unto his counselors, *Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king.*” The words of the king are not accompanied with the brashness exhibited when he had the three young men thrown into the fiery furnace. Now there is a tremor in his voice, as his wicked heart has been arrested by the God of heaven. At first, it is as though the king considers the possibility that more than the three had been cast into the furnace. But God will not allow such a foolish notion to continue. **He will cause the truth of the matter to surface in order that the faith of His servants might be seen and acknowledged.**

At this point, the king groups himself and his counselors together: “*did not WE cast three men bound. . .*” The verse suggests that the counselors were involved in this judgment. If they were not a part of its instigation, they certainly agreed with what the king was doing. They had added their “*Amen*” to the judgment against the three young Hebrews.

Again, we must see the working of the Lord in this whole matter. The king might have easily relied upon his own



memory, and depended upon the strict carrying out of his edict, with no doubt that it had been done. In such a case, this whole matter would have remained relatively secret. However, God will not allow this to happen. The counselors will be forced to face the vanity of Babylonian religion and the impotence of its king in the face of Jehovah God.

This was not something that was eagerly done, nor was the king driven by his will. **Rather, he was driven by fear, and circumstances for which no earthly account could be given.** It is ever true, the Lord is “*terrible to the kings of the earth*” (Psa 76:12). In this very test, the 102nd Psalm is being fulfilled: “*So the heathen shall fear the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth thy glory*” (Psa 102:15).

The counselors quickly answer, “*True, O king.*” Other versions read, “*Certainly, O king.*”^{NASB/NIV} There is no doubt about this! **THREE** men were cast into the furnace. Three men were **CAST** into the furnace. Three men were **CAST BOUND** into the furnace. From every possible earthly point of view, there was no hope of survival. **From every vantage point, the three young men had been conquered by a power superior to themselves.** They had been bound by the strongest men in the military, and thrown into a furnace so hot it killed the men who threw them in. This was done because they refused to yield to a man, and instead insisted upon yielding to their God.

AND WHAT OF YOU??

And what of you? What circumstance is there in your life that appears to be hopeless? Is there something that men have acknowledged is beyond all hope? You must flee to the account of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! You are no less a child of God than them. In fact, if you are in Christ, you have even greater advantages than they did. Do your enemies seem greater than you? Have you been bound by the ropes of difficulty, and secured with the bonds of sorrow? Has one of your peers seemed to take dominion over you? Do not judge according to appearance (John 7:24). If you have taken your stand for the Lord, He is for you, and “*If God be for us, who can be against us?*” (Rom 8:31).

God can cause you to survive in this trial, and make your enemies acknowledge that He has done so! That is how much He thinks of you! Are you able to depend on that?

LOOSE AND WALKING WITH A FOURTH MAN

“²⁵ **He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.**” Now the king publicly declares what God has caused him to see. He will provide such details as will accrue to the glory of God. He will phrase his words in such a manner as to

emphasize the power of God. He does not do this with a desire to glorify God. Rather, **God causes him to speak in this manner, putting a word in his mouth, even though he is the king who is responsible for the young men being in the fire.**

I SEE FOUR MEN

“*Lo, I see four men . . .*” Other versions read, “*Look, I see four men . . .*” The king calls for his counselors to look into the furnace for themselves. He had three men thrown into the fire to destroy them. **Rather than destroying them, the number of men increased. Now there was four.** The edict of the king had not only been overturned, it had been

countermanded by an even greater decree that brought a fourth person into the flame. **The enemy had not increased. Rather, the number of those associated with the God of heaven increased.**

LOOSE

The men who were cast into the furnace bound were now loose. **The fire that was intended to destroy them had been the place where their bonds were loosed.** Concerning their bonds, there are at least three possibilities. First, they might have been bound with ropes, in which case, the fire burned them off. Second, they may have been bound with some non-combustible material, like chains, in which case the fire could have been intense enough to melt the chains. Third, the fire may have had nothing at all to do with their loosing,

uneasy at being in it."^{JOHN GILL} **Indeed, this is no doubt the occasion to which Hebrews refers when it speaks of those who "quenched the violence of fire," or "quenched the fury of the flames"**^{NIV} (Heb 11:34).

See how strong these young men are – they walk about in fire. Behold how confident they are, they stroll around in the flames. I do not doubt they sang the praises of God in their trial as Paul and Silas did in theirs (Acts 16:25). As I have already mentioned, the Septuagint Version says "*the king heard them singing praises.*" and I do not doubt that it was so. I cannot conceive of these three godly men simply walking around with their hearts and minds disengaged. They were experiencing the deliverance of the Lord, and it is inconceivable that they would have kept silence. What holy pleasure and

historians have said the patron God of Nebuchadnezzar was Nahu, "the god of fire," although I cannot substantiate that to be the case. Fire gods mentioned in the prophets include Molech (Lev 18:21; 2 Kgs 23:10), Adrammelech and Anammelech (2 Kgs 17:31; 19:37; Isa 37:38), Chemosh (Judges 11:24; 1 Kgs 11:7; 23:13) and Dyonisus (Acts 17:24). However, the God of these servants, by protecting them in the fire, threw any purported "fire god" down to the ground in disgrace.

We must not allow Nebuchadnezzar to see more than we are able to see in Christ Jesus. If we can see the afflicted people of God aright, they are not being hurt by their afflictions – even though they are, so to speak, in a furnace of fire. The deliverances of God are real!

THE FOURTH MAN

"I see four men loose . . . and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." Other versions read, "*the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods,*"^{NASB} "*the fourth looks like a son of the gods,*"^{NIV} "*the fourth has the appearance of a god.*"^{NRSV} and "*the fourth looks like a Divine being.*"^{NLT}

The fourth "man," stood out to the king. Although, from one standpoint, he was like the other three, yet it was apparent that he was different from them.

There has been a great deal of speculation concerning this personage. Some have affirmed this was Gabriel. Still others have insisted it was a preincarnate appearance of the Lord Jesus, who many are wont to say is the "His angel" of Moses and the Prophets (Gen 24:7,40), as well as "*the angel of the Lord*" (Gen 16:7; 22:11; Ex 3:2; Num 22:22; Judges 2:1; 13:3; 1 Kgs 19:1, etc.). Before going any further, I want to establish this was **not** a preincarnate (when the Word became flesh) appearance of Jesus Christ.

This Was Not Jesus

This view is a fanciful bit of theology that multitudes have embraced, and that is wholly without a syllable of justification from Scripture. First, the words "*His angel*" and "*the angel of the Lord*" are not peculiar to the Old Covenant writings. If, however, this was a reference to the Lord Jesus, they would have been confined to the writings of

THE MEN WHO WERE CAST INTO THE FURNACE BOUND WERE NOW LOOSE. THE FIRE THAT WAS INTENDED TO DESTROY THEM HAD BEEN THE PLACE WHERE THEIR BONDS WERE LOOSED.

for it was purely a work of the Lord.

However one chooses to view it, the glory must go to the Lord, not to the fire. **The point is that what was designed to kill them was the very experience in which the three children of Judah were liberated.**

WALKING IN THE MIDST OF FIRE

" . . . walking in the midst of the fire . . ." Other versions read, "*walking around in the fire,*"^{NIB} and "*walking in the middle of the fire.*"^{BBE} The idea is that they were continually moving about in the very heart of the flame. The fire had not taken one bit of mobility from them. They went into the fire restricted, but now that they were in the fire, there was not the slightest restriction found in them. They were moving about with all of the liberty they would have had in their own house. One man has said "*the furnace being large enough to walk in, and where they took their walks as in a garden, nor were they concerned to come out of it, nor*

delight must have been found in them!

THEY HAVE NO HURT

" . . . and they have no hurt . . ." Other versions read "*they are not hurt,*"^{NKJV} "*without harm,*"^{NASB} "*unbound and unharmed,*"^{NIV} "*there has no harm happened to them,*"^{Septuagint} and "*they are not damaged.*"^{BBE} The dreadful fire into which they had been thrown was utterly powerless against them. Their bodies were not harmed, nor were their turbans, coats, shoes, or other garments. They were not walking about on fire, but walked unharmed in the midst of the fire. They suffered no pain in their bodies, nor loss of their garments.

Thus Nebuchadnezzar was forced to acknowledge his decree had been reversed. **There was One who was more powerful he, who could set aside the word of the king as though it was nothing.** I understand that the Chaldeans worshiped fire (pyrolatry), and had many "Fire-Temples." Some

Moses and the Prophets.

First, "His angel" is mentioned in the Apostolic writings. This is how the angel who delivered Peter from prison was identified (Acts 12:11). The angel who revealed the Revelation to John is also referred to as "His angel," and was further sent to John by Jesus Himself (Rev 1:1). John again refers to this angel in Revelation 22:6, saying "the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servant . . ." No person of sound thought would affirm these were references to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is consistently depicted as presently enthroned at the right hand of God (Acts 5:31; 7:55; Rom 8:34; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1; Heb 8:1; 12:2; 1 Pet 3:22).

Second, the phrase "the angel of the Lord" is also used in the New Covenant writings. This is who revealed to Joseph that Mary was carrying a child conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matt 1:20,24). Joseph took the young child Jesus and His mother into Egypt at the direction of "the angel of the Lord" (Matt 2:13). Such an angel is said to have rolled the stone away from the tomb in which Jesus had been buried (Matt 28:2). Other references to "the angel of the Lord" are related to the deliverance of the Apostles (Acts 5:19), the direction of Philip to speak to the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26), the deliverance of Peter from prison (Acts 12:7), and the slaying of Herod (Acts 12:23). It should require no further explanation to confirm this was not the Lord Jesus Christ, but a heavenly servant of the Savior. This is simply not how the Holy Spirit uses this term "His angel."

In addition to these considerations, it is expressly stated that Savior "took not on Him the nature of angels" (Heb 2:16). This has particular regard to the redemption of humanity in whose likeness He came. Thus other versions read, "For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham" (Heb 2:16). The relevance to the matter we are discussing is apparent. The Word, as Jesus was referred to prior to becoming flesh (John 1:14), **only took the form of those He came to help.** If at any time He had taken the form of an angel, as some affirm, it could only have been to give assistance to angels, not men. That is

something He is nowhere represented as doing. Additionally, to be made a messenger, which is the meaning of "angel," **the Word would be required to humble Himself, taking a lower position.** To affirm that such a thing took place comes very close to blasphemy. The preincarnate Word is never depicted as in any way humbling Himself prior to becoming flesh in order to the salvation of men. There is not a syllable in Scripture that justifies such a conclusion.

Men should thrust from themselves foolish opinions that demean the Lord Jesus Christ, making Him a servant for human deliverance before He was "made of a woman, made under the

round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." (Psa 34:7)

- ▣ "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." (Psa 91:12)
- ▣ "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." (Mat 18:10)
- ▣ "And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the

THE PREINCARNATE WORD IS NEVER DEPICTED AS IN ANY WAY HUMBLING HIMSELF PRIOR TO BECOMING FLESH IN ORDER TO THE SALVATION OF MEN. THERE IS NOT A SYLLABLE IN SCRIPTURE THAT JUSTIFIES SUCH A CONCLUSION.

Law" (Gal 4:4). Although some notable men have taken the position I have here denied, it is still a false one, demeaning of the Lord Jesus, and serving not one bit of enlightenment concerning His Person.

This Was An Angel

The same "fourth person" is called an "His (God's) angel" in verse 28. Thus, we see that God sent an angel from heaven to deliver his faithful servants. **This time the deliverance was not from the fire, but in the fire.**

LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

Angelic deliverance and protection

One of the chief, if not exclusive, ministries of holy angels is that of ministering to the heirs of salvation. As it is written, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb 1:14).

There are frequent reminders of this fact in the Scriptures.

- ▣ "The angel of the LORD encampeth

eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." (2 Ki 6:17)

For those in Christ Jesus, angels are not always seen, but they are always there. There is no hardship through which the elect pass of which the holy angels are unaware. Behind every good day, when the enemy ceases to oppress, the activity of holy angels has been in the background, ensuring the ultimate safety of the children of God.

God is with us in trials

Satan would have us imagine that trouble, oppression, sorrow, and the likes, are evidences that the Lord has abandoned us. Such a thought, however, is only a foolish imagination – a fiery dart hurled at us by the wicked one. "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" (Isa 41:10). In

confirmation that this is a promise for us, *“Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you’”*^{NKJV} (Heb 13:5).

It is ever true, *“When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them”* (Isa 41:17). As we are engaged in the good work of the Lord, working together with Him (1 Cor 3:9), we have this unwavering promise: *“Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world”* (Mat 28:20). That, dear child of God, is something your faith **can** grasp with confidence. The persuasion of this reality will keep you in the hour of trial.

Creator” (1 Pet 4:19).

These afflictions will never exceed our ability to bear them, but are faithfully accompanied with Divinely appointed means by which we can escape being overcome by them (1 Cor 10:13).

All deliverance is not after this manner

This marvelous account does not justify the conclusion that deliverance is always after this manner.

- ▣ Abel was killed by Cain (Gen 4:3-8).
- ▣ Some of the prophets of God were killed by wicked Jezebel (1 Kgs 18:13).

they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth” (Heb 11:38).

There is no guarantee we will be delivered from all oppression in the manner in which Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were delivered. Yet, we must store the knowledge of their deliverance in our memories, for it attests to power of God. **The remembrance of their rescue will strengthen our faith and refurbish our hope.**

Allow me to be even more specific in this matter. **It is IN affliction that God makes us peculiarly His own.** It is written, *“Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction”* (Isa 48:10).

We must seek grace to be delivered from naive and overly-simplistic views of spiritual life. To entertain such erroneous views guarantees our fall in the time of trouble.

Ultimately, afflictions do not hurt the people of God

As grievous as afflictions are, they cannot ultimately hurt us. Has not the Lord promised, *“When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee”* (Isa 43:2).

Accenting this truth, Jesus once told His disciples they would suffer many things, with some of them even being killed. Yet, no ultimate harm would come to them. Thus He said, *“And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish”* (Luke 21:16-18). Every trouble, difficulty, and affliction is strictly monitored by the Lord. **If you will keep on believing,**

WE MUST SEEK GRACE TO BE DELIVERED FROM NAIVE AND OVERLY-SIMPLISTIC VIEWS OF SPIRITUAL LIFE. TO ENTERTAIN SUCH ERRONEOUS VIEWS GUARANTEES OUR FALL IN THE TIME OF TROUBLE.

Afflictions are part of the path in which we walk

Those who take their stand with the Lord, refusing to bow to the gods of this world, will suffer affliction. This is part of living by faith. As it is written, *“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution”* (2 Tim 3:12). In fact, being heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ are contingent upon suffering with Jesus. As it is written, *“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together”* (Rom 8:17).

We are reminded that we have been appointed to *“afflictions”* (1 Thess 3:3). If we suffer for righteousness sake, it is only by *“the will of God.”* As it is written, *“For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing”* (1 Pet 3:17). For this reason we are admonished, *“Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful*

- ▣ The prophet Zechariah was stoned in the very court of the house of the Lord (2 Chron 24:21-22; Matt 23:35).
- ▣ John the Baptist was beheaded (Mark 6:18-28).
- ▣ Stephen was stoned (Acts 7:58-60).
- ▣ James the Apostle was killed (Acts 12:2).
- ▣ The Jew killed their own prophets (1 Thess 2:13).
- ▣ During Old Covenant times, there were many miraculous deliverances. However, there were also others who were summoned by God to endure the harshest treatment. *“Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned,*

no real harm or detriment will come to you. You must exert yourself to believe this, and rely implicitly upon it.

A Man Will Be for A Hiding Place

All of this reminds me of one of God's exceeding great and precious promises. Isaiah delivered the Word during very hard times. It is a word for us, and we do well to receive it with joy. As it is written, *"And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land"* (Isa 32:2).

Make no mistake about this, child of God. There are winds of adversity that, were it not for the grace of God, would sweep us into oblivion. There are mighty spiritual tempests that would eternally disrupt us, were the Lord not for us. There are places so dry and bereft of spiritual nourishment that, were it not for the Lord, we would have died long ago. **There is a land so weary that it exceeds our strength, and would soon cause us to fall if the Lord was not with us.**

The "Man" of Isaiah's prophesy is

none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. He is *"the hiding place,"* or refuge ^{NASB} the stormy wind cannot penetrate. He is the One God has appointed to be our *"covert,"* or shelter ^{NASB} from the roaring storm. He is the streams that break out in life's desolate places, and the shade of a huge rock in a parched and thirsty land.

Walking in fellowship with Jesus, you will survive just as surely as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! Have faith in God! He is with you when you pass through taxing trials – yes, the most difficult of them!

COME FORTH

"²⁶ Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire." The testimony of the king is not enough to bring sufficient glory to the Lord. The sight of them walking in the furnace is good, but not good enough. The delivered men of faith must stand before their condemners. The Babylonian counselors must see them close at hand, and be persuaded of the truth to which the king has already testified.

NEAR THE MOUTH, BUT NOT BURNED

"... Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace..." Other versions read, *"came near the door of the furnace of blazing fire,"* ^{NASB} and *"approached the opening of the blazing furnace."* ^{NIV} One versions reads, *"Then Nebuchadnezzar came as close as he could to the door of the flaming furnace."* ^{NLT}

Doubtless, the flames were not shooting out like they were when the men who threw the three into the furnace were killed. Yet, the furnace was still ablaze, for the angel and the three men were walking about *"in the midst of the fire."* Even so, as the king came near to the

mouth of the furnace he was not burned or put into danger. He got close enough to know the intensity of the heat was very real. He knew full well this was no natural oddity that he was confronting.

The flames could very well had leaped forth and killed the king. **Yet, God was in this whole matter to bring glory to His name and comfort to His**

furnace. His unbridled wrath had been mitigated by what he now confronted. **Now Nebuchadnezzar has great respect for those he had formerly despised and condemned.**

Even though he calls them by the names he had given to them (1:7), he does not refer to them as his servants. Rather, he calls them *"servants of the most high*

HERE IS ONE OF THE ASPECTS OF SERVING GOD. HE CANNOT BE SERVED CASUALLY, THOUGHTLESSLY, OR PERFUNCTORILY. THAT IS, THOSE WHO ATTEMPT TO SERVE GOD HALF-HEARTEDLY, WITHOUT THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE HEARTS AND MINDS, OR MECHANICALLY OR BY ROTE, DO NOT SERVE GOD AT ALL.

saints. He will also give a flawless display of His power to those who dared to worship other gods.

SERVANTS OF THE MOST HIGH GOD

"... and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God..." You may expect the king did not speak in the same intonation he used when he demanded they bow before his image, or else be cast into a fiery

God." For three years they had been trained to be his counselors (1:3), and had been made the head over the affairs of Babylon (2:49; 3:12), which was his seat of authority. Yet, he does not call them his servants, but *"servants of the most high God."* **They chose to serve God even though it meant they would be consigned to death for doing so.**

An Aspect of serving God

Here is one of the aspects of

servicing God. **He cannot be served casually, thoughtlessly, or perfunctorily.** That is, those who attempt to serve God half-heartedly, without the involvement of the hearts and minds, or mechanically or by rote, do not serve God at all. Faith simply will not work in such a way, and *“without faith, it is impossible to please”* Him (Heb 11:6). In spite of this circumstance the church is too often noted for such service. It is not acceptable.

It is written that we are to seek

whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace” (Dan 3:17). May the Lord grant that an army of such servants may rise up in our generation, and in this place!

COME FORTH!

“ . . . come forth, and come hither.” Now the king summons the three servants of God to come out of the furnace into which he had commanded that they be cast. **He knew full well he could not go in and escort them out.** His

“Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire.” The faith of the young men had made them bold, but not brash and insolent. They did not shout back at the king in disrespect, but glorified the Lord by conducting themselves honorably.

As Joseph came out of prison, the three came out of the fire. They came out of confinement like Israel came out of Egypt. They exited from a hopeless condition like Lazarus came out of the tomb. They did not come from the edge of the fire, but from *“the midst of the fire.”*

They Remained Until Given the Word

We must not miss the fact that these three men continued walking in the furnace until the king called for them to come out. They did not presume to come out as soon as they were loosed. The reason for this is the will of the Lord. All three of them knew what they should do, for they were walking with a heavenly representative, and were unwilling to leave that glorious fellowship for freedom outside of the furnace.

CIRCUMSTANCE MAY SEEM TO JUSTIFY THE THOUGHT THAT YOU ARE ALONE, BUT YOU ARE NOT. IF YOU WILL LOOK ABOUT IN “THE FURNACE OF AFFLICTION,” YOU WILL SEE THERE IS SOMEONE THERE BESIDE YOU!

grace to *“serve God **acceptably** with reverence and godly fear”* (Heb 12:28). Such service refuses to bow the knee to the gods of this world. Those who genuinely serve God are appropriately described as overcoming the devil *“by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death”* (Rev 12:11). The Psalmist spoke of God’s servants as those remaining consistent in the night. *“Behold, bless ye the LORD, all ye servants of the LORD, which by night stand in the house of the LORD”* (Psa 134:1). In the night of trial, they serve their God. In the darkness of affliction, they serve Him. When their path is not brightened by the light of advantage, they continue to serve their God! That is the only manner in which God can be served. A holy God cannot be served by unholy hands. A consistent God cannot be served by sporadic manners. A loving God cannot be served by loveless hearts. A thoughtful God cannot be served by thoughtless deeds. A deliberate and purposeful God cannot be served by rote.

And now it becomes very apparent to Nebuchadnezzar why these three young men would not bow down to his image. They were servants of the most high God! When the king had threatened them, they had plainly declared, *“our God*

gods were not able to deliver him from the burning fiery furnace, and he knew that all too well.

The King Spoke Differently

Compare this word to the brashness of the previous conduct of this king. *“Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace”* (Dan 3:20). **This is the same man, but he has been humbled by the mighty God of heaven!** As this very king will confess later, *“the King of heaven . . . is able to abase”* (Dan 4:37).

Suffering child of God, you must believe this is the case. God WILL *“avenge His own elect,”* even though He often *“bears long with them”* (Luke 18:7). **Circumstance may seem to justify the thought that you are alone, but you are not.** If you will look about in *“the furnace of affliction,”* you will see there is someone there beside you!

THEY CAME FROM THE FIRE

David said, *“For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness”* (Psa 84:10). He was not suggesting that a day in the courts of the Lord meant he was free from trouble. That glorious day may be enjoyed **while in a furnace** like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. It may be realized **while imprisoned** with your feet in stocks, like Paul and Silas. God can send such a day when you **have a thorn** like Paul, or have been stoned and left for dead, like Paul. I will tell you that the fellowship of the *“forth man”* removed any fear of the fire, or dread of the furnace. Divine fellowship – fellowship with the Father and the Son (1 John 1:3) – is so precious you can walk in the fire while enjoying it.

The Fourth Man Did Not Come Out

You will note that the *“fourth man”* did not come out with the three servants of God. **He was not sent to testify to Nebuchadnezzar and his counselors, but to walk with the three in the fire of trial.**

There are some lofty spiritual experiences that may only be had in the

heat of trial – the burning fiery furnace.

- ▶ Enoch walked 300 years with God in the midst of a generation so wicked, it would have to be destroyed by God (Gen 5:22-24).
- ▶ Noah walked with God while dwelling with a cursed generation (
- ▶ Moses saw the glory of God after he had witnessed the rebellion of the people (Ex 32:19; 34:6).
- ▶ Elijah heard the still small voice of the Lord while running from the wrath of wicked Jezebel (1 Kgs 19:12).
- ▶ The Lord spoke comfortingly to Paul in the midst of a life-threatening storm (Acts 27:23-25).

SOME APPLICATIONS

The enemies of God’s people can be brought to acknowledge the saints superiority in this world – like Pharaoh had to acknowledge the God of Moses. However, this is not always the case. Sihon did not acknowledge Israel or their God, but was obstinate to the end (Num 21:23-24). Neither Pilate nor Herod acknowledged the Lord Jesus, but are noted for gathering together against Him (Acts 4:26). **We should not expect the Lord to always deliver as He did in the case of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.** We should, however, believe that He can.

Ultimately, the enemies of the people of God will acknowledge they were loved by the Lord – and do so to the glory of God. As it is written, *“Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee”*(Rev 3:9). This

is no doubt involved in the saints judgment of the world (1 Cor 6:2).

The heathen and the wicked can be compelled to acknowledge the Lord.

- ▶ **PHARAOH** twice confessed he had sinned against God. *“I have sinned this time: the LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked”* (Ex. 9:27). *“I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you. Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and entreat the LORD your God, that he may take away from me this death only”* (Ex

well happen in our case.

God could have subdued the fire, as He did for the children of Israel during the plague of the hail and fire (Ex 9:23-26). He could have delivered them from the fire altogether, as He did Lot from the fiery holocaust of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:16). Instead, He enabled His servants to stand in the midst of the fire, at its hottest point.

You must be able to associate this circumstance with your own trials. The Lord may choose to simply remove you from the trial instantly and completely. He may subdue your oppressor before you.

GOD COULD HAVE SUBDUED THE FIRE, AS HE DID FOR THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL DURING THE PLAGUE OF THE HAIL AND FIRE (EX 9:23-26). HE COULD HAVE DELIVERED THEM FROM THE FIRE ALTOGETHER, AS HE DID LOT FROM THE FIERY HOLOCAUST OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH (GEN 19:16). INSTEAD, HE ENABLED HIS SERVANTS TO STAND IN THE MIDST OF THE FIRE, AT ITS HOTTEST POINT.

10:16-17).

- ▶ **BALAAM**, who prophesied for wages, and was anything but a model of behavior, said, *“I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again”* (Num 22:34).
- ▶ **NAAMAN**, captain of the host of the king of Syria was brought to say, *“Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel”* (2 Ki 5:15). **However, in this world, our enemies do not consistently do so, and we should not expect that they will.** We should, however, believe this is possible, and may very

He also may allow your oppressor to appear to have the dominance over you, in order that the superiority and triumph of your faith may be more evident. He may also choose to leave you in *“the furnace of affliction”* for an extended period. If that is the case, you will not be there alone. The Lord Himself will be with you. The Holy Spirit will be your Helper and Intercessor. The Lord Jesus will be with you, and faithfully intercede for you. In addition, the holy angels will be there to minister to you. That is their appointed role, That is the truth, and you can rely on it! Fill your mind with these thoughts. Ponder them. Let them support you in hard times, and sustain you in the wilderness.

A PUBLIC TESTIMONY

“²⁷ And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king’s counselors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies

the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.”

The faithful three had been publically condemned, and openly thrown into the fiery furnace. Now they will be publically exonerated. Until this time

came, they were granted the fellowship of a messenger from heaven. **He stayed with them throughout their tenure in the furnace.** As long as they were in the furnace, that “fourth man” received the attention. Now, however, the Lord will focus the spotlight upon the three who kept the faith. The angel will recede into the background to be a minister in a less apparent way.

WITNESSED BY ALL

“And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king’s counselors, being gathered together, **saw these men . . .**” From the king’s standpoint, these men had been assembled to witness the execution of Shadrach, Meshach, and

the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God” (Isa 35:2). The latter circumstance is the reason for the former!

What is happening in our text is a small scale depiction of what Isaiah declared will happen on a large scale. “*For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory*” (Isa 66:18). In this text, God has gathered the key people of Babylon together to see His glory, His works, and His care for His people. According to appearance, Nebuchadnezzar had gathered them together to bow before

being killed by the leaping flames, they would have sighed, “It is all over now. How tragic to meet such an end!”

But it was not over. All of these events were but a prelude to Divine deliverance. They were the setting of the stage for the exaltation of God’s faithful servants.

POWERLESS FIRE

“ . . . upon whose bodies the fire had no power . . . ” Other versions read, “the fire had no effect upon the bodies of these men,”^{NASB} “the fire had not harmed their bodies,”^{NIV} “the fire had not touched them.”^{NLT} Remember, this was a fire that was “seven times hotter.”

The flames that leaped out of the furnace slew those casting the faithful three into its midst. That fire certainly had power over the bodies of the Chaldean strong men. **But it has no power upon the bodies of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.** It was not that their bodies were any different. It was their God that was different!

God had power over the fire, and demanded it not to harm the bodies of His servants – not even in the most minuscule way. Scripture speaks of an angel who “has power (or “authority”^{NRSV}) over fire”^{NIV} (Rev 14:18). Perhaps he was dispatched to this scene to protect the young men. **Whether the Lord Himself or an angel with authority over the fire, the same fire consumed some, yet could not touch others.** A fiery trial that consumed one, was powerless over others. It had no power over these men because God would not allow it to have such power. God did not make their bodies noncombustible, but took away the power of the fire – and every one saw it.

NOT A HAIR WAS SINGED

“ . . . nor was an hair of their head singed . . . ” Note – “an hair,” a single one! The word “singed” means to be **superficially or lightly** burned. Singeing occurs when something is passed rapidly over a flame. It never occurs by prolonged exposure to fire. But there was no brief exposure of these men to the flames of the furnace that was heated seven times hotter. **Not only had they fallen down bound in the middle of the furnace, they had been walking**

AS LONG AS THEY WERE IN THE FURNACE, THAT “FOURTH MAN” RECEIVED THE ATTENTION. NOW, HOWEVER, THE LORD WILL FOCUS THE SPOTLIGHT UPON THE THREE WHO KEPT THE FAITH. THE ANGEL WILL RECEDE INTO THE BACKGROUND TO BE A MINISTER IN A LESS APPARENT WAY.

Abednego – men they no doubt hated. However, that view is a secondary one, not a primary one. Actually, from the heavenly vantage point, this assembly had convened to see what the Lord had done. Nebuchadnezzar has already called attention to “the Most High God.” Now the princes, governors, captains, and counselors, together with Nebuchadnezzar, will see what great things the Lord has done.

The Ways of the Lord

It is the Lord’s way to oftentimes work in this manner. **Dire circumstances are like an arid desert, that, were it not for the grace of God, would drain all strength from the saints.** God can make the desert “rejoice, and blossom as the rose,” teeming with life before all who are there to behold it (Isa 35:1). Speaking of this conversion of desert places the Lord says, “*It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it,*

the image he had made. When the three children of Judah refused to bow, this entourage remained to see them consumed by a man-made furnace. But this was not really why they were there. **This was God, in His own inscrutable way, working things together for the good of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.** It is His manner to do this.

The Manner of Some

It is the manner of some to prematurely disengage their minds when facing oppression. They give up too quickly, and fail to wait upon the Lord. Such people would have viewed the demands of the king as a dreadful threat. Their fear and doubt would have been enhanced as they saw the three young men condemned by the king, as though his word could negate the decree of the Lord. How they would have fainted as they witnessed the men being bound by the strongest men in the king’s army. And when they were thrown into the midst of the fire, with those who threw them in

Furnaces Made By Men Cannot Destroy Faith that Comes from God. He Delivers AND Promotes, by Given O. Blakely

about in the midst of the flame for some time. Yet, not a single hair of their head was even slightly singed!

Do not forget that hair is the part of our body that burns more quickly, and is more readily subject to the flame. It represents the very first stage of fire having power over our bodies. It is possible to have your hair singed, yet remain unharmed from the fire. Further, the smallest flame can singe.

When you think of the hair of the head, do not limit yourself to the top of the head. Include the eyebrows and the beard. Then consider what a miracle is before you, that not a single one of all of those hairs was even slightly singed.

God had fulfilled in these men what He had promised through Isaiah. *“When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee”* (Isa 43:2). As I have already mentioned, this was quenching the violence of fire, as mentioned in Hebrews 11:34.

COATS UNCHANGED

“ . . . neither were their coats changed . . . ” Other versions read, *“neither were their **garments** affected,”* NKJV *“nor were their **trousers** damaged,”* NASB *“their **robes** were not scorched,”* NIV *“their **tunics** were not harmed,”* NRSV *“their **mantles** were not harmed,”* RSV *“their **clothing** was not scorched,”* NLT and *“neither were their **hosen** changed.”* DARBY

I have provided these various translations to show how vain etymologists can be, throwing words about while missing the meaning and intent of the passage. The Hebrew word translated *“coats”* in our text is a dubious one, with an unclear specific meaning. It can mean anything from a mantel, or outer garment, to a slipper. It is similar to our words *“attire”* and *“clothing.”* In our text the intent is not to highlight a specific piece of clothing, but to show the fire had no power over their garments – any of them. It certainly did not burn up their tunics, but leave their shoes, or consume their coats, but leave their trousers and turbines.

From another point of view, their bonds were gone, but their clothing remained unchanged in any way. **No part of it was missing, altered, singed, or in any way affected by the fire.** Anything directly associated with these faithful men, including their bodies, their hair, and their clothing, was completely impervious to the fire. It had not one whit of power or effect on any part of them – **except their bonds.**

NO SMELL OF FIRE

“ . . . nor the smell of fire had passed on them.” Other versions read, *“the smell of fire was not on them,”* NKJV *“nor had the smell of fire even come upon them,”* NIV *“and not even the smell of fire came from them,”* NRSV *“and no smell of fire had come upon them,”* RSV *“they didn’t even smell of smoke,”* NLT and *“and the smell of fire hath not passed on them.”* YLT

The idea is not merely that as these

SUCCESSFUL BABYLONIAN BURNINGS

The Babylonians, or Chaldeans, were not always unsuccessful in their burnings. Some years earlier, Nebuchadnezzar had sacked Jerusalem. Of that occasion it is written, *“And he burnt the house of the LORD, and the king’s house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man’s house burnt he with fire”* (2 Ki 25:9). At that point, he appeared to be quite successful in the use of fire. However, in our text, he could not in any way burn the servants of God: not their bodies, not their hair, and not their clothing. He could not even get the smell of fire upon them. It was because of their God!

THE PROGRESSIVE EMPHASIS

Notice how the Spirit describes the deliverance of God’s servants. In a progressive manner He brings glory to God, beginning with the general and

ANYTHING DIRECTLY ASSOCIATED WITH THESE FAITHFUL MEN, INCLUDING THEIR BODIES, THEIR HAIR, AND THEIR CLOTHING, WAS COMPLETELY IMPERVIOUS TO THE FIRE. IT HAD NOT ONE WHIT OF POWER OR EFFECT ON ANY PART OF THEM – EXCEPT THEIR BONDS.

young men stood before the king’s nobles, there was no smell of fire upon them. **Rather, the point is that it was never upon them – either in or out of the furnace!** Fire does have an undeniable odor, and wherever it had been, that odor is left behind. When you cook meat over an open fire, the smell of the fire will linger with the meat for a remarkable amount of time. **But such an aroma never one time came upon these men – not on their bodies, their hair, or their clothing.** Not only could the fire not consume them, it could not singe them, or leave a smell upon them – not even a trace! The fire to which Nebuchadnezzar had consigned these men for destruction could not leave the slightest evidence of its presence upon them. They were completely free from any fiery influence.

advancing to the particular.

- Fire had no power over their bodies.
- Not a hair was singed.
- Their clothing was unaffected.
- The smell of fire was not upon them.

Here is another thing to consider. **There was absolutely no evidence that they had ever been in the fire!** Unless you had seen these men in the fire, there was nothing whatsoever but testimony that could confirm they had been in a fiery furnace – heated seven times hotter than it ever was before.

SOME APPLICATIONS

- Trials can be severe.** It is possible for the people of God to develop an erroneous view of victory and

triumph. Satan would have us believe that victory means there are no battles, no tests, no pushing us to the limit. But this is no so. Some of God's people have "fiery trials" (1 Pet 4:12). Others endure a "great fight of afflictions" (Heb 10:32). It is possible to be "pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life" (2 Cor 1:8). There are very real experiences for the faithful described as "troubled on every side," "perplexed," and "cast down" (2 Cor 4:9). Even our Lord Jesus "suffered being tempted" (Heb 2:18), and His soul was "exceeding sorrowful" (Matt 26:38). Do not be dismayed, dear child of God, when you are asked to pass through deep waters. You have the promise of God, "they shall not overflow thee" (Isa 43:2).

you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor 10:13). Your ability is not limited to your own personal strength. It is sometimes enhanced by the presence of an angel, as with the three in our text. It is ever true, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (2 Pet 2:9). You must not waste your time pondering when and how your trial will end. That is in the hands of the Lord. Draw close to Him, and he will be the more inclined to deliver you. He does know how!

☐ **God will vindicate our faith.** Jesus said, "And shall not God

☐ **When the trial is over, there will be nothing according to appearance that will confirm it ever existed.** As a child of God, you have already passed through very difficult times. Yet, unless you tell the rest of us of those trials, or we have personally observed them, we have no way of knowing you have gone through them. The evidence of the trial is not clinging to you like the smell of fire did not settle on the three men of our text. If you are presently enduring a great test of your faith, you must believe the same will be true after it is over.

☐ **There is more than one kind of furnace.** There surely is more than one kind of furnace. There is a furnace that consumes, like that displayed in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:26). As long as you have faith, believing God, you will never pass through that kind of furnace. There is the "iron furnace" that enslaves for a long period of time, like Israel was enslaved in Egypt (Deut 4:20). The people of God can survive a furnace like that – even one that burns for 430 years. That, of course, is much longer than any trial a single child of God will be asked to bear. There is the furnace of refinement, when the soul is being further developed and refined by the Lord (Prov 17:3). It is also called "the furnace of affliction," and God chooses people in that furnace (Isa 48:10). There is where you lose your dross – the things that cannot transport into glory. **In whatever furnace faith puts you, it will keep you.** Believe that!

☐ **There is a Divine fellowship that can only be realized in times of great difficulty.** There is a closeness to God and a degree of Divine fellowship that can only be experienced in trouble. There is praise that can only be sung in the prison (Acts 16:25). There is a determination that can only be made while you are experiencing the piercing effects of a thorn in the flesh (2 Cor 12:5-10). There is a suffering that is appropriately called "the sufferings of Christ," and they can

DO NOT BE CONFUSED WHEN THOSE WHO DESPISE YOU APPEAR TO HAVE GREATER STRENGTH THAN YOU. THAT IS ONLY THE WAY IT APPEARS, IT IS NOT THE WAY IT REALLY IS. IT IS SAID OF THE DEVIL, YOUR ULTIMATE AND MOST FORMIDABLE ENEMY, "GREATER IS HE THAT IS IN YOU THAN HE THAT IS IN THE WORLD" (1 JOHN 4:4). IF THAT IS TRUE OF THE MOST CHALLENGING ENEMY, IT IS EVEN MORE TRUE OF THOSE MEAGER FOES WHO ARE YOUR PEERS.

☐ **For a season, our enemies may appear to be stronger and wiser than we are.** Do not be confused when those who despise you appear to have greater strength than you. That is only the way it appears, it is not the way it really is. It is said of the devil, your ultimate and most formidable enemy, "greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4). If that is true of the most challenging enemy, it is even more true of those meager foes who are your peers.

☐ **God will not allow our trials to be greater than our faith.** This is the promise of God, and there is not the slightest chance that it is not true. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, **who will not suffer**

avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth" (Luke 18:7-8). There are trials that find the children of God crying out to Him night and day, with no apparent relief in sight. But that is only what seems to be. The truth is that God is bearing long with us, giving us spiritual strength, so to speak, a spoonful at the time. But He will come through, avenging His people, and taking up their cause. He will do it "speedily," or quickly. The only question is whether the Son of Man will find faith on the earth when He comes – people who are convinced of that truth, and are waiting patiently for it.

“*abound in us*” (2 Cor 1:5a). **The appointed effects of these sufferings are seen a corresponding consolation that is also caused to abound in us by the power of God:** “*so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ*” (2 Cor 1:5b). The experience of these

is referred to as suffering with Christ (Rom 8:17). They qualify us to be “*heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ*” (Rom 8:17).

However you may view your suffering, trouble, testing, or opposition, there is a “*fourth man*” in it with you.

You are not alone, and you are free to walk about in heavenly fellowship! **You must not allow yourself to gaze at the flames about you, or the dingy furnace in which you seem to be walking.** Rather, pay attention to the means God has given to you – means that enable you to survive, even the furnace!

BLESSED BE THE GOD

“^{28a} ***Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent His angel, and delivered His servants that trusted in Him . . .***” With the young men standing before him the king now speaks. Keep in mind, he is not speaking out of a sense godly of conviction, nor out of faith. Rather, he is acknowledging something he cannot deny. **He will bless God, but he will not consent to serve him.** Even so, his words exceed those of some who confess the name of Christ, and have access to greater spiritual insight than Nebuchadnezzar ever dreamed possible. He speaks these words before the dignitaries of his kingdom, not because of any faith he had in God, but because of convicting fear, which is a virtue found in the outer court of man’s approach to God. What he says is good. Even though it did not capture his heart, we must allow it to capture ours, **for we have a greater capacity to appreciate what he said than he did.**

THE GOD OF SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABEDNEGO

“*Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego . . .*” Another version reads, “*Praise be to the God of.*”^{NIV} This is valid blessing, but not of the quality of those who are committed to God. Compare this with the blessing of the sweet Psalmist of Israel: “*A Psalm of David. Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so*

that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s” (Psa 103:1-5). **There is no commitment in the king’s words, and no note of thanksgiving.** This is the acknowledgment of a man whose counsels have been overturned. He admits this is the God of the three he condemned, but makes no claim that it is his God.

There are precious few people with which God has allowed Himself to be so

- ▣ “*The God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego*” (Dan 3:28-29).
- ▣ “*The God of Daniel*” (Dan 6:26).

The Meaning of the Expression

There is a twofold meaning to the expression “*The God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.*” Nebuchadnezzar perceived something of both meanings, but not in their entirety, or anything near their totality.

HE SPEAKS THESE WORDS BEFORE THE DIGNITARIES OF HIS KINGDOM, NOT BECAUSE OF ANY FAITH HE HAD IN GOD, BUT BECAUSE OF CONVICTING FEAR, WHICH IS A VIRTUE FOUND IN THE OUTER COURT OF MAN’S APPROACH TO GOD. WHAT HE SAYS IS GOOD. EVEN THOUGH IT DID NOT CAPTURE HIS HEART, WE MUST ALLOW IT TO CAPTURE OURS, FOR WE HAVE A GREATER CAPACITY TO APPRECIATE WHAT HE SAID THAN HE DID.

identified: i.e., “*the God of. . .*” Here are some of them.

- ▣ “*The God of Abraham*” (Gen 26:24).
- ▣ “*The God of Isaac*” (Gen 28:13).
- ▣ “*The God of Nahor*” (Gen 31:53).
- ▣ “*The God of Jacob*” (Psa 20:1).
- ▣ “*The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*” (Ex 3:15).
- ▣ “*The God of the Hebrews*” (Ex 5:3).
- ▣ “*The God of Israel*” (Ex 24:10).
- ▣ “*The God of Jeshurun*” (a symbol name for Israel Deut 33:26).
- ▣ “*The God of David*” (2 Kings 20:5).
- ▣ “*The God of Hezekiah*” (2 Chron 32:17).

First, He was their God because they honored and served Him – even to the point of death. Not even a demand from the most powerful king upon the earth could move them to serve anyone else. He was their God by their choice.

Second, it was evident He was their God because He came to their aid, and delivered them from the king’s curse. Nothing could stop the Lord from effectively protecting them, even if it was a burning fiery furnace, heated sever times hotter than it ever was before. He was their God by His own Sovereign choice.

HE SENT HIS ANGEL

Before, Nebuchadnezzar said he saw a fourth man who was like a son of the gods. Now, he declares that personage was nothing less than an angel sent from the God of heaven. At first, the king had not associated that angel with a messenger from the God of gods – as one who was a sort of god himself – at least in the mind of the king. Now, however, he becomes more aware of the “*Lord of kings*”(2:47), than of the angels He sends.

Nebuchadnezzar was not familiar

their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old” (Isa 63:9).

▣ **REMOVING THE WICKED.** “*The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man*

presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth” (Luke 15:10).

▣ **WHEN THE GODLY DIE.** “*And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried”* (Luke 16:22).

▣ **HEALING THE SICK.** “*In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had”* (John 5:4).

▣ **DELIVERING THE APOSTLES.** “*And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison. But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said”* (Acts 5:19).

▣ **ASSISTING SEEKERS.** “*He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God”* (Acts 10:3-4).

▣ **PRESENT IN ASSEMBLIES.** “*For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels”* (1 Cor 11:10).

▣ **INTERESTED IN THE GOSPEL.** “*Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into”* (1 Pet 1:12).

It is true, Nebuchadnezzar did not have the knowledge of these things. **However, the point of our text is NOT what the king said, but what the Lords did!** The king’s words are incidental. He was to three Hebrew children what Balaam’s ass was to him

HIS WORDS WERE NOT FRAMED BY ONE WHO HAD EXPERTISE IN SPIRITUAL MATTERS. THESE WORDS WERE PUT INTO HIS MOUTH BY THE LORD OF GLORY, IN ORDER THAT WE MIGHT BE TAUGHT BY THEM.

with the vast amount of teaching on angels that has been given to us. **His words were not framed by one who had expertise in spiritual matters.** These words were put into his mouth by the Lord of glory, in order that we might be taught by them. From an earthly point of view, the king knew the “*God of heaven,*” whom Daniel had previously declared to him (2:37,44) had a heavenly court that did His bidding and served His interests. Thus he reasoned it was “*HIS angel,*” and not a powerful spiritual being acting on his own. But all of that was merely on the surface so far as Nebuchadnezzar was concerned. **The significance of his words is not found in the fact that he said them, but that the Holy Spirit moved Daniel to record them in Scripture.** In them, God was confirming to His people the many statements He has given us about His angels.

The Lord has confirmed the angels have been appointed to minister who those who are the heirs of salvation. **For this reason, they have a keen interest in the affairs of men, particularly in regards to the children of God.**

▣ **ISRAEL’S DELIVERANCE.** “*In all*

shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity” (Mat 13:41)

▣ **GATHERING THE RIGHTEOUS.** “*And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other”* (Mat 24:31).

▣ **ASSISTING JESUS.** “*And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto Him”* (Mark 1:13).

▣ **AT JESUS’ BIRTH.** “*And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us”* (Luke 2:13-15).

▣ **WHEN MEN REPENT.** “*Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the*

(Num 22:27-33). God used him to deliver a comforting and joyous message to the faithful, both in Daniel's day, and in ours.

AND DELIVERED HIS SERVANTS

"... and delivered His servants..."

This angel had no interest in the Babylonians, for he was not a minister to them. Consequently he did nothing about the mighty men who threw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the fiery furnace. They died without any Divine intervention. **Angels have no interest in men and women in general, but in those to whom they are sent by God!**

Thus the angel of the Lord delivered God's servants, who had chosen to reject the appeal of a heathen god to simply bow before a golden image. **In this case, they were servants of God because of what they did NOT do.**

Mark it well, **God is served by what the godly do NOT do**, as well as what they do. When men refuse to bow to the gods of this world, they are serving the Lord in that refusal. **By the same token, those who DO yield to the pressures of this world, by that very posture, cease to serve God.**

There are two sides to serving the Lord – doing the good, and refusing the evil. Thus it is written, *"Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: He preserveth the souls of his saints; He delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked"* (Psa 97:10). This very exhortation was no doubt known to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and they faithfully lived it out.

The grace of God enables us to be faithful servants of God, thus qualifying us for deliverance. It teaches us in both of these areas: doing good and rejecting evil. It is written, *"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ"* (Titus 2:13).

Not only had the three young men been faithful servants of God prior to this deliverance, they had been freed in order to continue in His service. We ought to

have a high regard for this, for we also have been liberated to serve the Lord. *"As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God"* (1 Pet 2:16).

From another point of view, the servants of God are those who "obey" Him. As it is written, *"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you"* (Rom 6:17). **The angels of God are still devoted to those who obey the Lord.** They minister to those who *"shall be heirs of salvation"* (Heb 1:14), and that *"great salvation"* is given by Jesus *"to all who obey Him"*^{NKJV} (Heb 5:9).

Nebuchadnezzar to speak as one who has been duly impressed by the power of God. But it is never right for a child of God to speak as one who has been unduly impressed by the world. I realize this has a strange sound to it for many, but it is essential that the people of God learn to associate what they do with obeying, honoring, and pleasing the Lord who purchased them.

THAT TRUSTED IN HIM

"... that trusted in Him." Other versions read, *"who put their trust in Him,"*^{NASB} *"who trusted on Him,"*^{VLT} and *"who had faith in Him."*^{BBE} Here is another aspect of being the servants of God – **trusting Him!** Trusting involves dependence upon the God – relying upon Him. Trust takes place when the individual puts the weight of his soul upon the Lord, leaning upon Him. **It signifies confidence in the Lord, and**

MARK IT WELL, GOD IS SERVED BY WHAT THE GODLY DO NOT DO, AS WELL AS WHAT THEY DO. WHEN MEN REFUSE TO BOW TO THE GODS OF THIS WORLD, THEY ARE SERVING THE LORD IN THAT REFUSAL. BY THE SAME TOKEN, THOSE WHO DO YIELD TO THE PRESSURES OF THIS WORLD, BY THAT VERY POSTURE, CEASE TO SERVE GOD.

Why These Things Are Said

I say these things because of the times in which we are living. **Serving God is rarely associated with obeying Him.** Generally people associate serving God with some aspect of religious institutional service, often called "a ministry." Thus, all manner of carnally minded people are engaged in what they call service to God. Yet, their service has the taint of the world upon it, and they do not relate it to pleasing and obeying the Lord. In this day and age, God is served by young men and women who refuse to bow to the pressures of the world – to people who will not bring the world's manners into the house of God. Rather, they will refuse to bow to the "images" the world has set up. **It is proper for**

dependence upon Him.

These young men went into that fire depending upon what the Lord would do, and ready to accept it, whatever it was. Of course, such dependence is not possible where God is not known. However, early in His dealings with the Israelites, God revealed what He was like. He said of Himself, *"And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin..."* (Ex 34:6-7).

David, whose writings were no doubt known well to these servants, had

said, "The LORD is my Rock, and my Fortress, and my Deliverer; my God, my Strength, **in whom I will trust**; my Buckler, and the Horn of my salvation, and my High Tower. I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: **so shall I be saved from mine enemies**" (Psa 18:2-3). It is one thing to know the Bible says such things **it is quite another to depend upon them – to TRUST the Lord to be and do what He has said He is and does.**

We ought to note that

distrusting, or failing to trust the Lord, is the mother of all disobedience, slothfulness, unfaithfulness, and the failure to grow in grace and truth. **All backsliding, lukewarmness, moral failure, and apostasy are the direct result of NOT trusting the Lord.**

What About You?

And what about you, dear believer? Are you trusting the Lord? Are you depending on Him to come through as He has promised? Remember, it is written, "For this is contained in Scripture:

"**BEHOLD I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER stone, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM SHALL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED**" (1 Pet 2:6). **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were not disappointed, and you will not be either. In your circumstances, regardless of the grief they have caused you, or how hopeless they may appear, put your trust in the Lord. Depend upon His merciful disposition!** That disposition is very real, and He is inclined to express it. He is full of mercy, and delights to give it!

CHANGING, YIELDING, AND SERVING

"^{28b} . . . and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God." These words are coming from Nebuchadnezzar, but they do not have their origin with him. This assessment is too thorough to have been produced by an

"violating the king's command,"^{NASB}
"defied the king's command,"^{NIV}
"disobeyed the king's command,"^{NRSV}
"set at nought the king's command,"^{RSV}
"and the word of the king changed,"^{YLT}

The meaning of these poignant words is that these men, by their trust in

it from them, refusing to honor it or give any heed to it. They did not spend time thinking upon it, but rather trusted in their God. **The king, with all of his political and military power, could not make these men disobey God!**

How pertinent this account is to us. To this very day, there are people who cannot push vanity from themselves. Like Ananias and Sapphira, they entertain vain thoughts to their own destruction (Acts 5:1-10). There are young men and women who have departed from the Lord because of the suggestions of their peers. It was not the word of a mighty king that caused them to do what was wrong, but a paltry suggestion from a miserably weak and unprincipled person. Such conduct is by no means confined to the young. There are older people who have ceased to trust the Lord as they once did, simply because it would put them at variance with their church friends. There are preachers who do not declare the truth because someone has told them it is not fashionable, and they ought to appeal more to the desires of the people.

But it was not so with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! The purpose of the king's word was changed, yea utterly frustrated, by their decision to serve the Lord. **He could not do what he wanted to, and they would not do what was unlawful.**

In view of the fact that we will see these men in the day of judgment, it is to

THE MEANING OF THESE POIGNANT WORDS IS THAT THESE MEN, BY THEIR TRUST IN GOD, REDUCED THE WORD OF A POWERFUL KING TO MERE BABBLE. THEY TOOK THE POWER OUT OF HIS WORD – A POWER THAT HAD CAUSED EVERYONE ELSE TO TREMBLE AND BOW OBEDIENTLY BEFORE THE IMAGE HE HAD SET UP.

idol worshiping and heathen king. There is a profundity in them that could only have come from the Lord Himself. They are an expert analysis of what the Lord has done, "and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor 10:11).

THE KINGS WORD CHANGED

" . . . and have changed the king's word." This is a deed attributed to the three condemned men – something they did. Other versions read, "they have frustrated the king's word,"^{NKJV}

God, reduced the word of a powerful king to mere babble. They took the power out of his word – a power that had caused everyone else to tremble and bow obediently before the image he had set up.

From another point of view, their trust in the Lord moved them to have no regard whatsoever for this word from the king. It was a word that conflicted with the Word of God, and thus they gave no heed to it. They despised it, counting it as mere rubbish to be thrown in the moral scrapheap. They took his word, and thrust

our advantage to live in such a manner as will find no conflict between our conduct and theirs.

YIELDED BODIES

“... and yielded their bodies...”

Other versions read, “were willing to give up their lives,”^{NIV} “were willing to die,”^{NLT} “delivered their bodies to be hurt,”^{Septuagint} and “gave up their bodies.”^{YLT}

There is great significance to these words. The ONLY reason to be afraid of the king’s command and the fiery furnace was a consideration of their bodies. **The furnace had no power over their souls – only their bodies.** Centuries later, Jesus would say, “And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do” (Luke 12:4). In a sense, these men gave their bodies to the fire, but their souls to the Lord. Peter put it this way, “Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the **keeping of their souls** to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator” (1 Pet 4:19). **In fact, all Nebuchadnezzar could even threaten was their bodies. He had no authority over their souls or their spirits.**

Application

The language of this verse reminds me of certain Apostolic teachings. “Neither **yield** ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but **yield** yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Rom 6:13). And again, “even so now **yield** your members servants to righteousness unto holiness” (Rom 6:19). **Is this not a wonderful picture of presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice to God** (Rom 12:1-2)? You have even more reason to do this than the men of our text, for “your bodies are the members of Christ” (1 Cor 6:15).

SERVING NO OTHER GOD

“... that they might not serve nor worship any god.” These men made a choice – a deliberate and willing choice. Nebuchadnezzar had given them two alternatives. Bow down and worship the image, or be thrown into a burning fiery furnace. They looked at the choices, and did not linger long upon them. Nebuchadnezzar said, “They disobeyed

the king’s command and yielded up their bodies **rather than serve and worship any [other] god.**”^{NRSV}

To them, it was not a matter of honoring a king, but worshiping a false god!

Application

What are you willing NOT to do to avoid serving other gods? What will it take for you to yield to the gods of this world? Or, like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, **have you made up your mind to serve the Lord, regardless of the consequences?** That is certainly

11:16). God was certainly not ashamed to be called the God of these young men, for they had trusted in Him, and would not bow to another god.

“My God”

Nebuchadnezzar had spoken of “MY gods” (Dan 3:14). Now, by way of comparison, he acknowledged the three before him have a different God who is more powerful than his.

The words “my God” are mentioned 138 times in Scripture. It is always in the nature of a confession. When Israel was delivered at the Red Sea,

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING NOT TO DO TO AVOID SERVING OTHER GODS? WHAT WILL IT TAKE FOR YOU TO YIELD TO THE GODS OF THIS WORLD? OR, LIKE SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABEDNEGO, HAVE YOU MADE UP YOUR MIND TO SERVE THE LORD, REGARDLESS OF THE CONSEQUENCES?

something to think about!

THEIR OWN GOD

“... except their own God.” Nearly every version reads exactly the same. The only exception I found in regular translations was in the Basic Bible English,^{BBE} which still carries the same meaning: “of any other god but their God.”

There is a sense in which God is “the God of all flesh” (Jer 32:27), whether they acknowledge it or not. He is, in truth, “the God of the spirits of all flesh” (Num 16:22; 27:16). **That is not a matter of human choice.**

However, that is not the sense of these words. **Human choice is reflected in these words, as well as Divine preference. They parallel the words that distinguish the New Covenant:** “... and I will be their God, and they shall be My people” (2 Cor 6:16). In fact, it is said of those who live by faith and seek a heavenly country, “God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city” (Heb

they sang, “He is my God” (Ex 15:2). Moses referred to the Lord as “my God” (Deut 26:14), as well as Joshua (Josh 9:23), Ruth (Ruth 1:16), David (2 Sam 22:7), Solomon (1 Kgs 3:7), Elijah (1 Kgs 17:20), Micaiah (1 Chron 18:13), Ezra (Ezra 7:28), Nehemiah (Neh 2:8), Isaiah (Isa 25:1), Daniel (Dan 9:4), Jonah (Jon 2:6), Micah (7:7), Habakkuk, Zechariah (Zech 11:4), the Lord Jesus (Matt 27:46), and Paul (Rom 1:8).

In all of these cases, the attitude and conduct of the people made God “their God.” They served and worshiped Him, and refused to yield themselves to the devil, his hosts, or his ideas. This was done with great consistency.

Previously to our text, the three men who were cast into the fiery furnace confessed “**OUR God, whom we SERVE is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace**” (3:17). Now He had done precisely that, and the king admitted the “God of gods and Lord of kings” was, in fact, “their God.” In doing this, he was also admitting God was not his God.

OBSERVATIONS

Nebuchadnezzar knew of God's greatness because of what he saw. We know of it primarily because of what we have heard, and secondarily because of what we have seen. **The truth is that**

God is able to say more about Himself than He is about to presently show us. That is precisely why He has exalted His Word above all of His name. As it is written, *"For You have magnified Your word above all Your*

name" (Psa 138:2).

A high regard for, and ingestion of, the Word of God will yield benefits that are otherwise unobtainable.

A NEW DECREE IS MADE

"²⁹ Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort."

Thus far, we have read of two of

A NEW DECREE

"Therefore I make a decree . . ." A decree is a commandment or judgment to which all are to give heed. It is interesting that after being frustrated in his most recent decree, he resorts to yet another one. It will also be interesting to see just what he decrees. It will further confirm the spiritual impotence of the flesh.

SPEAKING ANYTHING AMISS

God, or desire to worship Him. **This is the outburst of religious flesh that will soon pass away, being driven by impetuosity and not faith.** It is like a knee-jerk reaction, not one that is thought out, or results from pondering the work of the Lord. **It ought to be noted that there is an approach to religion that seeks to obtain such responses – instant and without depth.** A lot of the "bow-your-head-and-raise-your-hand" invitations fall into this category. They are more fleshly than spiritual, and rely little upon the Word and power of the Lord. Too often, they are mere emotional appeals, made on the spur of the moment with no intention to glorify God in them.

The Forbidden Accented

Note, the king made no personal determination to worship the true God, or to serve Him. **He did not take down his image, or purpose to destroy it.** Flesh will not and cannot bow to God or serve Him. When faced with certain incontestable facts, it can bring itself to admit they are true. Yet, it will not yield to that truth.

When Manasseh, an exceedingly wicked king, *"knew that the Lord He was God,"* he straightway *"took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the LORD, and in Jerusalem, and cast them out of the city"* (2 Chr 33:15). But **Nebuchadnezzar did no such thing.** He *"made a decree."* His decree was not to worship God, but simply not to say anything against Him. No real conviction was found in him, and no desire to serve the Lord and amend his ways. That is the way flesh is. **It will concede to refrain from this or that, but will not present itself to God.** It simply cannot do that.

THIS IS THE OUTBURST OF RELIGIOUS FLESH THAT WILL SOON PASS AWAY, BEING DRIVEN BY IMPETUOSITY AND NOT FAITH. IT IS LIKE A KNEE-JERK REACTION, NOT ONE THAT IS THOUGHT OUT, OR RESULTS FROM PONDERING THE WORK OF THE LORD.

Nebuchadnezzar's decrees. (1) *" . . . if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill . . . And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain"* (Dan 2:5,13). (2) *" . . . a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image: and whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace"* (Dan 3:10-11). Now he will make a third one. **All three focused on the penalty of failing to meet his demands.** The punishment for violating this decree is precisely the same as his first one: *"shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill."* There is little originality with this king.

" . . . That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego . . ." Other versions read, *"that speaks anything offensive,"* ^{NASB} *"who say anything against,"* ^{NIV} and *"that utters blasphemy against."* ^{NRSV}

To *"speak against"* primarily means to misrepresent, or say wrong things about God. This would be something that would lead men to incorrect conclusions about the God of gods – the *"God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego."*

A Religious Outburst

There is no doubt that Nebuchadnezzar is moved by fear to make this declaration. He had no preference for

When the lame man at the gate called Beautiful was healed, the enemies of Jesus vigorously opposed what was done and who did it. Yet they were quite willing to confess, *“that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it”* (Acts 4:16). Yet, rather than submitting themselves to Jesus, they threatened those who declared Him to *“speak henceforth to no man in this Name,”* commanding them *“not to speak at all or teach in the name of Jesus”* (Acts 4:16-17). Those who heard Stephen preach so powerfully *“were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake”* (Acts 6:10). But they did not turn from their traditions to worship Jesus, but rather chose to stone His messenger.

The people of God must learn to spot religious flesh. There are some aspects of fear in it, but never enough to fully yield to the Lord. It insists upon staying close to the earth, and consequently at a distance from the Lord. **Beware of a religion that decrees what you are not to do, but never gets around to insisting that God be honored and served.**

THE PENALTY

“ . . . shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill . . . ” This is precisely the same penalty held before the Chaldean wise men when Nebuchadnezzar demanded they tell him his dream and its interpretation – word for word (2:5). **I do not doubt that such a decree in our country would result in mass and unfathomable bloodshed.** There are a lot of people, even religious people, who speak derogatorily about God, as though He was one of their peers.

- ☐ “I am angry with God.”
- ☐ “Where was God when I needed Him?”
- ☐ “Where was God when _____ was abused, and people killed?”
- ☐ “If God is all powerful, why doesn’t He stop all the wars and trouble?”
- ☐ “God really does not know everything.”
- ☐ “God will love you no matter what you do.”
- ☐ “God loves the sinners but hates the sin.”

- ☐ “God did not love Judas any less than He loved Paul.”
- ☐ “I cannot believe God would demand the shedding of blood to get rid of sin.”
- ☐ “God will only take rewards away from those who return to sin. He will never take their names out of the book of life.”
- ☐ “God is cruel.”

These are only representative of statements I have personally heard from professing Christians. Perhaps you have heard similar ones. I suppose the threat of death might stop such things from occurring – at least for a while.

Such a decree might be effective in stopping wayward souls from blaspheming God, but it will never cause one to worship God *“in Spirit and in truth”* (John 4:23-24). Neither will it constrain a person to *“yield their bodies to fire,”*

It is the peculiar prerogative of faith to move people to embrace the good as well as reject the evil. **Wherever genuine faith is found, the issue of speaking against God is instantly resolved, as well as the matter of worshiping and serving Him.**

THERE IS NO OTHER GOD THAT CAN . . .

“ . . . because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.” Take careful note that **Nebuchadnezzar does NOT say there is no other God, but only that there is no other God who can deliver like the God of the Hebrew men.**

While it may appear to be a very technical matter, God is not duly honored because He can deliver us. **That is surely true, but more is expected of men than seeking deliverance from the Lord! It is God Himself that is to be**

GOD IS NOT DULY HONORED BECAUSE HE CAN DELIVER US. THAT IS SURELY TRUE, BUT MORE IS EXPECTED OF MEN THAN SEEKING DELIVERANCE FROM THE LORD! IT IS GOD HIMSELF THAT IS TO BE SOUGHT, NOT WHAT HE CAN DO.

choosing to serve the Lord alone.

Here is how Jesus addressed the matter of speaking against God. You may compare it with the decree of Nebuchadnezzar. *“Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come”*(Mat 12:32). As you can see, **Jesus placed the emphasis upon turning to the Lord and honoring Himself. He also held eternal judgment for speaking against the Holy Spirit.**

sought, not what He can do. That is His appointment for people, and they do well to give heed to it. *“From one man He made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us. For in Him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are His offspring”*^{NIV} (Acts 17:26-28).

Nebuchadnezzar was absolutely correct in what he said, but he did not say enough. God has accented His Person. It is in light of who He is that what He does takes on significance. Without duly considering

WHO God is, our own dilemmas obtain too much importance in our eyes, and we miss the blessing. He wants us to find HIM more fully.

- ▶ God is light (1 John 1:5).
- ▶ God is love (1 John 4:8)
- ▶ God is a consuming fire (Heb 12:29).
- ▶ God is a our refuge and strength, a very present help in the time of trouble (Psa 46:1).
- ▶ God is the King of the earth (Psa 47:7).
- ▶ God is judge Himself (Psa 50:6).
- ▶ God is my defense (Psa 59:9).
- ▶ God is a refuge for us (Psa 62:8).
- ▶ God is the God of salvation (Psa 68:20).
- ▶ The Lord God is a sun and a shield (Psa 84:11).
- ▶ God is holy (Psa 99:9).

- ▶ God is merciful (Psa 116:5).
- ▶ God is faithful (1 Cor 1:9).
- ▶ God is wiser than men (1 Cor 1:23).
- ▶ God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor 14:33).
- ▶ God is true (2 Cor 1:18).

When we stand in *“the light of the knowledge of the glory of God”* (2 Cor 4:6), everything else becomes more plain, and is seen more clearly. That is precisely what is meant by the expression, *“For with Thee is the fountain of life: in Thy light shall we see light”* (Psa 36:9).

The recognition of these things goes far beyond delivering men from a fiery furnace, yet does not diminish that deliverance one whit. **Those who know God Himself are not surprised at the rescue of Shadrach, Meshach, and**

Abednego. However, those who are forced not to say anything false or against God would be as surprised at such a deliverance as Nebuchadnezzar was.

The king would have been more wise to issue a decree to seek the Lord, citing the deliverance of these three men as an excellent reason to do so. However, flesh does not think in this way – yea, **cannot** think in this manner. It has no capacity to do so.

God did work through this decree to reduce opposition to the Jews. He can do something like that through the heathen. **But when it comes to the building up, or edification, of His people, that will come from Daniel, not Nebuchadnezzar! Spiritual work demands spiritual workers**

PROMOTION FROM THE LORD

“³⁰ Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon.” Even though these young men were already *“over the affairs of Babylon,”* the king now advances them even further. His mind has been changed toward them, as he has been humiliated by their preservation.

THEN THE KING PROMOTED

It seems to me that the promotion of these men was **God’s way of getting the testimony of their deliverance among the Chaldeans.** Perhaps the people had heard of their refusal to obey the king. Now they would hear of God’s deliverance of them. Maybe it would even be written in the Babylonian chronicles of their kings. I say this *“For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another”* (Psa 75:6-7).

Furthermore, God does nothing *“without cause”* (Ezek 14:23). A Divine PURPOSE is not served by causeless actions.

We may therefore conclude that higher purposes were being served than the temporary exaltation of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Remember, this book is about the working of the Lord, not the activities of men, whether they be Chaldeans or Jews.

THE LAST WE HEAR OF THEM

Concluding with this word, the words “Shadrach,” “Meshach,” and “Abednego” are never again mentioned in Scripture, nor are their Hebrew names Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (Dan 1:6). We do not know when or where they died. Even as David served *“his own generation”* well (Acts 13:36), so did they.

We will now await the time when we will see them in the glory, and express our appreciation for the glowing testimony they left behind. Truly, *“their works do follow them”* (Rev 14:13). Now, our attention will be turned to the productive ministry of Daniel.

APPLICATION

When we put our trust in the Lord, and serve only Him, whatever the cost, the most profitable future will be ministered to us. Part of trusting the Lord is knowing He will chart the most excellent course for us. If, however, we choose to direct our own path, we will fall upon difficulties that will be our demise. God will not allow people to permanently prosper who do not live for Him. **But for those who choose yield themselves to Him, the benefits they receive can transport into glory.** Their works can “follow them.”

CONCLUSION

We have dealt with another of the better known passages of Scripture. That circumstance, however, can work against us. **I have found that well known Scriptures are, for the most part,**

viewed in a shallow and unproductive manner. Grace can deliver us from such a dilemma, however, showing us precious gems of truth that lie beneath the surface of the truth. The

spirit of man cannot be sustained by popular texts and favorite verses – as popular as that may appear.

New manna needs to be gathered

by the saints, and the horizon of spiritual awareness expanded. **Growth, in other words, is imperative.** The lack of depth belongs to Nebuchadnezzar. The depth of truth belongs to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. The knowledge that Nebuchadnezzar had could never have delivered him from the burning fiery furnace. It took the faith of the faithful three to work such a deliverance.

Heavenly messengers do not come down to fellowship with the lukewarm, indifferent, and immature. **There must be a closeness with the Lord before you can accompany Him to the Mount of transfiguration or the**

Garden of Gethsemane! I do not believe this is generally recognized among the professing church.

We must learn the manner of the Kingdom from accounts like this. It is ever true, *“They also who dwell in the farthest parts are afraid of Your signs; You make the outgoings of the morning and evening rejoice”* (Psa 65:8). That is, **being at a distance from the Lord makes it more difficult to see what He is doing and hear what He is saying.** Consequently, when He finally gets the attention of such people, it is a frightening experience. Walk in the light, and you will be sustained, have fellowship with the saints, and experience

cleansing from all sin (1 John 1:7).

ONE LAST WORD

If you are presently enduring a *“great fight of afflictions”* (Heb 10:32), do not despair. You are living under a *“better covenant”* that is established upon *“better promises”* (Heb 8:6). **If the Lord was faithful to deliver his children under an inferior covenant, He surely will not abandon you under a superior one.** If not already there, help is on the way! He has seen and heard you, and will avenge you “speedily.” There is a “fourth man” for you, just as surely as there was for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Hold on, and keep the faith!

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 6/28/2002. We will continue in our overview of Daniel, covering verses 1-9 of the fourth chapter. The lesson is titled, **“NEBUCHADNEZZAR TESTIFIES AND HAS A DREAM.”** In lofty words, Nebuchadnezzar extols the God of heaven. He then declares he has had another dream, the interpretation of which he eagerly seeks. However, he does not seek understanding from the God of heaven, nor from His servant Daniel. Rather, he first seeks the answer from the wise men of Babylon. As in his previous dream, Daniel is his last resort. The nature of the flesh is once again confirmed. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

*The Blakely Family: Given, June, Benjamin, Jonathan, and Eva
406 South Bergeant Street, Joplin, MO 64801*

A place where believers can meet, fellowship, be edified, and express themselves.

Telephone: (417) 782-3063, Email: Given (GivenB@aol.com) June: (JuneE01@aol.com)

ADAH's Webpage: <http://wotruth.com/adah.htm> -- EVA's Webpage: <http://wotruth.com/Eva.htm>

Benjamin (Bensvison@aol.com), Jonathan (Jonstalk@aol.com), Eva (Evablakely@aol.com)
Adah Hutchcraft (ALHutchcraft@hotmail.com), Jason Hutchcraft (hutchcraftj@esr.edu)

WORD OF TRUTH Website: <http://wotruth.com>

WORD OF TRUTH FELLOWSHIP Website: <http://wotruth.com/wotf/wotindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on Romans: <http://wotruth.com/Romans.htm>

COMMENTARY on Daniel: <http://wotruth.com/Daniel.htm>