

Part 8 — “The Most High God & the Fiery Trial” — 17 July 2022

**Introduction**

By setting up the image of gold and demanding that his officials pay homage to it, Nebuchadnezzar had set himself up to rival God. The actions of Daniel’s three friends bore witness, however, to the fact that the God of Heaven was more to be feared than the king.

**Main Point:** In the midst of times of intense trial or persecution, the God of Heaven is present with His people, and we can trust and obey Him as we await His deliverance either \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ such circumstances.

**Daniel’s Friends & the Fiery Furnace—Daniel 3:13-30**

**The Defiance of Daniel’s Friends (3:8-18)**

Observations

1. The king’s response revealed that he had not anticipated anyone defying his order.
2. Perhaps because of who the three men were, the king generously offered to them a second chance to \_\_\_\_\_ his command.
3. The king’s question to the men revealed his own \_\_\_\_\_ and misunderstanding of his actual \_\_\_\_\_.  
*“who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands”*  
  
⇒ There is a significant amount of irony in Nebuchadnezzar’s words given how the book of Daniel begins with the description of how God’s people even came to be in Babylon in the first place (Dan. 1:2).
4. Their measured response \_\_\_\_\_ with how the king conducted himself.
5. Their response displayed genuine \_\_\_\_\_ in God and \_\_\_\_\_ to His will for them.  
*“our God whom we serve is able to deliver us”*  
  
*“But if not...we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image...”*

**Key Point:** Their \_\_\_\_\_ faith and confidence in the God of Heaven was displayed \_\_\_\_\_ in their decision to remain faithful to Him even if it meant the laying down of their own lives.

“They were ready to obey, whether or not God chose to deliver them from the furnace or not. In other words, they found their object of affection in God Himself, not in what God did for them.” — Leon J. Wood, *Daniel*

**The Deliverance of Daniel’s Friends (3:19-27)**

Observations

1. The king’s response to their defiance was reckless and his attempt to project \_\_\_\_\_ simply revealed his own \_\_\_\_\_.  
*“he ordered the furnace heated seven times more”* *“mighty men”*
2. The account goes into detail in describing what the men were wearing and how they were restrained.  
*“bound”*
3. The question of the king and his description of what he saw in the furnace further conveyed his lack of power and control.  
*“I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire”*

“They had expected only pain and death, but now were enjoying perfect comfort. They had been bound so that they could not move, but now they were free to walk around as they wished. What a contrast, and what an experience...” — Leon J. Wood, *Daniel*

*“the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods”*

⇒ The identity of this figure is not specifically stated. The king’s description in the KJV is translated “like the Son of God.” The language certainly allows for this rendering and it is certainly accurate as to the identity of this figure as the Preincarnate Christ who made appearances throughout the OT as ‘the Angel of the LORD’ (Gen. 22:11; Num. 22:31).

“For Scripture also likens this one to be an angel of God. For it was he himself who reported to us the mysteries of the Father. This one descended into the furnace with those who were around Azariah. The fire, seeing this Angel, recognized his master and, being afraid, fled outside of the furnace...”  
—Hippolytus of Rome, *Commentary on Daniel* (3rd c. AD)

4. The king calling forth the men from the furnace was an admission of his \_\_\_\_\_ in the face of a miraculous display of the power of the Most High God.

“Tell me, Nebuchadnezzar, for when did you see the Son of God, so that you confessed this one to be the Son of God? Who pricked your heart so that you plainly spoke such a word? With what sort of eyes were you able to see the light of him? But why was this shown to you alone and to none of the other satraps? But it is because it is said, “the heart of the king is in the hand of God.” —Hippolytus of Rome

**Key Point:** The presence of the Angel of Yahweh with the men demonstrated that the Most High God was \_\_\_\_\_ active in the deliverance of His people from their enemies.

## The King’s Response to the Miraculous Deliverance (3:28-30)

### Observations

1. The king first praised the power of God and His personal care for His people.
2. He then validated the decisions of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and further promoted them.

**Key Point:** The king’s decree demonstrated that he had, to some degree, been \_\_\_\_\_ before the God of Heaven since the issuing of his prior decree (3:4-7).

“(Notice that this chapter begins with one decree and ends with another). He did not forbid the worship of their Babylonian deities, but they were not allowed to utter malicious statements about ‘the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego’...Nebuchadnezzar was clearly beginning to see the uniqueness of the God of the Bible.” —J. Paul Tanner, *Daniel*

## Living Faithfully in “Babylon”

- Life in exile will at some point mean that our private faith will have to be exercised publicly.

*1 Pet. 3:13-17*—<sup>13</sup> Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? <sup>14</sup> But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, <sup>15</sup> but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, <sup>16</sup> having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. <sup>17</sup> For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God’s will, than for doing evil.

“honor”—ἀγιάζω (*hagiazō*)—To treat as holy; to reverence someone or something.

*To reverence Christ is to recognize His position of \_\_\_\_\_ over our lives.*

*To reverence Christ involves a willingness to \_\_\_\_\_ our lives in submission to His will for us.*

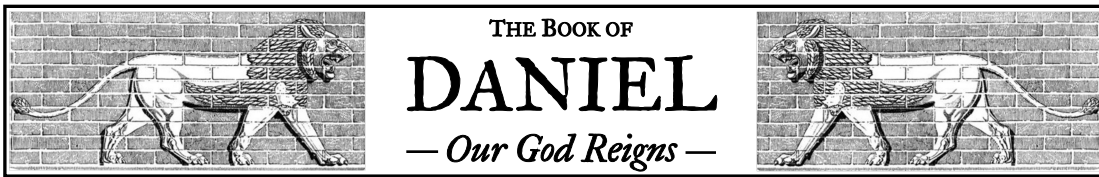
- We should expect that trials and \_\_\_\_\_ of various kinds will come as we live life in a fallen world.

*1 Pet. 4:12-13*—<sup>12</sup> Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. <sup>13</sup> But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

“strange”—ξένος (*zenos*)— Something unknown or unexpected.

*The Lord Jesus has suffered \_\_\_\_\_ us in order to ultimately deliver us.*

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#### **The Defiance of Daniel’s Friends (3:8-18)**

##### Observations

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2. Perhaps because of who the three men were, the king generously offered to them a second chance to **obey** his command.
3. The king’s question to the men revealed his own **pride** and misunderstanding of his actual **power**.  
*“who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands”*  
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4. Their measured response **contrasted** with how the king conducted himself.
5. Their response displayed genuine **faith** in God and **submission** to His will for them.  
*“our God whom we serve is able to deliver us”*  
*“But if not...we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image...”*

**Key Point:** Their **private faith and confidence in the God of Heaven was displayed publicly in their decision to remain faithful to Him even if it meant the laying down of their own lives.**

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