

# In the Furnace with God

## *Introduction*

A few weeks ago we looked at Daniel. We especially looked at his commitment to God in a new land. We saw that his commitment was early, while he was a young man. It was deep and it was lasting.

Because Daniel put God above all things, God gave him gifts and talents that were of particular use to the King in the interpretation of dreams and so on.

This morning, I believe God has laid upon my heart to talk about Daniel's 3 friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

Daniel was, in the future going to face the Lion's den, but before that his friends were to face the furnace.

If you are living for God, you will either have faced, will be facing now or will face in the future a furnace type situation.

Let me set the scene for you.

King Nebuchadnezzar had already had a dream in which God showed him a vision of an 'image of Gold, Silver, Bronze and Iron'. He had been told that his kingdom was the greatest there had ever been or would ever be until the Kingdom of Christ Jesus.

Daniel and his three friends were men of such repute that they were in very high ranking positions in the Kings court, administrators over Babylon.

Because of this, they had enemies. Their Enemies that wanted them out of the way.

I don't know if what Daniel had told the king had gone to his head. But the King decided to build an 'image of gold' on the plain of Dura.

## [Read Daniel 3.](#)

THESE two images in chapters 2 and 3 represent man's rule and man's worship.

This "image of gold" to be set up in the plain of Dura was the visible expression of Nebuchadnezzar's "new theology. " It was to be a great affair. The music would play, and everyone was expected to bow down and worship the image.

But true godly living is a very simple thing. A Revelation of Christ Jesus is needed. When we realise that Jesus died for us and loves us, and we repent and turn from our sin, He comes in and through his word changes us so that we can live in obedience according to His will.

But this new popular religion brings a new trial to the servants of God. There was

### **I. Their Temptation.**

A new national idol had been set up (vv. 3-5).

Man's unenlightened ingenuity is always setting up some new thing as an object of worship.

It is all the more delusive with its grand musical attractions (v. 7).

On the king's part it was but another exhibition of despotism and religious intolerance, another form of "man's inhumanity to man.

The temptation at this time to Daniel and his three fellow-believers was to

### **2. SAVE THEIR SITUATION.**

They had been "set over the affairs of the province of Babylon" (chap. 2. 49). As government officials they held a high social position, and perhaps received a good salary.

In the NT we read of Demas who forsook Paul when worldly advantage was to be gained (2 Tim. 4. 10).

It was also a temptation to-

- **SACRIFICE THEIR CONSCIENCE.**

It would affect their relationship with God. Of course all that the king demanded was conformity, what all sham religions are satisfied with.

Surely, it wouldn't hurt to just bow the knee now and again – would it?

James Renwick, the last of the Scottish martyrs, was offered freedom if he would "but let a drop of ink fall on the paper. " But, no, when it was to be the sign of the denial of Christ.

### III. Their Testimony.

**"Our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us... We will not serve thy gods"** (vv. 17, 18).

This showed their-

- **FAITH IN THE POWER OF GOD.**

"If so be our God is able. " Those who are serving God daily are not likely to be cast down suddenly.

True hearted service gives stability of character in the time of trial.

- **SUBMISSION TO THE WILL OF GOD.**

"But if not.., we will not" (v. 18).

They would rather burn than turn.

Like Job, they could say, **"Though He slay me, yet will I trust"**

In the NT Peter and John faced a similar situation

**ACTS 4:19-20 But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."**

They were in Babylon, but they were not of it.

### IV. Their Triumph.

They were cast into the furnace because of non-conformity, their triumph was in the face of death they were true to God. They did not know if God would save them or they would die, but **"the fire had no power"** (vv. 26, 27).

The wrath of man is a poor, impotent thing in presence of the power of God.

Their sufferings brought them-

- **A NEW SENSE OF FREEDOM.**

**"Lo, I see four men loose walking in the midst of the fire"** (v. 25). Liberty to walk in a furnace was a new experience for them. They could truly "glory in their affliction. " They were **not saved from** the fiery furnace, but they were **saved in** it, which was a much greater deliverance. The peace of God in the heart is an indestructible principle, beyond the reach of any fiery trial. The world cannot take it away.

- **A NEW SOURCE OF FELLOWSHIP.**

There was a fourth in the fire, **"like the Son of God."** In being cast out by men, they were brought into sweeter communion with the Son of God. It was so with Paul and Silas (Acts 16). Bunyan, Rutherford, Madam Guyon, and multitudes of others who suffered for Christ.

- **A NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR SERVICE.**

**"The king promoted them"** (v. 30) Their sphere of usefulness was enlarged after their deeper experience of the power of God. What a testimony they had to give, as men who

had passed from death into life; who were dead, but are now living in the power of it resurrection. Every severe trial borne for Christ's sake will bring a new revelation of Divine possibilities, that we may go back to live with a new force in our being. The Captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering, and the servant is not greater than his Master. By refusing; to bow to the image of gold man had set up, the image of God was more firmly set up in their own hearts.

### *Conclusion*

Are you facing a furnace?

Are you doubting yourself and your stand. Put your hands in His strength, for He is able.

***17-18 If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."***

Have you faced the furnace already? But you buckled under the pressure, you bowed the knee-just that one time! Or the temptation of what was being offered was too much for you to give up? Because of it, do you feel a long way from God right now?

Jesus wants you to come back. Repent of your failure and ask his forgiveness, He will restore you, Read the parable of the prodigal son.....the Father is looking out for you, even while you are far away.

If you have not faced, or are not facing right now a furnace. You will. Be ready.

When Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to bow, the King became angry and ordered the furnace to be heated 7 times hotter than normal.

The Bible shows the number 7 as being the perfect number – this furnace was now at the “perfect” temperature.

When we go through the furnace think on this

- God is allowing it to happen
- You have been found worthy to go through it
- You will be purified through it
- You will be richer in faith because of it.
- God wants you to fully trust Him, no matter what the outcome.
- You will not be alone – His Spirit is with you ALWAYS
- He will exalt you because of it.

The devil is starting to turn up the heat in the society that we live let us be ready to say as these three friends said

***the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."***

Praise be to God

Amen