

## FIRE IN THE FURNACE Pt. 2 Daniel 3:19-30

Introduction: In this chapter, we are reminded of the words of Revelation 1:19: “The things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.” The things that have been seen are the events of Daniel three: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the furnace of Nebuchadnezzar. “The things which are...” – the things you and I experience in the furnaces of life, family furnaces, work furnaces, school furnaces, relationship furnaces, etc. I do not know what furnace you are in; but I do know this, if you are a child of God, Christ is in the furnace with you. Jerry Vines says: “Some lessons can only be learned in the furnace.” (60) “The things which shall be hereafter” are also pictured in Daniel three. The nation of Israel is going to go through the great tribulation, such as the world has never seen before. Just as Jesus walked in the fiery furnace with the three Hebrew children, God will be with the Jews and walk with them as they go through the furnace of tribulation. Hundreds of thousands of Jews will be saved during the tribulation and come out of the furnace having received Christ and thus being purified.

### I. VSS. 19-20, THE FUROR OF KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR

A. Vs. 19, The king let his temper get the best of him; the Bible says he “was full of fury.” You had heard of the biggest loser; well, the biggest loser is the person who loses his temper. When tempers flare, things are done and said that would not be done under conditions. Many times people make a fool of themselves when they lose their temper.

1. Proverbs 16:32 says: “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.” Because the king was angry, it showed in his countenance. You could look at him and know that he was mad. The mirror of the soul is the face for most folks.
2. What we have here is the battle between the might of Babylon and the three children of God who are despised in a foreign land. Christian, we are not at home in this world; we are just passing through. In the midst of our trials in this world, God will show Himself faithful. What God does for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego He has done for others. Think of these examples that pitted the

captives against the mighty: Moses vs. Pharaoh; David vs. Goliath; Samson vs. the Philistines. In each case, God showed His might in the time of trial.

3. In his rage, the king wanted the three Hebrews to suffer. He had the furnace heated seven times hotter than normal. So hot that they would be annihilated and suffer less than those saints who were burned at the stake in England for their faith. What he really did was to cause a greater miracle to happen. Instead of the three being cremated, they walked in the fire.

a. Salvation does not mean that our worries are over; as you live for the Lord, you will, many times, face trials that the world does not face.

b. You will have to go against the crowd as they push and shove you. We are not promised a rose garden, but we are promised His all sufficient grace.

B. VS. 20, Battle hardened veterans were commanded to throw the three Jews into the fiery furnace. The king wanted to make sure they made it into the fire. The furnace was used for smelting ore; most of us have seen pictures of the hot metal poured from the caldron.

## II. VSS. 21-23, THE FURNACE OF KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR

A. VS 21, Apparently the three Hebrew were still in their entire official garb. Official dress would mean layers of clothing that would turn up the heat just a little more.

1. The humanism of our day is turning up the heat on the true believers. Many in Communist countries are dying for the faith. Socialism in America is turning up the heat on all Bible believers, calling us nuts and extremists. The Bible says: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Timothy 3:12).

2. The picture here is striking. Babylon, with its might, carries three helpless Jews to the furnace's door of death and casts them in. One thing that the Babylonians did not count on was the supernatural power of God.

B. VS 22, The mighty men who threw Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego into the furnace were destroyed by the fire. Those who would destroy were destroyed. In the last days, God will

destroy those who come up against Israel in the Valley of Armageddon.

- C. VS 23, To the bottom of the furnace fell the three Hebrews, with their turbans, belts, coats and the rope that bound them.
  - 1. 1 Peter 4:12 tells us: “Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which shall try?” All sold out Christians are going to undergo furnace experiences. The trails of our faith will bring glory to our Savior (1 Peter 1:7).
  - 2. Yes, you will go through the fiery furnace at times; your faith will be tested. Keep in mind that the Lord wants to make us better Christians. There are times when the trails of life are designed to burn away “the sin which doth so easily beset us...” (Hebrews 12:1)

### III. VSS. 24-27, FREEDOM FROM THE FURNACE

- A. VS. 24, King Nebuchadnezzar was seated, at a safe distance, in such a way as to see the activity in the furnace. The furnace having slits for observation so the smelters could check their work. When he looked, he did not see the men bound, but FREE.
  - 1. The king’s eyes probably bugged out, and he was startled as he saw what was going on in that furnace blazing with fire. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego would not burn. This is a picture of the preservation of the saints, of eternal security.
  - 2. Those who believe are kept by the power of God, not by their own power (John 10:27-28).
- B. VS. 25, The king looked and instead of three men being in the fire, there were four. Not only did he see four men, they were all free to walk about the furnace.
  - 1. The ropes that had bound Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were gone. There are times in life when the only thing that can set us free is going through the fire.
    - a. Sometimes we must experience the fire of failure so that we can learn responsibility. If someone is always bailing out and enabling the irresponsible people of the world, they will never live within their means nor act their age. Why should the government bailout people who bought too big of a house, too fancy a car, or ran up too big of a credit

card bill?

- b. When we bail out the irresponsible, we are enabling them to continue on in there frivolous way of life.
  2. “Have no hurt...” Instead of being cremated, they are animated and happy in the fire. Vines says: “He saw the saints of God preserved by the presence of God. Isn’t it great that our God walks with us, and talks with us, even in the fires of life.”
  3. “The form of the forth is like the Son of God.” This statement has been the center of much controversy over the years. Could Jehovah God give the king prophetic insight whereby he knew that this fourth man was the Messiah of Daniel and his friends? I believe God did just that. The Hebrew word for “like” means one like no other, one of a kind just like “only begotten” of John 3:16 means “one of a kind”.
    - a. What we have here is a Christophany, an appearance of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament.
    - b. This is not the only place a Christopany is recorded. He is the voice of God who walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden in the cool of the day; He is the Son of God who walked with Enoch all the way to glory; before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, he ate with Abraham; He wrestled with Jacob; as the Commander of the Lord’s Army He appeared to Joshua.
    - c. The song “How Firm a Foundation” says: “When through fiery trails thy pathway shall lie, My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply. The flames shall not hurt thee; I only design Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.”
- B. VS. 26-27, When Nebuchadnezzar called Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego out of the fiery furnace, he did so by addressing them as: “Ye servants of the most high God.” He may not have completely known what he was saying, but he was on target anyway. The three Hebrews were thoroughly inspected, and it was found that not a hair of their heads was singed, their coats were not burned, and they did not even smell like smoke. God had saved the Hebrews boys all the way. If you will trust in the crucified, buried and risen Savior, He will save you all the way

(Hebrews 7:25; 2 Corinthians 5:17).

IV. VSS. 28-30, THE FORMAL NOTICE GIVEN BY THE KING

- A. VS. 28, The God who sent His angel was Jehovah God, and the one that the king called an angel was Jesus Christ the Son of God.
1. The King recognized their trust in God. Do others see your trust in God?
  2. The three Hebrews had given their very bodies that they might worship Jehovah only.
  3. In verses 17-18, we saw how that these Hebrews trusted God. Come what may, their faith was in God. "God is Sovereign, whether the result of our obedience is triumph or tragedy." (Swindoll 34)
- B. VS. 29, A great victory had been won. The king revitalized that what he had seen was a miracle that no other god could perform. He still trusted in his gods, but elevated the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego above all other gods.
- C. VS.30, The trails of life will either make us bitter or better. God wants them to make us better. The three Hebrews were promoted, made to prosper as it were. God allowed them to go through the fire and brought them out as better men. Remember Romans 8:28 is still in the Book!

Conclusion: God's desire is for us to be more like unto His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. There are times when we must be put into the fire of trials to burn away the dross. Malachi 3:3 says: "And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver." The silversmith turns up the heat, and the silver turns to liquid. The silver goes to the bottom as the impurities rise to the top and with a skimmer the silversmith skims off the dross. He continues to regulate the heat, not to ruin the silver, but to make it purer. His job is not finished until he can see his face in the silver. God wants to see His Son in your life!

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