

Prayer:

Slide # 1

Theme: God is Sovereign over History

Outline:

- A. The personal history of the prophet Daniel – chapter 1
- B. The prophetic history of the Gentiles – chapters 2-7**
- C. The prophetic history of Israel – chapters 8-12

In the OT about 600 years before the time of Christ the Jews were taken captive to Babylon where they remained for 70 years. This all happened according to prophecy – which is God’s specialty (Jer. 25:11-12; 29:10). He says what is going to happen to His people, Israel, and then He brings it to pass (Amos 3:7). This is His pattern – consistent right up to where we live today. Israel is consistently the central player in prophecy.

Daniel and his three friends were taken captive to Babylon in 605 BC. In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar (king of Babylon) he had a troublesome dream. Only Daniel (by supernatural revelation) could tell the dream and give its interpretation. Daniel told the king that the God of heaven had revealed to him “**what will be in the latter days**” (Dan. 2:28).

The dream was that of a metallic image consisting of four successive parts representing four kingdoms, with the last phase of the fourth kingdom being mixed in nature. The fourth successive kingdom was Rome, but we note that it has two phases. The legs of iron are distinct from and yet connected to the final form of the feet and toes, which are comprised of iron mixed with clay.

Slide # 2



This is God's outline of world history from the time of Babylon to the coming of Christ's kingdom. The four empires in view represent world empires that not only dominated the world but also did so in relation to the land of Israel.

Now, many have noted that there are various "**world powers**" after Rome and before the end and have wondered why they are not mentioned. Again, this is **God's outline**, and He includes what is significant in relation to His people, Israel in particular. Israel is consistently the centerpiece of prophecy. And God shows us that in the end it all circles back to Rome!

The period in view represented by the metallic image was called by Christ "**the Times of the Gentiles**" (Lk. 21:24). The Gentile nations of the world really only come into prominence in prophecy insofar as they touch on or significantly relate to Israel in terms of God's overall plan. Keep that in mind. This is **God's outline** – and the significant players are mentioned because of their key role in relation to Israel – especially in relation to the end.

Note two things:

1) All of these world powers (without exception) related to Israel while they were in the land, even if it involved removing the Jews from the land, as was the case with Babylon and Rome.

2) In the case of the last empire (Rome), it was in power while Israel was in the land at Christ's first coming, wielding its ultra-destructive power as seen in the crucifixion of Christ. And it will be in power (a revived form of the Roman Empire) under the Antichrist when Israel will once again be back in the land in the latter days.

Israel is back in the land, and the great question now is what will be the final form of this revived Roman Empire? Stay tuned. We are spectators. We are not given all the details – just the broad outline.

Nebuchadnezzar was astounded at Daniel being able to know and interpret the dream and acknowledged that, indeed, Daniel's God was God over all other gods because He was able to reveal the secret of his dream. Nebuchadnezzar had intellectual assent on some level but not yet true personal saving faith as the text clearly goes on to show.

Some time then passed, and that brings us to Daniel 3.

Daniel 3 does not present any additional prophetic information, but it does reveal the sovereign greatness of Israel's God and it also demonstrates the character of the Gentile world powers that would rule over Israel.

Chapter 2 had shown these empires in their political succession; chapters 3 to 6 will show their moral conduct and character while they rule. – **Charles Feinberg**

Daniel 3:1–18 (NKJV)

1 Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its width six cubits. He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.

Again, we are not sure on the timing of this event, but it had to follow the events of chapter two because here we find Daniel's three friends already serving in their exalted role of service which Daniel had asked for in Daniel 2:49 (cf. 3:12).

Some think the event of Daniel 3 took place fairly close to the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar's reign because of the emphasis on him wanting to unify the empire in this way. Others point to the fact that records indicate there was a revolt against Nebuchadnezzar about 10 years into his reign, which may have been what caused him to push so hard for worship allegiance as seen in Daniel 3. And still others point to the Septuagint (a Greek translation of the OT) which at Daniel 3:1 says that this event occurred in the 18th year (587 BC) of Nebuchadnezzar just prior to the final siege of Jerusalem in 586 BC (cf. 2 Kg. 25:8-10; Jer. 52:12).

The bottom line is that we are not certain of the timing of this event – other than it took place some time after the events of chapter 2.

Whenever it took place, the occasion was when Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold. Many think it was probably plated or overlaid with gold and not actually pure gold through and through. It was an image of some sort, but exactly of what we are not told. Some think it may have been an image of Nebuchadnezzar himself, but others don't think so because the Babylonians at this time did not make idols in the fashion of their leaders, rather they made them in the supposed images of their false gods.

More likely, the image was of a Babylonian god, perhaps Nebuchadnezzar's patron Nabu or the chief Babylonian god Marduk.

- **HCSB**

Nebuchadnezzar was named after the god Nabu with his name literally meaning “***Nabu, protect my boundary!***”

Whatever the image represented, the intent was that it was to be worshipped. The image was 60 cubits high, which amounts to about 90 feet high and it was six cubits wide – which would have been about 9 feet. So it was 90 feet high and 9 feet wide. Again, some suggest that the 90 feet in height may have included a towering pedestal upon which the image was set. But again, we are not given details.

Slide # 3



It was set up in the plain of Dura. ***Dura*** was a common name meaning a place between mountains or between a high enclosure of some sort. It was located in the province of Babylon, which was the headquarters of the Babylonian empire. Many think it was probably just outside of the city of Babylon – maybe 5 or 6 miles from the city.

Footnote: This is the area very near to where Nimrod built the original city of Babel which birthed the kingdom of Babylon (Gen. 10:8-10). This is the area where the people sought to build a city and a tower, and where God confused their language, causing them to halt the work and disperse. The name Babel, which became Babylon, literally means “***confusion***”.

2 And King Nebuchadnezzar sent word to gather together the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

Listed here are eight categories of governing officials and leaders. The specifics of who they were is not totally clear, other than it seems they are listed in descending order of rank. It probably included anybody and everybody who served in any official capacity in the government, involving many thousands of people.

We see here a well-organized bureaucracy involving many people. And we see Nebuchadnezzar's push for national unity involving both a political reality as well as a spiritual reality.

Clearly this was presented as being an all-important meeting as it involved the dedication of this image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

3 So the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered together for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

Finally, the designated day for the dedication had arrived! And essentially all the various representatives of the entire empire were present.

There is a tremendous emphasis on the fact that Nebuchadnezzar had set this image in place. He owned it totally. He is at this point totally identifying with this idolatry. That he made or set it up is stated 10 times in verses 1-18 (cf. 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 12, 14, 15, 18). There may be some satire involved here in view of Isaiah 44 (cf. Ps. 115:4-8).

Slide # 4

Isaiah 44:9 (NKJV)

9 Those who make an image, all of them are useless, And their precious things shall not profit; They are their own witnesses; They neither see nor know, that they may be ashamed.

4 Then a herald cried aloud: “To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages,

5 that at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up;

6 and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.”

This was not a suggestion – it was a command!

Throughout is the double emphasis on falling down and worshipping the image connected with the idea that it has been set up by Nebuchadnezzar. This was meant to emphasize solidarity and allegiance to the king and the kingdom of Babylon involving both a religious and political component.

Leaders down through time have often sought to use “religion” to their advantage in bringing unity to their kingdom.

Consistently throughout Scripture is the idea that Babylon represents UNIFIED IDOLATRY that combines religion and the state. That was true at the tower of Babel in Genesis 11 and it will be true in the final form of Babylon under the Antichrist as seen in Revelation 17-18.

This was meant to be a VERY SPECIAL day in the kingdom of Babylon – a day of UNITY and ALLEGIANCE. It was all very well done. The sight was aesthetically pleasing – the emotions were catered to through the music. And just to ensure there was no problem, a furnace was in operation.

For idolatrous pagans to go through the motions of worshipping yet another god was no big deal. But for a conscientious Jew it was a HUGE deal.

Slide # 5

Exodus 20:3–5 (NKJV)

3 “You shall have no other gods before Me.

4 “You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;

5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God,...

To King Nebuchadnezzar, this was about loyalty and allegiance. To not participate would be an act of treason, which called for the death penalty.

This was a test of loyalty and allegiance. As far as Nebuchadnezzar was concerned, this was about a test of submission to his authority. As far as God-fearing Jews were concerned this was about loyalty and faithfulness to the ONE TRUE GOD – YHWH. It would reveal where one’s ultimate loyalty was found.

The command was clear: bow or burn – comply or die!

The phrase “fall down and worship” which is found six times in the surrounding context (v. 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 15) is almost redundant because the word worship (Heb. *segid*) literally means “to bow down before”. So there is a double emphasis 1) to fall down before and 2) to bow down before.

It is one thing to bow before someone as a matter of honor as some cultures do. But to bow down before in the sense of worship is to pay homage to them as a higher power who has authority over you.

It is to express allegiance to their lordship over you. For the true believer ONLY God is to be worshipped. We BOW only to Him! He alone is our Lord!

Worship in the Bible is always a LORDSHIP issue! The issue here was all about LORDSHIP and WORSHIP!

7 So at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the horn, flute, harp, and lyre, in symphony with all kinds of music, all the people, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the gold image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

This was a large ecumenical gathering. Ecumenical is the idea of “universal” that brings together all kinds of differing belief systems for the sake of outward unity. True Christians find their UNITY in gospel truth – not in outward compromise. Ecumenical meetings always compromise God’s truth to get along. We must NEVER do this!

I am sure Nebuchadnezzar would probably have said, *“I am not asking you to give up your god – just make room for mine too. This is my special day, just pledge allegiance to me and my god, and then you can do as you please.”* This is the way of the world – that just seeks to please everyone! It makes UNITY the highest priority over TRUTH.

Yes, biblical UNITY is very important but it is always centered in TRUTH – God’s truth as revealed in the Bible.

“While in college, I dated my future husband, who was preparing for the ministry. One Sunday morning I accompanied him to a nearby church where he was to preach. Anxious to make a good impression, I sat in the front row and remained its lone occupant.

At the conclusion of the service, the song leader announced the final hymn. I stood and joined the singing, but the song leader kept directing nervous glances towards me. During the second verse, this intensified to an unmistakable stare. Disconcerted, I began to check my dress for static cling. Finally, the man smiled with resignation and said to the congregation, “For the last verse, why don’t we all stand?”

– Gail Nash Tunnell

It is embarrassing to be out of sync with everyone else... we feel pressure to conform – people feel pressure for us. We don’t like to be put in that position.

But sometimes God puts us in that position – are we going to stand up for Him or compromise with the world, which will it be?

God wants us to stand for Him no matter what people think, say, or do.... But that is hard. In fact, we can only do it with God's help and strength. Remember Peter? He was so sure of himself, but then in the heat of the moment he repeatedly denied knowing Christ. The early Church was praying for BOLDNESS. We need God's help!

During his years as premier of the Soviet Union, Khrushchev denounced many of the policies and atrocities of Joseph Stalin. Once when he was doing so at a public meeting a heckler cried out **“You were one of his colleagues – why didn't you stop him?”** Khrushchev immediately ROARED **“Who said that?”** There was an agonizing silence and nobody moved a muscle. Then Khrushchev replied quietly - **“Now you know why.”**

It is really HARD to stand alone against a world of hostility but here we find three young Jewish men that had the fortitude to do just that.

8 Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and accused the Jews.

The language here suggests bitter hatred and prejudice against the Jews. The word “accused” literally means “to tear in pieces”. This was malicious talk that sought to destroy them.

The term [“accused”] suggests slander and malicious accusations which devour the accused piece by piece. – ***The Nelson Study Bible***

The Chaldeans, as noted in chapter two, were the leading class of wise men who should have been thankful to Daniel and his Jewish companions for earlier saving their lives. They all knew the story (cf. Dan. 2:4-5, 10-13). But instead, they were full of bitter jealousy because these three had been promoted to high office over them. Therefore, they relished the idea of taking them out.

9 They spoke and said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “O king, live forever!”

They come with flowery speech as if to “butter up” the king.

10 You, O king, have made a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the gold image;

11 and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

12 There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up.”

One gets the feeling that these Chaldeans, while hating the Jews, are not very happy with the king either, telling him about his own decree (which he knew quite well), and about the noncompliant Jews that he has set over the affairs of Babylon.

They proceeded to tell the king that these Jews, namely Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego “***have not paid due regard to you***” saying, “***They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up.***”

They were so excited – they had an airtight case against these Jews – and maybe in a subtle way making the king eat humble pie for having put these Jews ahead of them.

They made it personal – saying the actions of these Jews was a PERSONAL affront to the king. This was his special day and they were raining on his parade.

What a tremendous insult! They had no respect for the king and no regard for his gods. They refused to worship as commanded to do so. The charges were clear and very offensive!

A question that is often asked is: Where was Daniel? We are not given an answer. Some suggest that as one who sat in the gate of the king, someone probably needed to remain back at the palace and keep watch for things there.

Perhaps, but we just don’t know because we are not told. But we can be sure that if he was here, neither would he have worshipped the image – you can be very sure of that.

13 Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. So they brought these men before the king.

To his credit, Nebuchadnezzar didn't just take the word of the Chaldeans and accept the charges on the accusation of hearsay. We know from chapter two that Nebuchadnezzar didn't really trust the Chaldeans (cf. 2:9).

So instead of just running with these charges, the king brought them in for a personal interview to get the story first-hand from Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego.

One thing about Nebuchadnezzar – he did do his own thinking – and in this case his own investigation. Albeit, he is full of pride and dead wrong about the whole thing, but he did go to the source – which was wise and proper.

14 Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up?”

How is that for a pointed question: “Is it true?” The pressure was on! They were standing face to face with the king and he asked them straight out – no beating around the bush whether or not they were guilty of not serving his gods or worshipping the golden image which he had set up.

Initially, it seems that the three Jewish young men kept silent. They did not rush to defend themselves. And so the king kept talking...

15 Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, good! But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?”

Amazingly, the king is ready to give them one more chance. It seems like he really did have an element of respect for them and wanted them to be with him. I don't know that Nebuchadnezzar was in the habit of giving many people a second chance. But he did here.

The conditions were the same: At the signal of the music, if they would fall down and worship the image, all would be well.

On the other hand, if they refused, the king said, “***I will fire you!***” Literally, they would immediately be cast into the burning fiery furnace.

And then he said the thing that really got him. He said, “***And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?***” Oh boy! That was a direct challenge to the God of heaven – whom he should have remembered from his interaction with Daniel in chapter 2. The fact that this is not uppermost in his mind would argue that the events in chapter 2 probably happened years earlier, and now it is not top of mind.

The truth of Daniel 2:47, where he said to Daniel, “***Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings***” has faded from his mind – showing that he never really got it.

Historically, those who have made a braggadocio challenge like this concerning the God of Israel have really been put in their place in a big way. God takes this kind of challenge very personally! To do so is to really play with fire in a big way.

Slide # 6

Exodus 5:1–2 (NKJV)

1 Afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, “Thus says the **LORD God of Israel**: ‘Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.’ ”

2 And Pharaoh said, “**Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go.**”

That didn’t end well with Pharaoh. Ten plagues later and his entire army drowned in the sea, he was clearly the total loser, while God’s power and fame were made known throughout the entire world (Ex. 9:16; Rom. 9:17).

And then there was Sennacherib (king of Assyria) who sent his army to overthrow Jerusalem in the days of Hezekiah. The commander of the Assyrian taunted the Jews...

Slide # 7

Isaiah 36:20 (NKJV)

20 Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their countries from my hand, **that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem** from my hand?’ ”

This direct challenge resulted in God killing **185,000 Assyrian** soldiers in one single night, causing Sennacherib to leave in disgrace, only to be murdered by his sons once he got home (cf. Isa. 37:36-38).

Rule number one: Don't arrogantly challenge the God of Israel. He is a lot BIGGER than you are and you are going down BIG time.

But here was Nebuchadnezzar all full of himself challenging the idea that any god could deliver them from his hands. He was about to have his question answered in a most dramatic way. This special day to intended to dramatize Nebuchadnezzar was about to turn in to a special day that would dramatize the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego.

There was tremendous pressure put on these young men who may have been about 18 years old. The intimidation of the king who held the power of life and death in his hands, the music, the critics, the whole known world watching. The pressure was on and yet their GOD was more real to them than any of those things.

Burning was a common form of execution by the Babylonians (cf. Jer. 29:22). This must have been a huge furnace, perhaps used in the construction of the great image as a means of smelting the gold that was then applied to the image. That would make sense because it was on site.

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter.

Note, there was no flattery here – no, "O king, live forever!" They were not disrespectful but just straightforward. They had no further defense. The king got it right – they would not bow. They did not need to reconsider their position. It was a settled issue! There was no debate or indecision.

"We" is emphatic in the original text and implies a contrast with Yahweh. God would give the king an answer. – **Thomas Constable**

God fearing Jews would repeat the Shema daily which in effect, was the core statement of faith for the Jews.

Slide # 8

Deuteronomy 6:4–5 (NKJV)

4 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!

5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

As true believers they took this seriously. There was no disrespect or treason but rather a response of reasoned conviction.

Slide # 9

Acts 5:29 (NKJV)

29 But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "**We ought to obey God rather than men.**"

They had drawn a line that they would not cross over. Yes, we are to obey those in authority over us unless they command us to disobey God. Then we put God first and must obey God rather than men.

Do you have lines of conviction in your life?

I remember a few years back we had a lady in our church who has now gone to glory. But she had a family member who told her that if the government passed a law that we as a church had to perform same-sex marriage that I as a pastor would do it. I don't know why they said that because I didn't even know this person. But she was concerned about it and came and asked me about it. I told her that no matter what the government did I would NEVER perform such a ceremony – no matter what. She was glad to hear that.

We must have lines of conviction. Where God has clearly spoken we must not compromise – not if we are going to be faithful.

There must be lines of conviction about the gospel. We can't compromise the gospel of grace.

There must be lines of conviction about morals. We can't endorse or go along with what the Bible calls sin.

There must be lines of fellowship as we cannot go along with false teachers.

As God's people our first allegiance is to God and His Word. We are called to be a separated (holy) people. Two things are to define us: 1) Holiness, and 2) love. A holy love is to define God's people.

It would have been so easy for these young men to rationalize.

1. If we compromise a little bit here, we can continue on with our ministry – otherwise we will be killed! Then where will our influence be?
2. Everyone else is doing it – it is just a political thing and really doesn't mean anything.
3. They may have rationalized – well we know that this image is not really a god and, in our hearts, we don't really mean it anyway.
4. They could have thought maybe just a quick bow – just this once. God is gracious, He will forgive us and then we can just go on.
5. They could have thought: Well, we are not really being asked to renounce our God. We are just bowing in respect for the king.
6. Our ancestors set up idols in the Temple and this is not nearly that bad.
7. This really won't hurt anyone – why not just go along a little bit to get along.

And on and on! It is amazing how creative the flesh can get when we feel the pressure. I have seen people compromise in ways I never thought they would. They seem to be strong UNTIL suddenly it involves a family member or until this is really going to cost them in some way. Then the challenge is on: Am I going to rationalize (compromise) or stay the course for the Lord.

You will face this – sooner or later.

What are the lines of conviction in your heart? You better have them ahead of time or you will probably fold in the heat of the moment! That is why we seek to ground ourselves in the Scriptures.

Slide # 10

Psalm 119:11 (NKJV)

11 Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.

In verses 17 and 18 we have one of the greatest statements of faith in all the Bible. It is a classic response of God-honoring faith.

17 If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king.

They had no further defense, but they did have a statement of FAITH!

They believed that their God was ABLE to deliver them from the burning fiery furnace and expected that in one way or another He would deliver them from the hand of the king.

They believed their God was able! They may have had in mind verses like Isaiah 43:2.

Slide # 11

Isaiah 43:2 (NKJV)

2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. **When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you.**

They had no doubt about God's ability to save. But in balance, neither were they presumptuous. They continued...

18 But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."

"**But if not**". That represents a well-balanced theology. They were saying that they believed God was able and that they expected deliverance, but they also recognized that He may choose not to do so.

Their faith was not limited to belief in a miracle but also included trust in God's sovereignty. – ***The Moody Bible Commentary***

Indeed, it is presumptuous to say you know what God is going to do if He hasn't specifically told you. James is very clear that it is sinful to claim something is going to happen when in fact you don't know.

Slide # 12

James 4:15 (NKJV)

15 Instead you ought to say, "**If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.**"

It is very biblical to say, "***If the Lord wills***". That's really what these Jewish young men were saying.

Daniel 3:17-18 is a classic statement on faith. They knew God was ABLE – they expected Him to act, and yet in humility they didn't know for sure how God was going to work. That is honest!

The view that says, “***If you just have enough faith you can do anything or have whatever you want***” is not biblical or balanced. These men had GREAT faith, and yet they were not sure what God would do. There is honesty here. There is humility here. There was nothing wrong with their faith – we just don’t always know how God is going to work.

Slide # 13

Hebrews 11:33–35 (NKJV)

33 who **through faith** subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

34 quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

35 Women received their dead raised to life again. ...

However, that is not the full story...

Slide # 14

Hebrews 11:35–39 (NKJV)

35 Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.

36 Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment.

37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two,

39 And **all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith**, ...

Faith is not dictating terms to God, but rather resting in His sovereignty! Faith says, “***But if not***”. That is not doubt, but rather humility in keeping with God-honoring faith that leaves the results to God (cf. Hab. 3:17-19). Faith says with Job, “***Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.***” (Job 31:15) Often God’s plan may be different than what our desires are. And His ways are infinitely above our ways (Isa. 55:8-9).

God has a unique individual plan for every person. We don’t always know how God is going to work, but we can always know that HE IS ABLE!

And we can know that we are immortal until our job here is done! Our times are in God’s hands (Ps. 31:15).

Whatever God's will for us is we can be assured that it will be completed and nothing can thwart it. We just don't always know what that is. He delivers some and others are martyrs.

What God has promised is that His grace is sufficient for us! Whatever our calling He gives us the grace to accept it and deal with it (cf. 2 Cor. 12:9-10).

The real issue is not what happens but rather that God be glorified in the situation through our obedience. The outcome in one sense was irrelevant, but what mattered was their faithfulness to God!

And so they flat out told the king that come what may, ***“let it be known to you O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.”***

They made it clear that they were so committed to their God that they were willing to die for Him.

The king said to the Hebrew children ***“bow or burn”***. God says to the world ***“turn or burn”***. In the end it is those on the wrong side of the God of the Bible that get burned.

MY COMMITMENT AS A CHRISTIAN

I'm a part of the fellowship of the unashamed. I have Holy Spirit power. The die has been cast I have stepped over the line. The decision has been made. I'm a disciple of His. I won't look back, let up, slow down, back away, or be still.

My past is redeemed, my present makes sense, my future is secure. I'm finished and done with low living, sight walking, small planning, smooth knees, colorless dreams, tamed visions, mundane talking, cheap living, and dwarfed goals.

I no longer need preeminence, prosperity, position, promotions, plaudits, or popularity. I don't have to be right, first, tops, recognized, praised, regarded, or rewarded. I now live by faith, lean on His presence, walk by patience, lift by prayer, and labor by power.

My face is set, my gait is fast, my goal is heaven, my road is narrow, my way rough, my companions few, my Guide reliable, my mission clear.

I cannot be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back, deluded or delayed. I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of the adversary, negotiate at the table of the enemy, ponder at the pool of popularity, or meander in the maze of mediocrity.

I won't give up, shut up, let up, until I have stayed up, stored up, prayed up, paid up, and preached up for the cause of Christ. I am a disciple of Jesus. I must go till He comes, give till I drop, preach till all know, and work till He stops me. And when He comes for His own, He will have no problems recognizing me – my banner will be clear!

The testimony of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego was clear!

Is yours?

Stand up, stand out, and stand strong for Jesus!

It's all about Him!