

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

God predicted through His prophet Jeremiah that His people (the Jews) would be taken captive to Babylon where they would remain for 70 years.

Slide # 2

Jeremiah 29:10 (NKJV)

10 For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place.

Babylon took over Judah involving three separate sieges of Jerusalem.

Slide # 3

Three Babylonian Sieges of Jerusalem

- 605 B.C. – Daniel was taken captive
- 597 B.C. – Ezekiel was taken captive
- 586 B.C. – The Temple & the city of Jerusalem was destroyed

In the context of captivity God showed that He is still SOVEREIGN God over all. Daniel 2:4b through chapter 7 is written in Aramaic – the language of the Gentiles. God’s message is in their language and communicates LOUD and STRONG that in spite of the captivity of His people He is Most High God with universal authority over all.

This was important because pagans believed that when they took over another people, it showed the superiority of their gods.

But God's miraculous intervention repeatedly shows this was NOT true. There was a different reason His people were currently in captivity. It was a matter of discipline – not a matter of God being inept. In Daniel 3 God made this point before representatives of the entire Babylonian Empire.

In Daniel 1 we find that four outstanding Jewish young men were taken to Babylon. They were men of conviction in their stand for God with special emphasis on Daniel having understanding “in all visions and dreams” (1:17).

In Daniel 2 Nebuchadnezzar had a troublesome dream. Only Daniel could tell what it was and give the interpretation.

Nebuchadnezzar was forced to acknowledge that Daniel's God was “***the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets***” (2:47). He proceeded to promote Daniel who brought with him his three friends.

Sometime later Nebuchadnezzar built a huge golden structure and called all those in positions of authority throughout his vast kingdom to attend. Once assembled, all were commanded to worship this image as a show of allegiance on pain of death if they did not comply.

All complied except for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. When called to give account to the king, they expressed that their God was able to deliver them and He would, but even if He didn't, that they would not serve Nebuchadnezzar's gods nor worship the golden image he had set up.

We pick up the narrative today in Daniel 3:19.

Daniel 3:19–30 (NKJV)

19 Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. He spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated.

Nebuchadnezzar had great power and it went to his head. He was full of pride and as such he was prone to outbursts of anger whenever anyone did not comply with what he demanded.

In chapter 2 when the wise men couldn't tell him his dream he became “angry and very furious” and gave the command that all the wise men of Babylon should be destroyed (2:12).

In chapter 3, when they told Nebuchadnezzar that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego would not bow to his golden image, “in rage and fury,” and commanded that they be brought before him. Then he composed himself enough to interrogate them before they answered him straight out that they would not bow.

At this point Nebuchadnezzar became “full of fury” and his countenance toward them changed.

How dare they try to ruin his ceremony. This was his special day – to the glory of himself and his gods and absolutely no one was to get in the way.

What an insult. Had he not **elevated** these three thankless captives to positions of prominence? Had he not been gracious enough to offer them a **second chance**?

This perceived SPURNING of the king was taken very personally as an act of **defiance, disloyalty, and total disrespect!**

His face changed – his whole disposition changed - reflected even in his appearance.

Nebuchadnezzar went from “I am willing to work with you on this if you comply” **to the RED RAGE of “you're going to die immediately as an example of what happens to those who would dare defy me!”**

This was definitely a case of **wounded PRIDE. Proud people can get really mad!** The more full of pride the madder they get.

They had dared to defy him face to face in a most blatant manner. Therefore, in great fury, he commanded that the furnace be heated seven times more – which probably meant that it be made as hot as was humanly possible.

It is surmised that this large kiln furnace may have been used in the process of smelting the gold for the large image Nebuchadnezzar had built and also perhaps to make an enormous number of bricks for various building projects.

Some have estimated that perhaps the temperature was made to reach 1800 degrees Fahrenheit, which is the temperature used in cremation.

Someone has quipped: ***What was hotter*** - the furnace or Nebuchadnezzar? It was definitely a HOT situation all the way around!

The furnace was obviously quite LARGE and evidently had an opening at the top and probably a side opening below.

By the way, his command to make the furnace seven times hotter was really dumb (intellectually speaking) for several reasons. First, a slow burn would be more tortuous. And secondly, (as we will see) it actually cost him some of his best men as the fire being so hot killed them in the process.

However, the king intended to make an EXAMPLE out of these rebels. Everyone that was anybody in the kingdom was there. Everyone was watching! He would show everyone that this is what happens to ANYONE who would dare defy him.

20 And he commanded certain mighty men of valor who were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, and cast them into the burning fiery furnace.

21 Then these men were bound in their coats, their trousers, their turbans, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

Nebuchadnezzar ordered certain elite men (perhaps military guards or the like) to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. They were bound with all their clothes and garments on – anything and everything flammable that would make them burn all the more. And then they were cast like LOGS into the fire.

22 Therefore, because the king's command was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego.

How hot was it – so hot that if you even got close, it would kill you, as it did those men who were ordered to throw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego into the fire.

Evidently, this furnace had a large mouth at the top and a ramp or platform of some type by which they could approach it and throw people in. Note in verse 22 that they “***took up***” the three Hebrew children and in verse 23 they ““***fell down***” into the furnace.

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Certainly the dying of his own men was an unintended consequence. The fire was so **HOT** that to even get near enough to throw someone in **was FATAL**. These men gave up their lives to carry out the king's orders.

However, it made what happens all the more spectacular and impossible to explain away. There was no doubt that this was an undeniable supernatural miracle!

23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

Count them: Three were thrown in. They fell down **BOUND**. And they fell right into the “**MIDST**” of the burning fiery furnace.

But then a most amazing development....

24 Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, “Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?” They answered and said to the king, “True, O king.”

Evidently, from a safe distance back the king was able to see through a side opening and see the men inside the furnace.

This is kind of like the king saying, “Am I losing my mind?”

The king was struck with sudden shock, surprise, – astonishment!

He must have been rubbing his eyes as he “rose in haste”. This brought him right out of his chair! And blabbering in review he says, “***Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?***”

This was not advanced math! We are not dealing with LARGE numbers here.

The counselors affirmed that YES it was true that there were only THREE that were cast BOUND and into the MIDST of the fire. This is almost comical! This was definitely NOT going as planned.

The Septuagint says in Daniel 3:24 that Nebuchadnezzar's attention was caught when he heard the men singing praises in the furnace. If true (and we don't know this for sure), but if true, we can imagine that as the king sat back on his chair expecting morbid satisfaction that he ***"had shown them"*** when SUDDENLY he was shocked out of his mind by *singing* coming from the furnace. But again, this may just be Jewish tradition that developed in conjunction with the story which was written in the sidenotes of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. It is not a part of the inspired text (cf. Acts 16:25).

However, exactly how it went down, the king's response is seen in verse 25.

25 "Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

Five things startled Nebuchadnezzar.

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- 1) He saw FOUR persons in the fire.
- 2) None of them were BOUND.
- 3) They were all WALKING in the fire.
- 4) None of them were HURT.
- 5) The FORM of the fourth person was "a son of the gods!"

They had been bound up very tightly with every flammable part of clothing in the bundling. But here they were loose. And they were just walking in the midst of the fire. They weren't running around screaming in pain – more like they were nonchalantly just walking around feeling no pain. Clearly the text says they were "not hurt".

More literally the fourth person was like "a son of the gods."

This was Nebuchadnezzar's pagan way of saying He had the appearance of a supernatural being.

“Like a son of the gods”... is the correct translation because the Aramaic form for “God” is plural... Hence, on the basis of consistent usage, the rendering “a son of the gods,” that is, a celestial being, god, or “angel” (v. 28), is preferable linguistically and also contextually, in line with Nebuchadnezzar’s spiritual comprehension at that juncture in his experience.- **Merrill Unger**

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Who was this fourth person in the fire? He was very DISTINCT! We are not told explicitly who it was, but there are really two possibilities.

1. It was an angel sent from God.
2. It was the preincarnate Christ in the form of an angel – referred to in the OT as “the angel of the LORD” (cf. Gen. 16:13, 18; Ex. 3:2; Josh. 5:13-6:5; Jud. 13)

From the early days of the Church, most conservative scholars have thought this was most probably the preincarnate Christ in the form of “the angel of the LORD. This is called a “Christophany.”

In the OT again and again we have this very unique person show up Who is called “the angel of the LORD” (cf. Gen. 16:1-16; 22:9-18; 32:24-30; Ex. 3:2-5; Judg. 13:17-18) After the birth of Christ He never shows up again. After that it is always “an angel of the Lord”, but this person in the OT was “THE angel of the LORD”.

The “angel of the LORD” accepts offerings, is prayed to, is called God (cf. Gen. 16:7-14; 21:17-18; 22:11-18; 31:11-13; Ex. 3:2; Jdg. 2:1-4; 5:23; 6:11-23; 13:3-22; 2 Sam. 24:16; Zech. 1:12, 3:1; 12:8); speaks as God and acts on behalf of God (cf. Gen. 16:10; 22:15-17); claimed to be God (cf. Gen. 31:11, 13; Ex. 3:2-6); and is worshiped (cf. Josh. 6:13-15). He is identified with God and yet distinct from YHWH (cf. Gen. 18:1-21; 19:1-28; 24:7; Zech. 1:12-13; Mal. 3:1). This was no ordinary angel.

The angel of the LORD accompanied Israel when they left Egypt.

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Exodus 14:19 (NKJV)

19 And the Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them.

Exodus 23:20 (NKJV)

20 “Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared.

As we turn to the NT we find a clear indication that this was indeed Christ in the OT.

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1 Corinthians 10:4 (NKJV)

4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

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Judges 13:16–18 (NKJV)

16 And the Angel of the LORD said to Manoah, “Though you detain Me, I will not eat your food. But if you offer a burnt offering, you must offer it to the LORD.” (For Manoah did not know He was the Angel of the LORD.)

17 Then Manoah said to the Angel of the LORD, “What is Your name, that when Your words come to pass we may honor You?”

18 And the Angel of the LORD said to him, “Why do you ask My name, seeing it is wonderful?”

The word translated “wonderful” is from a Hebrew root word meaning surpassing, ineffable, beyond understanding. This is the very same word used to name the Messiah in Isaiah 9:6.

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Isaiah 9:6 (NKJV)

6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Another reason to believe this was the preincarnate Christ in the form of an angel is found in Isaiah 43.

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Isaiah 43:1–2 (NKJV)

1 But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine.

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.

Yes, God could have done this via an angel but this was such a unique miracle that it is totally in keeping with the very special activity of the divine angel of the LORD in the OT.

This is one of those RARE times in the Bible where the curtain is taken back and we see the supernatural presence of God on display in a very visible way.

Sometimes we lose sight of the reality that God is with us in whatever the “firey” ordeal we may be going through. Come what may HIS presence is with us – even if we walk through the valley of the shadow of death for He has promised to never leave us (cf. Mt. 28:20; Heb. 13:5).

Harry McCormick Linz tells about a small band of Christians who were meeting in secret because of the threat of persecution. One night their meeting was interrupted by the **secret police**. The head officer ordered a count of how many people were in attendance. The count was 30. An elderly Christian spoke up saying “**Sir, a mistake has been made, you missed one.**” He demanded another count. Again, the number was 30. The officer then addressed the old man and said, “*There are only 30 of you miserable Christians here and no more!*” The old believer responded, “**Yes, but there is ONE MORE PERSON HERE - one you missed - and that is our LORD JESUS CHRIST.**”

26 Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace and spoke, saying, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here.” Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire.

Nebuchadnezzar “went near” that is he came as close as it was safe. He evidently came close so that he could be heard above the roar of the fire.

He now addressed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego as “servants of the Most High God”. Their testimony was very clear! This was their identification. There was no doubt about whom they served! They served the Most High God!

The title “Most High God” emphasizes His universal authority over all – His sovereignty over all. Some form of this title occurs 13 times in Daniel, which is more than any other OT book other than Psalms.

The king told them to come out: Wouldn't it have been funny if they had said, “***You can't make us!***” Or, “***Why don't you come in and we will talk about it.***” But no, there was no gloating or disrespect. Rather, in an attitude of obedience and respect they come out as ordered.

27 And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king's counselors gathered together, and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them.

The whole of the Babylonian leadership was witnessing this. It was a public spectacle for all to see.

When they came out they saw that this tremendous blazing fire had no power over them. Every hair was in place – not singed a bit! Their coats, trousers, hats were all perfectly fine. They didn't even have the smell of fire on them.

Amazing, I can't even grill hamburger without getting the smell of smoke on me. It was like they had never even been in the fire. They had absolutely zero effects from it. This was truly an amazing supernatural miracle that defies any other explanation!

This was clearly a miracle! In the Bible, a “miracle” is when God exercises supernatural power that goes contrary to the normal laws of nature or contrary to the ordinary course of nature.

Often what people call “miracles” is actually God’s providential working. Providence is when God aligns things just right so that it turns out in just the right way.

When we signed the contract to buy this building, we did it early on the Monday morning right after our “All Church Meeting”. Another realtor was ready to buy this building for a government agency. He told me he was just ready to put in their bid and as he looked up, he saw on his computer screen that it said “**pending**”. If we had been just a few moments later, we may not have gotten the building. He told me “**You must have been praying harder!**”

But that was PROVIDENCE. It was God’s timing and brought a whole host of circumstances together in just the right way to bring about a certain outcome. Providence is just as BIG a deal as a miracle but God does in such a way as not to bypass the normal laws of nature.

“Providence is when God chooses to remain anonymous in His working; whereas a miracle has His clear signature on it.”

When God enacts a miracle, He supernaturally controls all details so that His power is unmistakable, and there is no other explanation.

– **John MacArthur**

The three Hebrew children coming through the fiery furnace was an undisputed clear miracle.

Miracles in the Bible consistently have SIGN value. Here in Daniel this miracle was a clear SIGN that the God of the Hebrews was real and in the words of Nebuchadnezzar “the Most High God”.

In the gospel of John miracles are consistently called “**signs**”. Sign miracles performed by Jesus and the apostles are not happening today. God can work miraculously at any time, but that is not the same as “sign miracles”. God often works amazing things in answer to prayer, but the age of “sign-miracles” through the hands of people as characterized in the early church in the days of the apostles is past.

However, God is constantly working providentially as we pray!

Remember the king's question in verse 15 where he said, “who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?” Well, here was his answer. It was the God of the Jews – the God Who has revealed Himself in the Scriptures – the God Who is sovereign over all.

28 Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king’s word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God!

Nebuchadnezzar, a pagan king, now gives PRAISE to the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. Note he doesn’t yet claim Him as his personal God, but he does recognize that He is their God.

And he says this God sent His Angel and delivered His servants. This again, may be an indicator that indeed it was the Angel of the LORD in the midst of the fire with them.

And note the king recognizes that this was a matter of TRUST on behalf of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. This was an active trust that clearly demonstrated itself in commitment to God.

The king was forced to admit that they “frustrated the king’s word,” which said that if anyone defied his order to bow to his image, they would be killed in the furnace. But that didn’t happen!

This was a major admission! The king of Babylon did not change his word! He didn’t back down. He didn’t negotiate. He told people how it was going to be. But in this situation the king was forced to eat his words.

And the king recounts how these three “***yielded their bodies***”. They were willing to die for their faith.

This whole account is a powerful illustration of the principle of Romans 12:1 [where we are told to present our bodies as a living sacrifice]. We see Satan trying to make the believer bow down to his idealized image of what men and women should be. Christians must resist this with everything they have and pursue God’s ideal. In this, we will fulfill Romans 12:2: *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

– David Guzik

The confession of Nebuchadnezzar in verse 28 brings out much about God that is true. This was what the testimony of Shadrach, Meshack, and Abed-Nego reflected to the whole watching world – and was so understood by the king.

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- He is the God of the Hebrews (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego)
- He is a God Who sends a Deliverer (sent His Angel)
- He is a God of power (delivered His servants)
- He is a God worthy of trust (who trusted in Him)
- He is a God Who can frustrate the king's word (Lord of kings)
- He is a God worth laying down your life for (yielded their bodies)
- He is a God Who demands exclusive allegiance (not serve nor worship any god except their own God!)

Instead of the **focus** being on the worship of the golden image, SUDDENLY we have the pagan king over the whole empire of Babylon giving praise to the God of the Jews. Instead of everyone going home and talking about the greatness of Nebuchadnezzar and his gods, you can be sure that all the general populous could talk about at this point was how Nebuchadnezzar now gave credit to the GOD OF THE JEWS for delivering His servants!

Just like that this went from being the BIG DAY for Nebuchadnezzar and his gods, to that of being a HUGE event to the glory of the God of Israel.

29 Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this."

What a tremendous windfall for the Jews. Just like that, the most powerful man in the world (humanly speaking in terms of position) made a decree that anyone who would dare to speak against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego would be cut in pieces and their houses made an ash heap. That has a way of quieting the critic.

One can almost see those Chaldeans who brought the hateful charges of accusation against the Jews slinking away in disgrace.

The king got the message: ***"There is no other God who can deliver like this."***

Amazingly, the king still wasn't converted. As we find in the next chapter, he was still full of himself and his pride. God was working on him, but he still had a ways to go.

In the event of Daniel revealing the king's dream, the king then came to this conclusion...

Slide # 13

Daniel 2:47 (NKJV)

47 The king answered Daniel, and said, **“Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets,** since you could reveal this secret.”

In this event Nebuchadnezzar was forced to recognize that Daniel's God was God over all other gods because of His omniscience in being a revealer of secrets. So, the point was made that the God of the Jews KNOWS as no other so-called God KNOWS.

Now chapter three adds to this that not only does the God of the Jews KNOW on a level above all others, but He also has POWER over all others.

Slide # 14

Daniel 3:29 (NKJV)

29 Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; **because there is no other God who can deliver like this.**”

No other god KNOWS like the God of Israel, no other God has POWER like the God of Israel. Maybe He should be your God! But again, Nebuchadnezzar wasn't there yet. He knew a lot about the God of Israel, but He wasn't yet his PERSONAL God. This was a LORDSHIP issue!

Nebuchadnezzar knew Him as “the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego (stated twice – once in verse 28 and again in verse 29), but not as “My God”. Nebuchadnezzar still had two problems: 1) He did not recognize YHWH as his own personal God, and 2) He did not recognize YHWH as the one and only true God.

In the resurrection when Doubting Thomas saw the risen Christ he said to Him, “**My Lord and my God!**” and Jesus then said to him, “**Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed.**” This is saving faith!

Saving faith, just like Thomas, believes in Jesus as your PERSONAL Lord and God – that is as your God-Master!

Nebuchadnezzar will get there (as seen in chapter 4) but he was not there yet. He needed an extended period of evangelization out in the pasture – but eventually he did come around.

Saving faith is not merely a matter of knowing the FACTS about God, but rather that of a personal commitment to Him for WHO He is as Lord and Savior. Even the demons believe the facts about God, but they have no allegiance to Him (Ja. 2:19).

This miracle of delivering through the fire is very unique in recorded history. It is named in the Hall of Faith chapter of Hebrews 11.

Slide # 15

Hebrews 11:34 (NKJV)

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.

By faith this was accomplished, but note that in the very next verse it says, “**Others were tortured**” and died some of the most horrible deaths.

In the book of Acts we find that Peter was miraculously delivered from the executioner but Stephen and James were not spared. Why the difference? Honestly, we often don’t know, other than God has His sovereign purpose and He calls us to trust Him.

God may deliver us from the executioner or He may deliver us to heaven. In either case, He delivers us.

Paul spoke about how God delivered him from so great a death “and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us” (2 Cor. 1:10). That was certainly an important part of Paul’s testimony.

However, at the end of his life knowing that his time was short, he wrote, *“And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom.”* (2 Tim. 4:18).

God is sovereign and we can trust Him to either deliver us from the trial or through the trial to heaven! Either way – it's ALL GOOD!

As recorded in the Word of God, it is characteristic of Gentile times that there will be tensions between obedience to God and obedience to men. This will reach its peak in the future great tribulation when once again the tension between obeying an earthly ruler and obeying God will result in many martyrs. – **John Walvoord**

30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the province of Babylon.

Daniel got promoted after he interpreted the king's dream (Dan. 2:48-49). Now his three friends (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego) got promoted after taking a no-compromise stand and coming through the burning fiery furnace. These three are mentioned 13 times in the surrounding context. Their testimony was a HUGE deal that God used greatly for His glory!

By one act of faith, the three Jewish men became witnesses of the true and living God to the entire Babylonian Empire.

– **Warren Wiersbe**

God knows how to promote His people -whether it be in this life or in glory!

Yet, the main character in view in this story was not Nebuchadnezzar or even the three friends of Daniel – rather it was the LORD Himself. He put Himself on display in a most amazing way. If we look carefully, God is always the leading character in the lives of His people.

A key lesson in Daniel 3 is that our choices, decisions, and behavior are determined by one of two things: Either they are determined by outward pressures or by inward convictions. In any given situation you are either going to be conformed by external pressure, or you are going to live out your internal principles. We will be tested.

What will drive us: Will it be external factors or internal convictions? This is always the challenge!

God works mightily through people of faith who TRUST Him for deliverance. It is proper to say, "God is ABLE and He will deliver us, BUT IF NOT we will not bow and we will not compromise." God honors this type of commitment – come what may.

Two true stories:

A Christian in Korea whose faith was tested when the Communists invaded his village. He was a young man who had an earnest faith and testimony, and continued to be witness for Christ in spite of their law against it. So they decided to make an example of him. They commanded the entire village to appear in the town square. And they led him to the center of the crowd and put a pistol to his head. And a soldier said, "***Denounce Jesus Christ and embrace Communism, or die.***" The young man looked around at the crowd, saw some there whom he had led to the Lord. Then he looked up to heaven and shouted, "***I believe in Jesus Christ. I believe.***" And bang, was shot dead.- ***Donald Campbell*** credited with this story as told by ***Dan Duncan***

Was that a wasted life? No. God is going to honor him for all eternity. That's what lasts. If God preserves us here or takes us to glory the important thing is that we be found faithful! Life on earth is brief! What matters is what matters for all eternity! -

Slide # 16

Romans 8:36–37 (NKJV)

36 As it is written: "**For Your sake** we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

37 Yet **in all these things we are more than conquerors** through Him who loved us.

Another true story.

Christianity is banned in Saudi Arabia. A young man was born close to Mecca and grew up going to the mosque five times a day. One day someone gave him a Bible and as he read through the New Testament he put his faith in Christ. Soon afterward a man accused him of being a convert to Christianity, for which he could be killed.

The authorities arrested and imprisoned him. In jail, he was tortured and eventually sentenced to death by beheading.

But on the morning of his scheduled execution, no one showed up to escort him from the cell. Two days later the authorities threw open his cell door and screamed at him: “***You demon! Get out of this place!***” The man learned later that his execution had not taken place because on the very day he was to be beheaded, the son of his accuser had mysteriously died. The new Christian is now quietly working to bring other Muslims to faith in Christ. – (From the Book WHAT IN THE WORLD IS GOING ON by David Jeremiah, p. 94).

We serve the LIVING GOD – the MOST HIGH God – the God Who is ABLE to deliver us and He will, but if not God help us to be faithful no matter what. This is our calling! God is faithful!

Live Ready!

Live in light of eternity!