

The Three Hebrew

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EVERYONE who trusts in God has the testimony that he knows God cares for him; and when God cares for you, He does it right. There is no fear of the outcome when you are trusting God; you know that He is the Almighty. There is nothing that He cannot do; there is nothing impossible with Him; and He says that there is nothing impossible to those who believe in Him, either.

In the third chapter of Daniel we are told of God's care for those who trust and obey Him.

"Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.

"Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

"Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

"Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages,

"That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up:

"And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour he cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

"Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of musick, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up."

There were three men who refused to fall down and worship the golden image. It was a perilous time in their lives for they held government positions. God had blessed them, promoted them, and given them grace in the sight of the king. Through King Nebuchadnezzar they had received many temporal blessings and rewards. They had been given responsible positions in the government of that country; and they probably felt that they owed the king a great kindness in return. But they knew the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; they knew that they could not bow down to that image and retain their fellowship with God, and please Him. They knew also that it was already decreed that if they did, not do what this king said, they were going to be cast into a burning fiery furnace. They knew, ahead of time, what awaited them.

When this decree went forth, I suppose they got together and talked the matter over: "Well, Brothers, this is it! It has come at last! What are we going to do? We know there is only one thing for us to do — we are going to serve God just as we always have. We are not going to bow down to that image of the king's nor worship any of his gods, either."

Another added his thoughts: "We realize that the king has done much for us, and we have a high position in this country, but we would rather keep our fellowship with God and keep His grace in our soul,

and have His blessings, than all the favors the king has to offer." Then the third probably spoke up and said: "Yes, and we know that all these promotions we have received came from God. It was God who put it into the heart of the king to promote us. And the king — with all his pride — is on his throne because God exalted him and put him up where he is. And God is able to bring him down, too."

I believe that was the trend of their conversation and the attitude they took. All Christians give God the credit for everything, and He deserves the credit, for He rules the kingdom of men. Today God is not asleep regarding the affairs of this old world. He is permitting things to take place that His Word may come to pass. Everything that is prophesied in this Book will be fulfilled — if it has not been fulfilled already — just as surely as there is a God in Heaven.

No doubt the conversation of these three Hebrews continued, and the question again arose: "Now what are we really going to do?" One spoke up and said, "We have a promise, you know — yes, we have a promise — the one God gave to Isaiah!" "What promise was that?" one of them asked. The answer came back: "You know what God said, 'Thus saith the **LORD** that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not' We understand, from those words, that God does not want us to be afraid in this matter. We have the God of Jacob on our side; and He is telling us not to fear. And furthermore, God said: 'For I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.' Is not that promise good enough for us?" "Yes," they all agreed, "and we will stand on that promise."

All this time their enemies were crying out against them. And our enemies are doing the same in our day. Do not ever believe that we are not being watched. There is a tremendous responsibility upon every Christian, for the devil has his spies out everywhere trying to get something on the Christian. If one walks in the light as Jesus is in the light, and is true to God, the devil is apt to lie to get something against that person.

These Chaldeans were holding the king to his decree, and they said:

"Thou, O king, hest made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, shall fall down and worship the golden image."

Furthermore, they reminded him that the decree said: "And whoso falleth not down and worshipping shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace." Then they said to the king:

"There are certain Jews whom thou hest set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy *gods*, nor worship the golden image which thou hest set up."

They told the king that when the music was sounding forth, and all the others were falling down and worshiping his image that these Hebrews would not bow down. When the king heard that, he really did get mad!

These wicked men knew the king had made this decree, and they were eager to know what he would do about it. The king, in his fury, declared there was only one thing to do — put these young Hebrews in the furnace. But first he commanded that they be brought to him.

"Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my *gods*, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?"

After he had talked with these three men he decided to give them another chance, so he said to them:

"Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?"

That was too much for those fellows. They knew right there that he **was** defying the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He was defying the God of the universe and saying, "Who is that God that shall deliver you

out of my hands?" They thought: We'll show him!

"We are not careful to answer thee in this matter.

"If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

"But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy *gods*, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up?"

That was their decision. Nebuchadnezzar **was full of** fury, and he commanded that the furnace be heated seven times hotter, and he commanded the strongest men in his army to take these men and bind them, with their hosen and their hats on, their coats and other garments, and to cast them into the fiery furnace. The heat was so great when those young men were thrown into the furnace, that the flame slew the men who threw them in.

These three Hebrew men went down into the fiery furnace. The king was sitting afar off, and as he was looking on he may have figured: "That's that! We got rid of that bunch of rebels." But his visage changed; a sickly pallor came over his face; and he began to shake in his knees. He called his sheriffs and wise men.

"Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king.

"Be answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

Didn't the Word of God tell them, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee"? Bless God, they were loose in the midst of the fire, and walking around — and Jesus was walking with them! Bless God, if you have Christ on your side, He will go with you through the fire, through the waters, and through the rivers — and you will come out without the smell of smoke on your garments. That is just what happened here.

"Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the bunting fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire.

"And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them."

When the king saw that they had suffered no harm, he called them out. Then he changed his mind about these men:

"Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.

"Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon."

That is the God we are serving this morning. He is right here. It doesn't make any difference what you are going through; if you are going through a great trial, don't forget that someone has gone through all you are going through, and a whole lot more. They have come through with flying colors. God wants us to fly our colors. If He has done these wonderful things for us we should never be ashamed. God says that a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. And if a man has a light, he doesn't put it under a bushel, but he puts it on the table and lets it shine that everyone may see the light.

That is what God wants today — the kind of people who are letting their light shine. That doesn't mean that we are always going around talking about our religion, and wearing a "Jesus Only" button. That is all the religion some people have. But this is the kind of salvation that works out, and feels out, and acts out, in your everyday life; and all these spies around you can't find anything against you only that you are serving the Lord your God.

That is all we want them to find against us. We want to keep pressing on and forging ahead.

Just remember that the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego is the God of His people today, and He has not changed a bit in the way of working miracles for His people if they only trust Him.