

**Faith in the Fire**  
**Dr. John Carmichael**

[Dan 3:12-27 NASB95] 12 "There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the administration of the province of Babylon, [namely] Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. These men, O king, have disregarded you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up." 13 Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego; then these men were brought before the king. 14 Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up? 15 "Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery and bagpipe and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, [very well.] But if you do not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?" 16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. 17 "If it be [so,] our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. 18 "But [even] if [He does] not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up." 19 Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with wrath, and his facial expression was altered toward Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. He answered by giving orders to heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. 20 He commanded certain valiant warriors who [were] in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego in order to cast [them] into the furnace of blazing fire. 21 Then these men were tied up in their trousers, their coats, their caps and their [other] clothes, and were cast into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire. 22 For this reason, because the king's command [was] urgent and the furnace had been made extremely hot, the flame of the fire slew those men who carried up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. 23 But these three men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, fell into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire [still] tied up. 24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up in haste; he said to his high officials, "Was it not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire?" They replied to the king, "Certainly, O king." 25 He said, "Look! I see four men loosed [and] walking [about] in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of [the] gods!" 26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the furnace of blazing fire; he responded and said, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, come out, you servants of the Most High God, and come here!" Then Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego came out of the midst of the fire. 27 The satraps, the prefects, the governors and the king's high officials gathered around [and] saw in regard to these men that the fire had no effect on the bodies of these men nor was the hair of their head singed, nor were their trousers damaged, nor had the smell of fire [even] come upon them.

- Everyone loves the testimony of victory. When the fire never touches us, the sickness disappears, the problem vanishes overnight. But the truth is, sometimes faith leads us straight into the furnace. Daniel 3 shows us three men who refused to bow, not because they were sure they'd avoid the fire, but because they were sure of who was in the fire with them.
- Alternate (minority view):
  - 1. Notice the italicized words in v 18.
  - 2. I, and others, argue that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego never introduce doubt about God's deliverance. On this reading, they're saying: "Whether you throw us in or not, we still won't bow; and if you do throw us in, our God is able (and will) deliver us from your hand." That's linguistically possible, fits the discourse flow from v. 15, and is documented as a recognized option in translator handbooks and technical notes; even though most modern versions choose the other interpretation for v. 18.

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- 3. v. 15 (A: Bow, Not Thrown In; B: Not Bow, Thrown In) , 17-18 (B: Thrown In, Delivered; A: Not Thrown In, Not Bow) . (ABBA) It follows a chiasmic structure.
  - Sources:
    - Jounaid I. Sabri, "Conditionality in Daniel 3:17–18," *Journal for the Adventist Theological Society* 20 (2017): 17–37.
    - Roger L. Owen and Eugene A. Nida, eds., *A Translator's Handbook on the Book of Daniel* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1990), 123–25.
    - "Tough Texts: Daniel 3:17," *Christian Standard Bible online commentary*, accessed November 2025, <https://csbible.com/articles/tough-texts-daniel-317>
    - Nicholas J. Vette, "The Many Fiery Furnaces of Daniel 3," *Biblical Interpretation* 30, no. 4 (2022): 379–400.
  - Faith is not proven on the mountaintop. It's proven in the furnace. When life heats up, when the pressure builds, and when compromise seems easier than conviction, that's where faith either melts or it matures.

### **What does Daniel 3 teach us about faith in the fire?**

**Here are four lessons about what faith in the fire looks like.**

#### **I. Faith Stands When Everyone Else Bows**

- a. [Dan 3:12-15 NASB95] 12 "There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the administration of the province of Babylon, [namely] Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. These men, O king, have disregarded you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up." 13 Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego; then these men were brought before the king. 14 Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up? 15 "Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery and bagpipe and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, [very well.] But if you do not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?"
- b. The crowd bowed because it was easier. But Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego stood because they knew who they belonged to. Faith isn't shaped in the crowd; it's tested in isolation. Sometimes obedience means standing tall when everyone else bows low.
- c. [Rom 12:2 NASB95] 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.
- d. [1Co 16:13 NASB95] 13 Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.
- e. Stand up in cultural pressure, moral compromise, and spiritual apathy. The world's music is playing loud, but true faith refuses to bow to convenience, fear, or political correctness. Stand up to the enemy and everything else that is trying to destroy your family, your future, and anything that concerns you.

#### **II. Faith Speaks Before the Fire Comes**

- a. [Dan 3:16-18 NASB95] 16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. 17 "If it be [so,] our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. 18 "But [even] if [He does] not, let it be

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known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

- b. They declared, "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us... and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king." Then they added, "But if not (or, if you do not throw us in), we still will not bow." That's not doubt. That's determination. They were saying, "Our obedience is not dependent on the actions of others."
- c. [Heb 10:23 NASB95] 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;
- d. [2Co 4:13 NASB95] 13 But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I BELIEVED, THEREFORE I SPOKE," we also believe, therefore we also speak,
- e. Encourage believers to confess faith before the outcome is visible. Don't wait for the fire to speak faith—declare God's power in advance. Faith that speaks before the miracle is faith that sustains during the trial.

**III. Faith Finds God in the Fire**

- a. [Dan 3:23-25 NASB95] 23 But these three men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, fell into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire [still] tied up. 24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up in haste; he said to his high officials, "Was it not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire?" They replied to the king, "Certainly, O king." 25 He said, "Look! I see four men loosed [and] walking [about] in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of [the] gods!"
- b. Nebuchadnezzar saw four men walking freely in the midst of the fire. The fourth looking like "the Son of God." God's presence didn't keep them from the fire; it met them inside it. The ropes burned away, but not their faith.
- c. [Isa 43:2 NASB95] 2 "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, Nor will the flame burn you.
- d. [Psa 34:18-19 NASB95] 18 The LORD is near to the brokenhearted And saves those who are crushed in spirit. 19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the LORD delivers him out of them all.
- e. When we face fiery trials (sickness, loss, betrayal) remember: the same Jesus who appeared in the furnace still walks through pain today. The fire you're in might be the very place you meet Him most deeply.

**IV. Faith Comes Out Without the Smell of Smoke**

- a. [Dan 3:26-27 NASB95] 26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the furnace of blazing fire; he responded and said, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, come out, you servants of the Most High God, and come here!" Then Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego came out of the midst of the fire. 27 The satraps, the prefects, the governors and the king's high officials gathered around [and] saw in regard to these men that the fire had no effect on the bodies of these men nor was the hair of their head singed, nor were their trousers damaged, nor had the smell of fire [even] come upon them.
- b. They didn't just survive. They came out unsinged. The fire burned their bonds but not their bodies. God not only protects. He purifies. The trial didn't destroy them; it defined them.
- c. [2Co 4:8-9 NASB95] 8 [we are] afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;
- d. [Jas 1:12 NASB95] 12 Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which [the Lord] has promised to those who love Him.

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e. When you come out of this fire, you won't smell like what you've been through. Your praise will be stronger, your testimony purer, your faith deeper.

- **Faith that stands in the fire discovers the presence of God in the hottest places of life.**
- **Every furnace moment becomes a platform for God's glory. Nebuchadnezzar's heart turned when he saw their faith. Your endurance in trial might be the very witness that turns someone else to Christ.**
- **When you refuse to bow, refuse to bend, and refuse to buckle, you'll find Jesus standing beside you.**