

(Daniel 3:1-2, 4-6 NKJV) “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. {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. ...{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.””

Life seldom heats up to this degree, but on occasion, it can. Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego were faced with the ultimate faith decision - a literal test of life or death. It was a moment in time that tried their personal commitment to God.

The test was this: Who were they willing to burn for?

- ✓ It was a test of faith in the face of intimidation.
- ✓ It was a test of faith in the face of overwhelming odds.
- ✓ Apparent impending disaster will try to turn you from your faith in God. It will use the full weight of its strength to capture you and recruit you to its cause.

Our tests may not always be life threatening but may be eternal life threatening. Tests and temptations seek to turn you from God to serve and worship something other than Him.

These young men had “Faith in the Face of the Furnace.”

- **They would not bow!**
- **They would not bend!**
- **Ultimately, they would find out:
They would not burn!**

They made a decision to worship God regardless of the consequences. Apparent outcomes are one of the devil’s biggest weapons. Satan presents them to us through a lens of fear, which tries to bring doubt to focus on the situation. His intended result is unbelief, which will cause you to bow and bend to him.

(Proverbs 14:12 ICB) “Some people think they are doing what’s right. But what they are doing will really kill them.”

*(Daniel 3:8-15 NKJV) “Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and accused the Jews. {9} They spoke and said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “O king, live forever! {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.” {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. {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? {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?”**”*

Apparent **Catastrophic** Consequences

(Daniel 3:16-18 NKJV) “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. {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. {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.””

People often choose to lose their trust in God. They change their behavior to what seems right for the moment. Their motivating factor is fear. The result is that their failure to trust God moves them away from His protective covering. In the case of the three Hebrew young men, there were clearly catastrophic consequences coming, should they refuse to bow to the image. They chose to believe God, behave accordingly and trust Him for the outcome. We can take that a step further.

They chose to trust Him regardless of what would happen - regardless of the outcome! For them, it was not an issue of rewards or outcome! It was an issue of believing God is who He says He is and trusting Him in all things!

A Statement of Faith in the Face of the Furnace

**“Our God is able to deliver us... and He will deliver us...
but if not... we will not worship your gold image!”**

In His wilderness temptation, Jesus faced the same choice.

(Luke 4:6-8 NKJV) “And the devil said to Him, “All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. {7} Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours.” {8} And Jesus answered and said to him, “Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’”

“Who will you worship when the heat is turned up?” Faith’s answer: Get behind me Satan!

**The defining characteristic of faith:
It is a determined choice. For whom will you burn?**

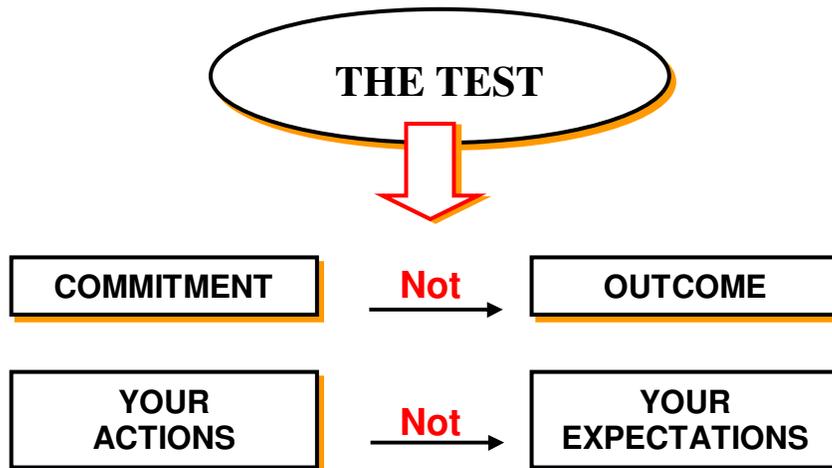
- Will you value your commitment to Christ so much that you refuse to be bound by the apparent consequences of the outcomes?
- Will the possibility of a painful end-product sway your resolve?
- Will doubt and rejection of your Christian stand capture you, and recruit you to its cause?
- Will you bow and bend?
- Will you turn away from God, deny Him and join the enemy’s camp?
- Will you burn before you turn... before you turn from God?

(Matthew 26:69-75 NKJV) “Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, “You also were with Jesus of Galilee.” {70} But he denied it before them all, saying, “I do not know what you are saying.” {71} And when he had gone out to the gateway, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, “This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth.” {72} But again he denied with an oath, “I do not know the Man!” {73} And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, “Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you.” {74} Then he began to curse and swear, saying, “I do not know the Man!” Immediately a rooster crowed. {75} And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.” So he went out and wept bitterly. Then he began to curse and swear, saying, “I do not know the Man!”

Could that ever be your answer?

Daniel 3:17-18 Paraphrased

“We’ll just zip our lips, great King. {17} Our God is well able to ice things down and stop us from frying in your furnace. But, even if He decides to let us burn, we will never turn! We will still choose to worship Him, and Him only. There is nothing that will stop us from trusting, obeying and worshipping Him. He alone is God! He is worthy of our worship!”



(James 2:17-20 NKJV) “Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. {18} But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. {19} You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe; and tremble! {20} But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?”

During times of unmet expectations, people turn away from God. They have focused on the expectations, which is good because you have to see with the eyes of faith. However, they failed the test of faith, because their commitment was linked to the outcome.

**Commitment to God is always to be linked to His Person.
It is never to be linked to the outcome.**

Faith in the Face of the Furnace says, *“Though he slays me, yet shall I serve Him.”* (Job 13:15a).

Job only had it half-right. The next thing Job said was, *“Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him.”* (Job 13:15b).

Get it right! Commitment to God is unconditional!

Their trial became their testimony!

Commitment to God is not entitled to any arguments! Servants obey without asking. Clay is molded without objection. Vessels are used as the master wills... without the necessity of their opinion or agreement. If God said it, that's it!

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego were in the midst of a trial. Their trial became their testimony. Observe that the testimony was spoken in the midst of the trial. They did not wait silently. Their words were their weapons.

- “We do not serve your Gods.”
- “Nor will we worship the gold.”
- “Even if He does not deliver us, our faith and commitment to Him will never waiver!”

(Daniel 3:19-22 NKJV) “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. {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. {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.”

Things will heat up when you declare your faithfulness!

(Daniel 3:23-25 NKJV) “And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. {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.” {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.””

When you walk with God, you can stand the heat!

The Issues



- Who are you willing to burn for?
- Who are you determined to worship?
- Who will you walk through the fires of life with?

The three young men had “Faith in the Face of the Furnace.”

- They would not bow!
- They would not bend!
- They would ultimately find out: **They would not burn!**

(Daniel 3:26 NKJV) “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.”

(Daniel 3:27 NKJV) “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.”

Notice the king only invited three to come out. It is doubtful he would have wanted a personal encounter with the Fourth Man!

When fear knocks, faith answers. Fear flees!

**Not only will your fear flee...
but the trouble will bow its knee!**

The trouble changed its tune! It sang a new song!

(Daniel 3:28 NKJV) “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!”

- Now who was bowing and bending?
- Notice → The fire had no power! Who had the power?

**Faith in the Face of the Furnace
has all the firepower you will ever need!**

When you have Faith in the Face of the Furnace, the devil has no choice but to change his tune, because you would not sing his song.

What about this story will fan the flames of our faith?

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego looked into the face of death refused to compromise? What can we learn from them to apply to our lives?

Never allow your faith to depend on the perceived performance of God. Stand in faith on the platform of God's immutable, holy character, which is wrapped in His never-failing love.

Personal Testimony of Dr. Bob Abramson **God is God in the Rain and the Sunshine**

In 1998, I was a missionary pastor and Bible school principal in the Fiji islands. It was during the rainy season that we were to have an open-air evangelistic meeting in a park in the middle of downtown Suva, Fiji's capitol. The students had spent a great deal of time preparing for the meeting. They had a lengthy program, which included music, skits, testimonies and preaching. We all were expecting a great turnout and hoping to see many people accept Jesus as Lord and Savior that day.

On the day of the meeting, a deluge of rain greeted the morning. It continued all day until the grounds where the meeting was to be held were soaked and flooded. Nevertheless, we set up our equipment on a covered stage and began to go through the program. The rain intensified as the program began. The students were valiant in their efforts to do what they had planned for so long. However, only a few brave souls huddled under some of the trees in the park, trying to stay out of the rain. For the most part, no one was there.

My wife Nancy and I were standing with an umbrella under a tree watching. The more the students tried, the harder it seemed to rain. It was greatly disappointing to see all their work turn to nothing. I was feeling angry at the weather. Suddenly, I felt my faith rise up in a kind of holy anger and I stalked to the stage, full of conviction. I strode onto the platform and took the microphone from the hands of a surprised praise singer. I spoke with the commanding voice of faith: *"In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, I command the rain to cease! I take authority over you and demand that you stop – right now, in Jesus name!"* I just knew it would. I never felt such faith in my life!

Well, it began to rain harder! In fact, it rained hard all through the day and into the next! It never even slowed. Needless to say, the outreach had minimal results and there was disappointment among the students. Why had God not answered our prayers?

It was about a week later, during a morning class session, that one of the students raised his hand and asked me why God did not stop the rain. Surely, the Lord heard our prayers and should have answered them – especially when the cause was so noble.

I thought about it a minute or two and then the same faith I prayed with on that platform a week ago rose up within me. Here is my reply: *“If we go back to that place next week, if we have the same music and skits and testimonies and sermons, if we have the same prayerful preparation, and if our expectations are as high as the sky, and if the rains come as they did last week and there is a torrential downpour...*

I would still walk to the stage, take the microphone and command the rains to stop. I would do it with as much faith or more, than I had last week when the rains did not stop. My expectation would still be that they would stop. I would take that microphone and say: “In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, I command you to stop raining right now!” I would believe that God would move and the rains would stop.”

As the students reflected on this, I said one more thing. Here it is.

“If after all that, the rains came down harder, God would still be God. If we went a third time, and the rains came I would still take the microphone and command the rains to stop. My faith is not dependent on the results. My faith is based on the character and faithfulness of God alone!”

The students went wild and a great noise of praise went up (along with their faith levels). They understood my point.

God is God in the rain and the sunshine. God is God in the good and the bad. God is God whether He answers my prayer or not. I will still believe Him and His Word. I will still open my mouth and exercise my authority. Nothing will take my faith away. Success or failure in my eyes will not spoil my perception of Him.

That is the real power in this Biblical history lesson!

Faith in the Face of the Furnace says:

- “Even if He does not deliver us, our faith and commitment to Him will never waiver!”
- “Though He slays me, yet will I serve Him.”
- “My commitment is not determined by the outcomes.”
- “My commitment is determined by my total trust and surrender to the One who saved my soul and who loves me.”
- There is such a fire for God in my heart that nothing can possibly interfere with it. Nothing has the power to quench it. Nothing has the power to withstand it.

Send me a rainstorm. I will declare the faithfulness of God and command it to cease, in Jesus Name!

If I find myself in the fire, I will stand tall, trusting Christ. Whether He quenches it or not, He is still God!