

God Is Able: The BLAZING FIRE

Daniel 3:1-30

I. As a follower of Jesus Christ, you can expect at some point to face persecution.

Nebuchadnezzar reacts in anger to the stand taken by the three Hebrew boys and determines to destroy them in the fiery furnace. The fire is so hot that it slays the men who toss them into the fire.

A. You, like the Hebrew boys, can be persecuted because of your standards.

The golden image set up by Nebuchadnezzar was to be worshipped (2 Cor. 6:17; Col. 3:1-2.)

B. You, like the Hebrew boys, can be persecuted because of your allegiance to the LORD.

The Hebrews will bow to nobody but Christ (read Matthew 10:37-38 and Luke 14:26-27.)

The Bible teaches us that we will suffer persecution in this life (see 2 Tim. 3:12; 1 Pet. 4:12).

Just like fire removes dross, persecution has the potential to remove corruption from our lives.

II. As a follower of Jesus Christ, you can expect at all points to be preserved.

The three Hebrews are cast into the fire, but an amazing thing happens. Instead of dying in the flames, they are loosed from their bonds and are walking around in the flames. Nebuchadnezzar cannot believe his eyes and commands them to come out, which they do, totally unharmed by the violence of the flames. Note how this amazing preservation took place; it happens the same for you.

A. They were preserved by an ever-present God (v. 25).

When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were thrown into the flames; they found that they were not alone. The God they had professed faith in earlier met them in the fire. The king and the others with him could not believe their eyes! Even in a furnace in Babylon, God kept His promise to His people (see Isaiah 43:2). We have the same promise as they did (Matt. 28:20).

1. They were free in the fire – All the fire did is burn away the things that had them bound.

Often, persecution seems like the worst possible thing that can happen in our lives, but it can prove to be the best thing we have ever experienced.

2. They were fine in the fire – We are told that they “have no hurt.” The fire did not kill them, it didn’t even burn them! God allowed them to go through the fire, but He did not allow the fire to go through them (see Romans 8:28; Jeremiah 29:11; 2 Corinthians 4:17).

B. They were preserved by an all-powerful God (v. 27).

We are told that not a hair was singed, there was no soot on them, and they didn’t even smell like smoke! (Can you see them sniffing these fellows?) What a miracle! That’s just God!

III. As a follower of Jesus Christ, you can expect at a future point to be promoted.

Everyone there that day came away with a greater understanding of Who God was and what God could do. Going in, the three Hebrew boys did not know what God would do for them, v. 17. But, they trusted Him anyway. Nebuchadnezzar thought that he was more powerful, but he learned! Notice what happened when Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were delivered.

A. God was praised – An old, pagan king exalts the name of the true God.

B. The boys were promoted – Because they were faithful to the Lord, they passed through the furnace. God never really uses anyone in a great way until He first takes that person through the furnace of affliction. You cannot stand on Mt. Carmel in power until you sit by the dry brook in humility. This truth is clearly seen in the life of Gideon, Judges 6-8. Gideon was a general with an army of 32,000. 22,000 left because they were afraid. Now, Gideon is a captain with an army of 10,000. 9,700 of those are rejected by the Lord. Now, Gideon is a sergeant with an army of 300. Then, he hears the enemy call him a “cake of barley bread.” That would be like being called a “dog biscuit.” But God took Gideon, “the dog biscuit,” and used him to win a great victory.