

BRYAN STATION BAPTIST CHURCH
THE PIONEER BAPTIST

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LESSONS FROM THE FURNACE

By: C. D. Cole

Daniel 3:8-25, *"Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the jews. They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live for ever. Thou, O king, hast 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: And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. There are certain Jews whom thou hast 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 hast set up. Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king. 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? 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? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, 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. Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He 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."

Introduction: You have read a thrilling story; more thrilling than anything you will ever read in any magazine. Several people are involved in this story; remember, it is a true story. Nebuchadnezzar was a very important person; great in his own eyes and the eyes of his contemporaries. Daniel 4:29-31 *"At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty."* Nebuchadnezzar was a very important man. He did not argue it, he just admitted it. He is the pattern man of pride.

This important man set up a golden image in the plains of Dura and commanded everybody in his jurisdiction on hearing the sound of various instruments of music, to fall down and worship the golden image. The image was ninety feet high and nine feet in diameter. It was a physical representation of himself as a great man.

Everyone obeyed the command except three men who were not of Babylon. They had come from afar, beginning as slaves they had by sheer merit and ability come to occupy rather high positions in the government. Some of the Chaldeans evidently envied them. They probably coveted their po-

sitions. They must have been little men aspiring to big positions.

But these Chaldeans saw their opportunity; the day for which they had been waiting had arrived. They were quick to observe that these three Hebrews, when they heard the music, did not bow down to that golden image. And with gleeful haste they reported the matter to the king.

The king was full of anger. He had thought well of these Jews, but they must obey him. He sent for them and asked them if the report were true. My text is their answer.

LIFE OF FAITH CONSISTS OF A SERIES OF CRISES

The road that faith travels is not always smooth and easy. There is the hill of difficulty and the valley of humiliation and the slough of despond and the lions by the way. We would like for the road to be smooth and pleasant and "Along the cool sequestered vale of life To keep the noiseless tenor of our way." But the poet's way is not our Father's way. Our Father knows the smooth road is not the best road.

Or to change the figure to that of a sea voyage; the way of faith is not a smooth way. On the sea of life there will be fog and tempest and raging waves. But now some people travel by air, but if you compare the life of faith to air travel it will be the same; it will not be smooth and always pleasant. There will be fog and air pockets and the ship [or plane] will stagger like a drunken man or plunge through space like a crazy man.

The life of faith is ever and anon disturbed by some crisis. Something different happens and we have to readjust ourselves. We cannot do today what we did yesterday. Open the record and see how this is illustrated in lives of ancient saints. Abraham settled in Ur of Chaldea and there comes a crisis. Genesis 12:1-4 "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that

I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him..." After a while he settles down again and things become a little more comfortable. And then he has to move again. He gets to Canaan and is shown the land, but soon there is a famine. He comes back from Egypt and things run smoothly for awhile and then another crisis: Lot leaves him. After another smooth stretch in the road there is another crisis: angels come to tell him of the threatened destruction of Sodom. Then he is disturbed because he has no heir. Finally Isaac is born, but only after Ishmael and that whole unpleasant affair with Hagar. And there is no end to his trials. As an old man he has to offer up Isaac. One can almost imagine his saying, "Is there to be no end to this thing? Can't I ever settle down to tranquility? Must I be disturbed again and again." It came to pass after this that God did tempt Abraham.

Brethren not one of us has reached the end of his trials, and that is what all our troubles are: they are trials of our faith. And they are for our good, not for our pleasure. I Peter 1:6-7, "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, through now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." At the appearing of Jesus Christ: do you not want to stand well on that day? We need not be so particular about the present; it is the future God has in mind in the trials He sends.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego must have had a comfortable time for awhile, but for the trial of their faith a crisis must come. They were in good positions in Babylon; and I suppose

were engaged in routine duties of the day, when suddenly there is the command to appear before the king. All of life was upset by this emergency.

What seems a terrible emergency is in reality a mercy. When any kind of discipline comes into your life, or mine, which will try our faith; that is a mercy. The flesh never welcomes it; it would never come by our consent. But it is for our safety and future good.

When the train pulls out of the station, it picks up speed and then acts as if it is going to stop. What has happened? The engineer is testing his brakes, to see if he can stop when he has attained real speed. So we have these trials on the road of life so as to test our brakes, to see whether all our powers are subject to divine control and responsive to His command.

It is the case of these three men. They were simple believers who worshipped Jehovah. They were doing well, living comfortable. They heard of the golden image, but said "That does not apply to us." It is not our God and we will go on our way and not bother about it. But at last, they are summoned into the king's presence and threatened with a dire penalty.

And this is the case with all of us. Certain stretches in the road of life we may travel with ease. But there are also forks of the road. There goes the crowd down that road, but that is not the right road. But everybody is doing it. That is the easy way; go with the crowd. But these men did not take that road, because they were men of faith.

"My old companions fare ye well,
I will not go with you to hell;
I mean with Jesus Christ to dwell,
Fare ye well, Fare ye well."

THE ANSWER OF FAITH

Listen to what these men said: Verse 16, "...we are not careful to answer thee in this matter." We don't need time to think it over. We do not even ask for time to pray about it. Our

minds are made up. We will not worship your god.

A lot of people talk silly, talk about praying. In face of some plain duty or some wrong practice say, "I will pray about it." A lot of things we do not need to pray about; except to pray for strength to act right in the face of them. You buy a suit and the clerk says \$40 please. You do not say, "Well, I will pray about it and if I am led to pay it, I will." You simply pay now, or promise to pay later, if you have credit.

We are not careful about this matter. The compromiser always has to be careful. Liars must have good memories. This is the philosophy of cross-examination. A man forgets what he says, and is tripped because he is not telling the truth. But the straightforward man talks straight or forward and does not have to be careful because he is telling the truth.

But someone asks what application does this have to us today. We are not having to choose between the true God and a golden image. Not exactly, but we are continually having to choose what we will do when tempted to do wrong and dishonor the true God we have professed obedience to. Temptations galore. Taking the smooth road at the expense of a troubled conscience.

Look carefully at what these men of faith said in Daniel 3:16-18 (quoted above). Note the preposition *from*. He is able to deliver us *from* the burning fiery furnace. Just now we do not know what means He will take in delivering us, but we will come out alright in the end; ultimate victory will be ours. He can halt the flames, if He pleases. But He may not will to do so.

Would you not like to be a hero? Would you not like to go in the flames? Yes, if you could be sure you would come out. But they did not know. They only knew there would be victory in the end; they believed Romans 8:28 "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to

his purpose." But they did not know how nor when the victory would come. Nobody would be a hero in going into the flames if he knew he would come out without being even scorched. But there was a margin to give faith an opportunity to exercise. But if not, it does not please him to deliver us from the flames. Daniel 3:18, "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 is our answer and it is final.

The king was full of fury and commanded the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual. These men were bound and cast into that terrible furnace. It was so hot that the soldiers who threw them in were themselves slain by the heat.

Then Nebuchadnezzar went to inspect his work. He looked in and saw four men having a good time in that furnace. He was puzzled and said we cast in only three men into the furnace and now I see four. This fourth was the angel of the Covenant, the pre-incarnate manifestation of the Lord of glory.

THE SEQUEL

Nebuchadnezzar changed his tune and attitude toward these men. He respected them. Verses 28-30, "Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God. Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing 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."

They had a new experience of divine fellowship. God did not deliver them from the furnace, but he did deliver them in the furnace. I think when they reached the door of the furnace they saw someone there and heard him say, "Do not be afraid, I am going in with you." All that happened was their bands were burned off.

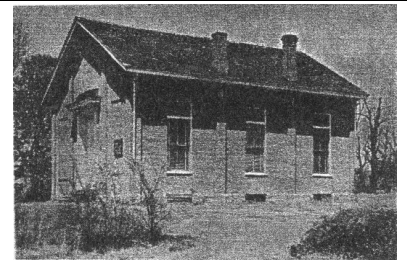
TAKING A LOOK BACK

From BSBC church minutes:

At a Church meeting held at the meeting house at Bryan's third Saturday in April 1788. Agreed to Consider some mode to be adopted for receiving Members into the Church from other Churches not in Union with us, the Church are of opinion that such members be received by giving the Church Satisfaction to such Questions as they Require. Query, what is the Duty of Church members, Referred. Then adjourned till meeting in Course. Henry Roach, Mdr., John Mason, Clk.

At a Church Meeting held at the meeting house at Bryan's Third Saturday in May 1788. Query from last meeting, Respectin the Duty of Church members, in what it Consents, First, we unanimously agree that it is the Duty of Church members Diligently to Search the Scriptures and to take them for the man of their Council. Secondly, that it is their duty to attend Church Meeting for Business as well as meeting for publick worship. Thirdly that it is Duty to Keep up the worship of God in their families morning and Evening. Adjourned to meeting Course. A. Dudley, Mdr., J. Mason, Clk.

At a church Meeting held at the meeting house at Bryan's Third Saturday in June 1788. The minutes with the Circular letter from our association held at Craig's meeting house South Elkhorn 31st of May, and first and second of June 1788 presented by our messengers and accordingly read. The Church Except to the terms, resolved and Excommunication. A motion made, whether our practice of not giving the right hand of Fellowship till after Baptism be continued. Agreed to discontinue said practice and so give the right hand of Fellowship when the Experience is recd. Then adjourned till meeting in Course. A. Dudley, Mdr., J. Mason, Clk.



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<i>Definitions of Doctrine</i>			<i>Face To Face With Paganism</i>	1.75	1.50
Volumes I, II, or III	5.00	4.00	<i>Infallible Proofs: Local Church</i>	2.25	2.00
<i>Lectures in Biblical Theology-N.T.</i>	4.50	3.50	Books by J. M. Carroll		
<i>Doctrine Of Election</i>	1.75	1.50	<i>The Trail of Blood (English)</i>	1.75	1.50
Pocket-size	.50	.50	<i>The Trail of Blood (Spanish)</i>	1.75	1.50
<i>Heavenly Hope</i>	1.00	.75	<i>The Eternal Safety/Security of</i>		
<i>Divine Order of the Sexes</i>	.75	.50	<i>All Blood Bought Believers</i>	1.50	1.25
<i>Eternal Punishment</i>	1.25	1.00	Other books		
Books by H. Boyce Taylor			<i>Courtship of Jesus – M. W. Hall</i>	6.00	5.00
<i>Studies in Genesis</i>	6.00	5.00	<i>Evangelism 101 – Matt Waymeyer</i>	1.00	.75
<i>Studies in Romans</i>	3.50	2.50	<i>Fully After The Lord – Steve Flinchum</i>	6.00	5.00
<i>Bible Briefs Against Hurtful Heresies</i>	3.00	2.50	<i>Rethinking Baptist Doctrine</i>		
<i>Acts of the Apostles</i>	3.50	1.00	–Various Authors	5.00	4.00
<i>Studies in the Parables</i>	1.25	1.00	<i>Resetting An Old Landmark</i>		
<i>Why Be A Baptist?</i>	3.75	2.75	–Tom Ross	2.50	2.00
<i>Women's Work in Baptist Churches</i>	.75	.50	<i>Studies in Types – J. A. Schmidt</i>	2.50	2.00
<i>Questions and Answers</i>	2.00	1.75	<i>Who Are The Baptists?</i>		
Books by Rosco Brong			– Curtis Whaley	1.75	1.50
<i>Christ's Church and Baptism</i>	1.75	1.50	<i>The Biblical and Historical Significance</i>		
<i>Following Holiness</i>	1.50	1.25	<i>of the Beard – Jesse Powell</i>	1.50	1.25
<i>Better Than The Angels</i>	5.00	4.00	<i>BSBC: Our History/Heritage</i>		
<i>Love Builds Up</i>	4.00	3.00	– Various Authors	5.00	4.00
Books by Mark W. Fenison			<i>God's Astounding Grace</i>		
<i>Baptist Women Exalted</i>	3.00	2.50	– D. Scott Meadows	1.75	1.50
<i>Once Delivered</i>	1.25	1.00	<i>The Revelation - Gerald Smith</i>	5.00	4.00
<i>Sunday-The 4th Commandment</i>	1.75	1.50	<i>An Examination of the Chemistry</i>		
<i>Why Infant Baptist is Wrong</i>	1.25	1.00	<i>of the Blood – J. C. Settlemoir</i>	1.25	1.00
<i>The Great Commission Credentials</i>	4.50	3.50	<i>Hell, Sheol, Hades, Gehenna, Tartarus</i>		
Books by Al Gormley			–Author Unknown	1.25	1.00
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 Don Waltermire, Assistant Pastor

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES:
Sunday Morning Devotion— 9:40 a.m.
Sunday School—10 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship—11 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship—6 p.m.
Wednesday Prayer Service—7 p.m.

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