

# DISCERNING DANIEL

## Purposes of Adversity

Text: Daniel 3:22-30

Introduction: In our study of Daniel 3:1-21, we watched the good times for the three friends of Daniel come to a screeching halt. In all probability, they had enjoyed many \_\_\_\_\_ as members of the magi and as rulers in the \_\_\_\_\_ of Babylon, a broad area surrounding the city, but including much countryside as well.

Their troubles began when King Nebuchadnezzar commanded the construction of a \_\_\_\_\_, possibly of himself, possibly of one of his pagan gods. The statue stood \_\_\_\_\_ feet tall and was covered with \_\_\_\_\_. At the dedication ceremony, the king declared that when the orchestra played, everybody must bow down and \_\_\_\_\_ the statue or they would be cast into the furnace in which bricks for the building of the glorious city of Babylon were fired.

Being high ranking \_\_\_\_\_ in the government, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego had to be at the dedication. As promised, at the signal, the royal orchestra played their tune, and everybody bowed and worshipped the image. Everybody bowed except Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. Somehow, they were not noticed by the watchful eye of Nebuchadnezzar himself, but some of their \_\_\_\_\_ among the magi who were jealous of their elevation to power, did not allow their failure to obey the king escape his majesty's attention. Like school boys seeking the \_\_\_\_\_ one of another, they told the king, "Those three Jews did not bow down and worship the statue."

Nebuchadnezzar was furious, but he liked Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. They had served him well for many years. Even better, Nebuchadnezzar liked their friend and mentor \_\_\_\_\_, who was obviously out of the province, probably on business for the king. He wanted to give the three another opportunity, so he suggested that maybe they just did not \_\_\_\_\_. So he gave them one more chance, but with a fearsome warning.

Daniel 3:15 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?"

It is as if the \_\_\_\_\_ put that question in Nebuchadnezzar's mouth, "And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?"

These three Hebrew men responded with courage and faith,

Daniel 3:16–18 16 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.”

Then the Scripture says,

Daniel 3:19-21 19 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.

God had allowed His faithful followers to fall into the pit of \_\_\_\_\_. To describe their ordeal as a fiery trial is not a figure of speech. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego were \_\_\_\_\_ by the palace guards and cast into the fiery \_\_\_\_\_.

Now we see what happened. Who is the God who will deliver them? \_\_\_\_\_ is His Name!

**Daniel 3:22-30 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. 23 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.”**

**26 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. 27 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. 28 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! 29 Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this.”**

**30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the province of Babylon.**

What a wondrous, miraculous rescue the One True and Living God performed on behalf of His children.

- Those who carried them to the mouth of the furnace \_\_\_\_\_ because of the heat,
- But the hairs on the heads of these servants of God were not even \_\_\_\_\_ nor did their clothes even smell like \_\_\_\_\_.
- Not only did their God deliver them, He came down from heaven and \_\_\_\_\_ them in the furnace! He was \_\_\_\_\_ them in the midst of their fiery trial.
- He not only preserved them, He set them \_\_\_\_\_.

While Nebuchadnezzar did not become a believer that the God of the Hebrews was the \_\_\_\_\_ True and Living God, he did become convinced that Yahweh was the most \_\_\_\_\_ of all the gods. The king said, "There is no other God who can deliver like this."

Last week we noted that God does \_\_\_\_\_ adversity, sometimes even tragic adversity and loss, to come into the lives of His children, even His children who are living \_\_\_\_\_ for the Lord. We said that tonight we would seek to understand \_\_\_\_\_ God sometimes allows this kind of trial and trouble to come upon those whom God loves with an \_\_\_\_\_ love and those who love Him in return.

I see \_\_\_\_\_ general purposes over and over in the Bible that God has in allowing adversity, even tragedy, in the lives of people, even in the lives of His children. We see each of these purposes fulfilled in the lives of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. We see the same things in the lives of many others in Scripture such as \_\_\_\_\_, Jeremiah, and even \_\_\_\_\_.

**1. God permitted adversity for the \_\_\_\_\_ of the three men.**

- Their \_\_\_\_\_ was deepened and enlarged.
- Their \_\_\_\_\_ was enhanced.
- Their opportunity for \_\_\_\_\_ was increased. (King Nebuchadnezzar promoted them to even more powerful positions.)

**2. God permitted the adversity to advance His \_\_\_\_\_ purposes.**

- The most powerful man in the world, King Nebuchadnezzar, was introduced to the All Powerful God.
- Many of the \_\_\_\_\_ of Babylon saw this miraculous action by God on behalf of His children as well. All who did not see it certainly \_\_\_\_\_ about it, probably over and over again!
- The faith of many of God's people who had been \_\_\_\_\_ to Babylon was also greatly encouraged and strengthened. This deliverance proved that although God had exiled them because of their apostasy and unfaithfulness, He had not \_\_\_\_\_ them.
- God's working in the midst of this adversity caused many, from Nebuchadnezzar on down, to realize that God had the power to \_\_\_\_\_ what He revealed in the king's dream to come \_\_\_\_\_.

**3. God was \_\_\_\_\_ by their successfully going through the trial.**

- God's presence was \_\_\_\_\_.
- God's power was \_\_\_\_\_.
- God's promises were \_\_\_\_\_ true.

**God not only permits adversity to come into the lives of His children, He \_\_\_\_\_ that it will happen!**

1 Pet. 4:12 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;

**What is God's promise to those who trust in Him when fiery trials come upon us?**

Hebrews 13:5 ...For He Himself has said, "I will never \_\_\_\_\_ you nor \_\_\_\_\_ you."

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego understood that God would be \_\_\_\_\_ them, but they also understood that did not mean they would not \_\_\_\_\_ in the fire of the furnace.

Daniel 3:17 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.

They were saying, "If you throw us in the furnace, our God will deliver us from \_\_\_\_\_ hand, even if He does not choose to deliver us from the \_\_\_\_\_."

God, who permits adversity in the lives of His children, does not always \_\_\_\_\_ them from the ultimate consequences of the adversity. Consider God's faithful servant \_\_\_\_\_ who preached Jesus to unbelieving Jews who did not want to hear.

Acts 7:54-60 54 When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with *their* teeth. 55 But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, 56 and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; 58 and they cast *him* out of the city and stoned *him*. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on *God* and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 60 Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

\_\_\_\_\_ of the twelve apostles were martyred for their faith in the Lord Jesus. None of them regret their faithfulness in spite of the great adversity that came upon their lives.

1 Cor. 2:9 But as it is written: "*Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who \_\_\_\_\_ Him.*"