

¹King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its breadth six cubits. He set it up on the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. ²Then King Nebuchadnezzar sent to gather the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

—Daniel 3:1-2 ESV

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⁴And the herald proclaimed aloud, "You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, ⁵that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up.

⁶And whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace."

7Therefore, as soon as all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, all the peoples, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up... ¹²"There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These men, O king, pay no attention to you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up." —Daniel 3:4-7, 12 ESV

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16Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king,
"O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. ¹⁷If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. ¹⁸But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."—Daniel 3:16-18 ESV

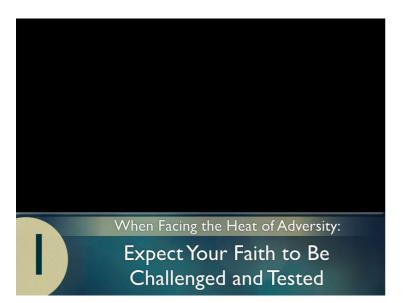
²⁴Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He declared to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king." ²⁵He answered and said, "But I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods." —Daniel 3:24-25 ESV

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²⁸Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent His Angel and delivered His servants, who trusted in Him, and set aside the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God." —Daniel 3:28 ESV



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²Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,

³for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.

⁴And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

—James 1:2-4 ESV

⁶In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ... ¹²Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.—I Peter 1:6-7; 4:12 ESV

"A faith that cannot be tested

cannot be trusted."

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⁸Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

—I Peter 5:8-9 ESV

"There is no way to know who you really are until you've been tested."
—Timothy Keller

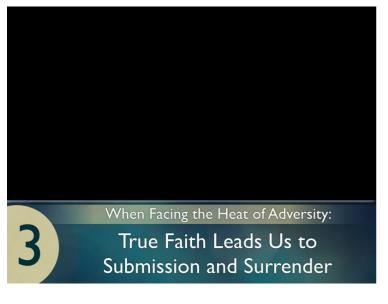
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"There is hardly one of us who does not know what it is to be betrayed. The figure of Judas, which we used to find so difficult to understand is now fairly familiar to us. The air that we breathe is so polluted by mistrust that it almost chokes us... Our duty is to foster and strengthen confidence wherever we can. Trust will always be one of the greatest, rarest, and happiest blessings of our life in community, though it can emerge only on the dark background of a necessary mistrust."

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer

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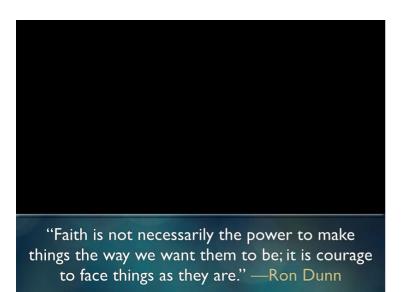


17"If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king.

18But if not, be it known to you,
O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

—Daniel 3:17-18 ESV

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And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

—Matthew 10:28 ESV

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But now thus says the LORD, He who created you, O Jacob, He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are Mine.

²When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. ³For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior." —Isaiah 43: I-3a ESV

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Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent His Angel and delivered His servants, who trusted in Him, and set aside the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God." —Daniel 3:28 ESV