

### Daniel 3: Three Wise Men Hold Fast 11-14-21

Nebuchadnezzar, the greatest king in the world in his time, created a golden idol that was to be worshipped by all his people. Yet there were three who refused to bow down to it. These three advisors to the king, Hanniah, Mishael, and Azariah, declared that they served only one God, and would not bow down.

*Daniel 3:16-18 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. 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. 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."*

Nebuchadnezzar was furious, and ordered them thrown into a fiery furnace. Yet afterwards he saw them (along with an unknown fourth) in the fire unharmed. He called them out, and proclaimed that their God was God.

As Christians, we will face persecution and trials (2 Timothy 3:12). This is a promise, because the world hates us (John 17:14). Our master says things and demands us to believe things that when contrasted with the wisdom of the world can feel embarrassing (2 Timothy 1:8). The three wise men faces persecution, public ridicule, and loss of favor by their stand for God. This is how it may be for us too.

We cannot give in to fear. It is not a sin to be afraid; the problem is when we give into that fear and act on it. We as believers are not to fear death (Hebrews 2:15) or the instruments of men (Hebrews 13:6). But how many people chose to stay away from worship during the COVID epidemic fearing death or public ridicule? How many people constantly fuel fears of government or public ridicule and persecution and even act on those fears, insulting and speaking evil of our leaders?

The three wise men serve as a lesson to us that God delivers His people. Nebuchadnezzar saw what he thought was the Son of God in the flames. Jesus tells us that He is with us, and that he knows what we are going through (Matthew 28:20). As if He were in the flames, so Jesus is next to us in difficult moments. But not only is He with us, he knows how to deliver us from these difficulties (2 Peter 2:4-9).

Hanniah, Mishael and Azariah chose early on to be on God's side. We need God with us; otherwise, we won't make it. But if we choose God, know that there will be difficulties in that choice. But if we remain committed, we will overcome.