



FIRE-PROOF FAITH

**Studies in Daniel
Chapter 3**

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Hope Church, Sunday 22 February 2009**



Topics

- **The basic story & application**
- **Three questions of faith**
- **One main lesson**

- **PS: Home security advice**

The basic story of Daniel 3

1-3. King Nebuchadnezzar sets up a huge image of gold, and arranges a dedication ceremony attended by all government officials.

4-7. At the ceremony all are required to worship the image or face death by burning – so they did.

8-23. Three Jewish officials (Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego) are denounced for not worshipping the image. Nebuchadnezzar gives them another chance to comply but they refuse. They are bound and thrown into a super-heated furnace.

24-27. Nebuchadnezzar sees the three men alive in the fire and a fourth person with them. He calls them out and they emerge unharmed.

28-30. Nebuchadnezzar praises their God, forbids people from speaking against him, and promotes the three Jews.

The basic application

- **Like Daniel & his friends...**
 - We live in a foreign culture (*“post-Christian”*)
 - Faith is either irrelevant or offensive
 - **So:**
 - How can we remain faithful to God?
 - How can we present a relevant challenge?
 - How can our faith survive & thrive?
- ... like Daniel & his friends**

Questions of faith – 1

- What was the image?



Questions of faith – 1

- What was the image?
 - 60 x 6 cubits, visible to all, dominating
 - All gold (compare chapter 2)
 - Representative (“*serve my gods ... worship the image*”)
 - Bow down & worship it
- Today’s golden image(s)?
 - Dominating influences of our culture
 - Demanding submission & compliance
 - “Gold” = materialism?
 - Romans 12:2 – conform or be transformed



Questions of faith – 2

- Where was Daniel?



Questions of faith – 2

- Where was Daniel?
 - The hero of the whole book (except ch 3)
 - Leader of the gang of four
 - Super-gifted in every challenge
 - Not there when they needed him
- Need my own faith in my own God
 - Can't rely on the faith of others
 - No super-heroes in God's kingdom
 - Faith for the ordinary person (1 Cor 1:26-29)

Questions of faith – 3

- **Where was God?**
 - Absolute certainty of his ability
 - No guarantee of his action
 - God appeared in the flames with his people
- **We cannot command God, but...**
 - He will always be with us, even in the fire
 - Identification (incarnation)
 - No need to be afraid

One main lesson

- **Different types of faith**
 - “*If... then...*” : conditional bargaining
 - “*If only...*” : wishful anticipation
 - “*Yes but...*” : qualified doubt
- **Fire-proof faith**
 - “*... but if not ...*” : unconditional trust
- **What was their secret ???**



So what?

- **God can deliver, heal, restore...** (Isaiah 43:1-3)
 - ... but if not ...
 - John 16:33, 2 Timothy 3:12, 1 Peter 4:12
 - Not necessarily delivered from adversity, but always delivered in adversity
- **God will be with us in tough times**
 - Emmanuel (Deuteronomy 31:6, 2 Corinthians 12:9)
- Hebrews 11:1 “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen”

**“I believe in the sun,
even when it is not shining.**

**I believe in love,
even when I do not feel it.**

**I believe in God,
even when he is silent.”**

Three things to remember

1. We live in a post-Christian culture with pressure to conform – don't!
2. We face opposition & intimidation – no need to be afraid
3. Life can be difficult – God is always with us in all circumstances

PS : Home security advice

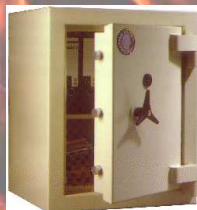
- Are your valuables safe?



£2,000 cash

£20,000 valuables

Fire rating 1 hour



£25,000 cash

£250,000 valuables

Fire rating 12 hours

Unlimited cash & valuables, bomb-proof



Two key questions

1. How much faith have you got?
2. How much faith do you need?



The answer : “*Don’t know*” (x2)

1. ... until it’s tested
2. ... until you get there

Need to trust God in all circumstances

- Based on **relationship** not results
- Who he is, not what he does (or doesn’t)

A final story

Corrie ten Boom’s train ticket

