

I. Introduction and Review.

II. Your commitment to the LORD will be tested by the world. v. 1-7

- A. What is the meaning of Nebuchadnezzar's image? Isa. 46:6 Gen. 11:4
1. The image is designed to symbolize the greatness of Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon and to promote the political and religious unity of his empire.
 2. It is possible to experience religious convictions without being converted! 2:47
- B. Nebuchadnezzar's act is part of ongoing battle between the counterfeit kingdom of darkness and God's kingdom. 7:25 Re. 13:8-18 II Th. 2:4
1. An anti-kingdom led by an anti-christ. v. 1 Rev. 13:8
 2. An anti-gathering of the nations. v. 2-4 Rev. 13:7 5:9 7:9
 3. Anti-worship. v. 5,7 Rev. 13:8 Rom. 1:25 Ps. 150:3-5 95:6
 4. An anti-judgement of fire. v. 6 Rev. 13:15 20:10,14-15
- C. What reasons might Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego have considered in favor of bowing before the statue?
1. *Everyone else is doing it!* v. 7
 2. *We can do more good for God and His people alive than dead.*
 3. *The cost of obedience is too high.* v. 6
 4. *It is a small thing. God will forgive one brief insincere act.*
 5. *We are in a strange land and should respect their customs.*
 6. *We are to obey those in authority over us.* Rom. 13:1-2
- D. Believers have been tested throughout history.

III. Courageously take your stand for the LORD. v. 8-18

- A. You may not be allowed to quietly live by your convictions. v. 8-13 II Tim. 3:12
John 15:18-19
- B. You will face intense pressure to conform . v. 13-16 I Pe. 4:4,22
1. Nebuchadnezzar gives them one last chance to capitulate -- Turn or Burn! v. 15a
 2. He defies God to deliver them. v. 15b 2:11 II Kn. 18:33 Isa. 36:18-20 37:10
- C. Boldly take your stand for the LORD. v. 16-18
1. Why do the three men refuse even at the apparent cost of their lives? Ex. 20:3-5
Acts 5:29 Dt. 5:7-9 Mt. 10:28
 2. They do not try to plead their case. v. 16 Ecc. 3:7 Luke 23:9
 3. They have complete confidence in God's power to deliver them. v. 17 Jer. 32:17
Ps. 115:3 Isa. 43:1ff
 4. They are in full submission to God's perfect purposes. v. 18a Dt. 29:29 Mt. 26:39
I John 5:14
 5. They are willing to die for their convictions. v. 18b Job 13:15 He 11:32-38,13-16
Acts 7:54-60 9:23-25 Phil. 1:20-21
- D. Are you willing to obey God at any cost? Mark 8:34-38 Mt. 10:37-39

IV. God will deliver you. v. 19-30 Ps. 68:20

A. You may not always be delivered from fiery trials. v. 19-23

- 1. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego are not delivered *from* the fire!**
- 2. God allows many Christians to enter the fires of affliction. I Pet. 1:6-7 4:12ff**

B. God is with you in your trials. v. 24-26 Isa. 43:2 Heb. 11:34 Mt. 28:20 Dt. 4:20

- 1. Who was with them in the fire? v. 28 6:22 Gen. 18 Isa. 43:1-2 Ex. 3:12 Mt. 28:20**
- 2. It is better to be in the furnace with Christ than outside with Nebuchadnezzar.**

C. God is glorified by your faithfulness. v. 27-30

- 1. God's deliverance is perfect. v. 27**
- 2. The occasion Nebuchadnezzar intended to bring praise to himself and his gods is used to display the glory of the one true God!**

V. Concluding Applications.

- A. We do not suffer in the furnace of affliction alone. God has sent One to be with us.**
- B. Will you trust Him to be with you even in fiery trials? Heb. 13:5 4:16**

Discussion questions

- 1. What was the purpose of Nebuchadnezzar's great statue?**
- 2. What in our culture serves a similar purpose?**
- 3. Why did the young men refuse to bow to the statue?**
- 4. What trials might we face which resemble what these three young man went through?**
- 5. Can we assume that if we just have enough faith God will deliver us from our trials?
Why or why not?**
- 6. How does Nebuchadnezzar's gathering resemble last times events described in Scripture?**
- 7. Where in this text do we see Christ?
How does this help us?**