

Fresh Fire Ministries
The Expository Teaching Ministry of Jay Duane Driver

“The 4th Man”

“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.” Daniel 3:25 (NKJV)

The story is familiar to most if not to all. For those who may be unaware, perhaps this would be a good time to become acquainted with this episode in the life of three young Hebrew boys. Regardless of how many times this passage may be taught, preached, or explained, there is still great insight and encouragement to be gleaned from its contents. The narrative is so powerful that it never grows old, nor becomes one to be discarded because it is no longer applicable. It still carries great weight. Its strength is in the reminder that God is always with us. He promised then not to leave us, and He promises now, never to forsake us. Through times of great faith He is with us. Then when the times come, and they will come, that our faith is under fire He is never found retreating or relenting from what His word has said.

The three Hebrew boys have decided to participate in an act of civil disobedience. They are young men caught up in the Babylonian Captivity under the tyrannical and treacherous rule of King Nebuchadnezzar. They are there because of the disobedience of a nation, and the sovereign act of God, which in turn is the fulfillment of a prophetic warning. **“And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.” Jeremiah 25:11 (NKJV)** They have been ordered by the king to bow down and worship the golden image that he had constructed. They refused. Under penalty of being thrown into a fiery furnace as the consequence of their actions they would not bend and they certainly would not bow. Their response is certainly one that we should consider when faced with the fiery trials of life. They believed that no matter the outcome, that the God that they served, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would deliver them.

Let's pause here to say parenthetically that “fiery trials” are not exclusive to the three Hebrew boys. If you have yet to face one in your personal life just keep living. **“Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you.” 1 Peter 4:12 (NKJV)** The reason that fiery trials are not strange is because they are common. Everyone will have the opportunity to experience a trial that has been set on fire by circumstances that are beyond what we can handle alone. They are oftentimes multi-directional and simultaneous, unknown and perhaps unwarranted, yet they are an integral part of life and our relationship with God. They are not necessarily a form of punishment, but can often be self-inflicted as a result of circumstances that we may have personally created as a result of our behavior. Or due to choices that we have made without the slightest regard or ability at that time to discern the consequences. Nonetheless, we are never in the fiery trial alone.

The three Hebrew boys decided to obey God rather than man. Even while under the governmental authority of the king of Babylon, they chose to disobey the decree and suffer the penalty for doing so. Now they are thrown into the midst of the fiery furnace that had been turned up 7 times hotter than normal. The normal firing temperature of a brick firing furnace is typically 1832 degrees Fahrenheit. Heated 7 times that temperature would be 12,824 degrees Fahrenheit. The heat of this fiery furnace was so intense that it actually killed the men that threw them in. But in the midst of the furnace when King Nebuchadnezzar looked in to observe what he thought would be the Hebrew boys demise, he saw what he least expected. Had he miscounted? Three Hebrew boys, one, two, three, but there was now a fourth man! Who was in the form of the Son of God. Who was this fourth man? Jesus Christ himself, in pre-incarnate form walking around protecting the three Hebrew boys from the flames of the furnace. They were never alone, never by themselves, and never without the presence of God. In the midst of our most fiery trial God doesn't show up in the nick of time. He's already there, waiting to deliver us.

