

THE SUPREME GOD REIGNS OVER ALL

Lessons in Daniel (Chapters 1-3)

by Paul G. Apple, February 2003

For each section:

- Thesis statement ... to focus on the big idea
- Analytical outline ... to guide the understanding
- Devotional questions ... to encourage life application
- Representative quotations ... to stimulate deeper insight

Daniel 3:17 *“our God whom we serve is able to deliver us”*

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TEXT: Daniel 1:1-21

TITLE: *MEN FIT FOR SERVING THE KING
QUALIFICATIONS FOR SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP*

**BIG IDEA:
THE SOVEREIGN GOD RAISES UP LOYAL LEADERS AND EQUIPS THEM
TO ACCOMPLISH HIS PURPOSES**

Background (1:1-2) The moral and spiritual decline of Israel led to the coming of Nebuchad. against Jerusalem and the Babylonian Captivity. This was a desperate time for the preservation of God's people. God uses evil men and nations to chastise His own people.

God took away:

- Israel's power (her king and capital city)
- her pride (desecrating the temple and carrying off the vessels)
- her people

Daniel and his friends were being groomed to serve the king as wise men. They stood on their convictions, submitted to the authorities over them, and trusted the Sovereign God to prosper them. The name of the Lord and His honor before these pagan rulers are clearly at stake in this historical context.

I. YOUNG MEN OF POTENTIAL (:3)

- A. Their Nature -- young men of the royal family
We have been born into the King's family and make partakers of the divine nature; given all that pertains to life and godliness; a high calling
- B. Their Advantages
the best environment and training; such men would have a certain bearing (dignity, poise, etc.)
- C. Their Age -- the timing was right to develop these men for long term positions of leadership

II. YOUNG MEN OF PROVEN WORTH (:4)

These were young men, but not untested. They had demonstrated excellence according to their appropriate level of maturity:

- A. Physical Excellence (in the case of spiritual leadership the emphasis would be on spiritual character)
 - 1. Negative Perspective -- no apparent defects (Do we have any apparent weaknesses we should be correcting?)
 - 2. Positive Perspective -- attractive; much to commend themselves (Does our character adorn the gospel and attract others to Christ?)

B. Intellectual Excellence

1. Aptitude for learning (general statement)
teachable spirit; keen mind; diversified aptitude
2. Retention and recall of previous learning
3. Ability to assimilate new teaching
good discernment, disciplined mind, ability to correlate
the unknown to the known
4. Summary -- "*who had ability for serving in the king's court*"
Whatever it took they had the aptitude for serving in this most
demanding position

III. YOUNG MEN OF PREPARATION (:4B-5)

proper training for service

- A. The Proper Teacher -- Ashpenaz, chief of the king's court officials
(many people today get their training from the wrong men)
- B. The Appropriate Course of Study
- C. The Provision of Material needs
Caution: don't be defiled in this area
- D. The Prescribed Period of Training (goal-oriented training)
- E. The Transformation of the Students (:6-7)
they were assigned new names as part of the total program to
Babylonionize them

IV. YOUNG MEN OF PURITY (:8-16)

refusal to compromise convictions

(This section provides a good example of what Bill Gothard talks
about regarding the proper procedure for proposing a creative
alternative to still fulfill the intention of your authority figure
without compromising your purity)

- A. Daniel's Determination (acting as a spokesman for the others)
- B. Daniel's Petition to the chief official
(Note: Daniel had already established a good relationship with
this official)
- C. Daniel's Specific Proposal to the guard (:11-14)
- D. Successful Results of the test (:15-16)

V. YOUNG MEN OF PROSPERITY (:17-21)

- A. God blessed them with special wisdom and insight
- B. The king recognized their abilities and gave them responsible
opportunities for service
- C. Daniel enjoyed security

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Consider how much change these young men were forced to experience. Think of the insecurity of being in a foreign land with a different culture and facing the pressure of conformity. What type of convictions do we have to anchor our soul under such forms of pressure?
- 2) What are our standards for purity? Where do we draw the line for defilement? Do we constantly get sucked closer and closer to the world's standards?
- 3) Note how respectful Daniel was in his appeal to authority. What steps did he take to avoid being unduly confrontational? Where did he draw the line in terms of not being willing to compromise? How thoughtful and careful are we in what we say in controversial situations?
- 4) Consider how amazing it was that these foreigners should rise to such positions of prominence. What does that teach you about God's providential power to raise up those whom He chooses to favor?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Derrick Strickland: "A NON-NEGOTIABLE FAITH

INTRO: Sometimes our faith can become an inconvenience. It will place us in inconvenient situation.

I. A NON-NEGOTIABLE FAITH MEANS THAT WE HAVE ESTABLISHED NON-NEGOTIABLES IN OUR LIVES.

II. A NON-NEGOTIABLE FAITH NEED NOT BE CONFRONTATIONAL.

III. A NON-NEGOTIABLE FAITH MEANS EMBRACING THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR CONVICTIONS."

Darrel Davis: "We are going to look at three principles that will help us to live in this world without becoming like this world:

I. SOMETIMES YOU JUST HAVE TO GO AGAINST THE FLOW (v. 8)

II. SOMETIMES YOU JUST HAVE TO STAND FOR WHAT'S RIGHT (v. 8)

III. SOMETIMES YOU JUST HAVE TO EXERCISE YOUR FAITH (v. 12-13)

Conclusion: Do you have what it takes to live in this world without compromising?"

Mike Spain: "The Pursuit of Excellence

1. The pursuit of excellence will most always seem foreign to those on the OUTSIDE looking IN!

(See Dan. 1:10 and 3:14)

2. Excellence will never ever COMPROMISE!

(See Dan. 1:8 and 3:17-18)

3. Excellence may be COSTLY!

(See Dan. 3:19-20)

4. Excellence will PAY off in the long run!

(See Dan. 1:15, 18-19 and 3:25, 28-29)"

Stedman: "A second precaution God has taken in Daniel, and even more especially in the book of Revelation, is that he doesn't introduce the prophetic section first, but brings us through six chapters into an understanding of the moral character he requires of the reader before the prophetic program can begin to make sense. In other words, you can't understand the last section of Daniel unless you have lived through and understood what is involved in the first six chapters. There is no way to understand what the prophetic program means unless you first grasp the moral lessons of the first part of the book. There is no way to cheat on this. You can't just read it through, and then turn to the prophetic program and hope to understand. You will find that you get nothing out of it. You really have to carefully analyze these initial chapters, think them through, begin to walk accordingly, and experience them, before the prophetic program comes to life. That is the glory of God's book. You can't understand it with just the intellect. . .

The first six chapters are for you if you are a teenager going to school where you are surrounded constantly by those who seem to have no interest in what God is like, or in the things of God. Daniel and his friends were themselves teenagers when they were first taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar and carried off to the land of Babylon. As they began their career of faith, they did so with a total lack of understanding of life and with all the insecurity of a teenager in a hostile environment. The book records in these first six chapters the pressure they underwent as they stood for their faith in the midst of these difficult surroundings."

TEXT: Daniel 2:1-49

TITLE: *INABILITY VS SUFFICIENCY*

BIG IDEA:

MAN'S INABILITY REQUIRES GOD'S SUFFICIENCY --TRUE WISDOM AND POWER COME FROM THE SOVEREIGN GOD

Background:

This chapter exposes man's inability (his limitations) and God's gracious sufficiency. In himself man is bankrupt in the realm of spiritual wisdom and power. We bring nothing to the table. However, the Sovereign God, the one who controls all of history, the one who possesses all wisdom and power, graciously gives wisdom and power to His servants as they need it.

I. MAN'S INABILITY

A. The Inability of Man's Power (:1-6) Picture of Nebuchad.

He was frustrated. Despite all of his power he did not have the capacity for knowing and controlling the future. Therefore, despite his present success, he could not be assured of the permanency of his kingdom.

Even men of power have needs and can never be self-sufficient. Zech. 4:6 -- "Not by might nor by power (of men), but by My Spirit says the Lord of Hosts"

our work for God cannot be forced; it depends on God's timing, His purposes, His granting of favor and fruit

B. The Inability of Man's Wisdom -- educated men and spiritual imposters (who do not have a vital relationship with God); Picture of the class of magicians -- the wise men priests who served in the court of Nebuchad.

1. The Best Education is Insufficient

our culture tends to think education is the answer to every problem

2. The Best Experience is Insufficient -- they had been offering counsel for many years

3. The Failure of Man's Wisdom is Exposed in Time of Crisis

a. Opportunity was not the problem -- they were the first ones called in by the king and asked to help

b. They had been masquerading as "servants" of the king, but really they were serving their own selfish interests (:4)

c. They tried to conceal their inability by redefining their mission (decreasing the difficulty of the task)

d. They hid behind a polite, religious facade

e. They promised much more than they could deliver

- f. They feared a strict accountability (:5-6)
they were not accustomed to playing for such high stakes
- g. They resort to stalling when pressed for results (:7-8)
(they believe that given enough time they can confuse people into thinking that there has been some progress)
- h. They support one another in their deception and falsehood
- i. When finally exposed, they seek to justify their inability
 - 1) The task is too difficult for any man (Why didn't they just confess this at the beginning?)
You have asked the impossible and the unreasonable
 - 2) There is no access to divine revelation (:11)
they maintain the existence of their gods and yet the helplessness of their gods to communicate to man. These men are not channels for divine communication
- J. They deserve the immediate wrath of the king (:12-13)

C. The Inability of Genuine Spiritual Leaders (in themselves)

Picture of Daniel -- God's Servant

1. The importance of an honest and prudent approach
He didn't rant and rave and pout: "Why didn't you come to me first?" :14-15
(we must deal with people wisely and lovingly in order to gain a hearing.)
2. The importance of confessing our need publicly
He confessed His need in 5 areas -- He needed these 5 things in order to accomplish the task:
 - a. Insight into the nature of the problem and the urgency of the situation
 - b. Time to ask God for wisdom (:16)
Required great boldness to make such a tough request to the king after the stalling of the other magicians had just been rebuked
 - c. Support of other godly men in corporate prayer
 - d. Compassion and grace of God (nothing guaranteed)
 - e. Revelation from God of the mystery
3. The importance of giving God all of the credit
Daniel's response of thanksgiving (:19) showed his inability. He was quick to give God all of the credit. He did not represent himself to the king as possessing special inherent powers. Maintain the distinction between God and man. Some leaders forget their inability after God has worked thru them for repeated successes. The people must make sure they are trusting the resources of the All-Sufficient God rather than the charisma of a particular leader thru whom God might be working.

II. THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE SOVEREIGN GOD --

The Sovereign God Is Our Source for True Wisdom and Power (:19-23)

A. The Character of God Means Sovereignty

1. He is the God of the Heavens--in contrast to the religious superstitions of the Babylonians
2. He is worthy of all worship -- Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever
3. True wisdom and power are his domain

B. The Actions of God Demonstrate His Sovereignty

1. He Controls Time and Space (all the dimensions known to man)
"changes the times and the epochs" -- the message of Daniel is God's unfolding of these times and epochs before they ever happen--an overview of world history and of the special role of Israel in God's program
2. Source of all Authority
"removes kings and establishes kings" (Rom.13:1)
3. Source of Wisdom and Knowledge
4. Gracious to give us wisdom and power when we need it to accomplish His will (1 Cor. 1:26-31)

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) What principles about interpreting prophecy do we need to apply to this section of Daniel? What are some of the mistakes in interpreting prophecy that we need to avoid? Note the liberal bias of commentators who reject the early date for the book of Daniel on the basis that he could not possibly have accurately predicted so many details about world history ... Daniel teaches us clearly that (vs 28) *"there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days."*

2) Notice the combination of *"discretion and discernment"* in vs. 14. What are the consequences of missing either one of these two key ingredients?

3) To what or to whom do we wrongly attribute wisdom and power when we should be giving glory to the God who stands behind all wisdom and power?

4) In the midst of troubling world events and precarious times for our nation, how does the sovereignty of God and His control over the kingdoms of this world provide us with comfort and encouragement?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Tiger Gullett:

1. "My Wisdom Disgraces The Wisdom Of Man." v.1-27, 30 (Key Verses: 1-10, 19, 27, 30)
2. "I Desire To Reveal The Mysteries Of The World And My Word." v.27-30
3. "I Am The God Of Yesterday, Today, And Tomorrow." v.31-33, 36-43
4. "I Will Strike Down Earthly Kingdoms, And Rule From An Eternal Throne." v.34-35, 44-45
5. "I Will Use Simple Men To Exalt My Name And My Kingdom." v.46-47
6. "I Will Bless Those Who Serve Me From The Heart." v.48-49

Bradley Boydston: Big Problem, Big God, Big Answers
OUR GOD IS BIG ENOUGH TO GRANT EVEN THE MOST DIFFICULT
REQUEST. This is the key point this morning. . .

There is a children's song that says it all so well. (And isn't that the way it often is? When you're in a pickle go back to what the preschool Sunday School teacher taught you.)

"My God is so big, so strong and so mighty! There's nothing my God cannot do! FOR YOU!"

That's the message of Daniel. And that's the good news.

Dan Morrison: Confidence in God's Revelation

Will this crisis turn into a disaster or will Daniel turn it into an opportunity for faith? As we study together this morning let us see if we can relate. You and I will encounter difficult and different circumstances that have the potential to change life, as we know it. Will these circumstances be the factor that causes us to lose our confidence in God or will it be an opportunity for us to continue to have confidence? Confidence is so important as we go about our daily lives, both in our relationship to God and our relationships to others.

1. Daniel's Dilemma 2:1-13
2. Daniel's Decision 2:14-24;
 - a. He did not panic; 14-16; he did not get angry and try to get even; he used discretion and discernment; an attitude not of defeat or fighting back or trying to get even for being put in this position; He acted instead of reacting;
 - b. He prayed; v17-19 he is seeking God, why, because he has confidence in God. If God

cannot resolve this it can't be resolved, and he with faith and confidence is going to give God a chance. And what does God do? He comes through v19; How many of us pray really giving God a chance? Do we pray thinking this has gone too far, it is beyond the scope of fixing? Why seek God if you don't have confidence in Him? Don't waste your time or pretend, just go ahead and let the disturbed king have his way. (The enemy). He wants to destroy you, and while he picks up on something that he thinks will work, why don't you put him to shame by seeking God earnestly?
c. He praised; 20-23; note what Daniel has to say about the God he has confidence in; We need to ask ourselves, do we believe this about God? If the answer is yes, then we pray and wait accordingly.

3, Daniel's deliverance v24-30; will Daniel's deliverance come? Only if he takes what God has revealed into the situation. This is critical. If he does not take what God has given him and tell the king or as we would say, apply it, the dilemma still exists. This was a hard word, this kingdom will be destroyed eventually and do you think for one minute that the king will want to hear this? No, but Daniel knows that this is the revelation God has given so he must take it into the situation. He gives God all the credit and takes this before a pagan king, what a risk. Once God reveals something to you stand on it, take it into the situation and you will not be ashamed or defeated. Will they always respond to the revealed word of God? No but that is not our problem. Our deliverance comes at the hand of God not the one we are presenting the word to.

Robert Deffinbaugh: The Dream Which Nearly Became a Nightmare --
To summarize the story up to this point, the situation looks dismal, if not disastrous, and by divine design. Only when things seem impossible is God's hand undeniably present. The king's demands were unreasonable because they were impossible, humanly speaking. Here at the point of impossibility, the powerlessness of the "gods" of the heathen became evident. The wise men who stood before Nebuchadnezzar confessed with their own lips that their gods could not accomplish what the king demanded. They even admitted that any "God" who could fulfill the king's request would be a "God" of a different (higher) order. . .

(2:17-24)

First, Daniel's praise focuses on the superiority of God to the "gods" of Babylon. Neither the wise men nor their gods could satisfy the king's demands. They were too difficult for them. God revealed the dream and its meaning for the king. The God who answered the prayers of Daniel and his friends was the "God of heaven" (verse 19), the God about whom the wise men spoke but did not know. As opposed to the Babylonian gods, whose purposes and plans were determined by the stars and seasons, the God of heaven changes the times and epochs.³⁵

Second, Daniel's prayer gives insight into the message which God was giving to Nebuchadnezzar through his dream. As the king pondered the future, God informed him through his dream that the future is in God's hands and is not determined by kings. Indeed, even the rise and fall of kings is the work of God and not men. Wisdom and

power belong to God; and thus the king, who was looking to men, should have been looking to the God of Israel for wisdom.

Third, the dream demonstrated God's care for His people Israel. The four young Hebrew captives, about to be put to death, prayed for mercy and deliverance. Their request was answered with the revelation of the king's dream and its interpretation to Daniel. Even in captivity, God continues to care for His own. . .

(1) Our text contributes to our understanding of spiritual leadership. Daniel did not seek prominence. He did not set his sights on spiritual leadership. He sought to be faithful to His God and to his calling. It was only when he was put "between a rock and a hard place" that he stepped forward. It is often in the crisis situations of life that leaders emerge. So it was with Daniel. He was, in a sense, forced to lead. Had he not acted as he did (humanly speaking), he and his three friends would have died. Daniel's leadership came about when he acted out of necessity and out of faith, in a way that set him apart from the rest. This seems to be the way most of the leaders in the Bible were set apart.

(2) Impossible situations expose the futility of human wisdom and power and of false gods and religions. At the same time, they provide the setting for which the power and wisdom of God to be undeniably demonstrated. God brought about the crisis of Daniel 2. In so doing, He showed the wise men of this world to be unwise, and by testimony of their own lips showed their gods powerless. God's power was so evident through the faith of Daniel and his friends that the king fell before this man and his God.

Robert Aubuchon:

A reporter once asked Albert Einstein's wife if she understood the theory of relativity. She replied, "No, but I know Albert, and he can be trusted." Can you and I say the same thing about God? "No, I don't understand what God is doing in my life right now. But I know God, and He can be trusted."

If we trust God, we can pray to God. Prayer is the glue that holds life together. The effectiveness of prayer as the adhesive of our lives depends on several factors.

? Slippage / Shrinkage

"But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him" (Hebrews 10:38 NIV)

? Malleability (altered or controlled outside)

"And do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind ..." Romans 12:2a

? Cohesive Strength

"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them." Matt 18:20

? Surface Tension

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7

Prayer is not just lifting up a few words when in trouble. It is intended to be the glue for our lives. Apply in the days when you do not need it and it is sure to help hold you together in the day everything is coming apart.

Prayer: "Oh God, at times life seems to fall apart. Things don't always go as planned. Help us in those moments to acknowledge our lack of understanding. Break our pridefulness that causes us to believe we can handle life alone. Turn our pride to trust.. For when we trust You we can pray to You knowing you will answer in Your wisdom. You are the answer to our prayers as the sovereign God. Nothing we are going through is unmindful to You ... You know and are working for our best.

TEXT: Daniel 3:1-30

TITLE: *THE SUPREMACY OF GOD*

BIG IDEA:

THE GOD WHO IS SUPREME IN SAVING POWER DESERVES OUR UNSWERVING LOYALTY DESPITE THE PRESSURE OF INTENSE PERSECUTION

Background:

Daniel and his friends were in a pagan environment that was hostile towards the worship of the true God. They faced the dilemma of remaining faithful to God's revealed will while trying to submit to the God-ordained authority of King Nebuchad. When there was a conflict between these two objectives, sometimes a creative alternative will do the trick (cf. Daniel 1), but at other times the choice is plain: Remain loyal and be willing to pay the price (recognizing God's ability to deliver if He chooses) or compromise to protect yourself.

I. IDOLATRY CHALLENGES THE SUPREMACY OF GOD (:1-12)

Neb's image of gold

Key Question = Who has the supreme authority?

This attack comes from 3 areas:

A. Proud Men in Positions of Power -- They Challenge God's Authority and Standards, Promote Idolatry, and Threaten Persecution (:1-6)

1. Motivated by Pride they seek to exalt themselves thru impressive, outward displays of supremacy

Neb. went to a lot of trouble and expense to build this image.

The image was spectacular (90 feet high by 9 feet, probably overlaid with gold).

The setting was impressive -- "on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon" -- no fear of God; a blatant challenge

The dedication ceremony was impressive:

important people in attendance

appropriate pomp and ceremony

2. Misrepresenting their God-given authority as absolute, intrinsic authority

The image had both political and religious significance.

3. Abusing their power

B. The Masses Promote Idolatry By the Pressure of Conformity (:7)

great music to help people respond on the basis of the emotional mood rather than truth

a fiery furnace to frighten the fence sitters into compliance

- C. The Enemies of God's People Make Every Effort to Enforce Idolatry (:8-12) Chaldeans with a desire to get ahead
Satan is the accuser of the people of God and uses whatever means he can to take the offensive and promote worldliness and idolatry.

II. THE SUPREMACY OF GOD DESERVES UNSWERVING LOYALTY REGARDLESS OF THE COST (:13-23)

- A. The Loyalty of Men of Faith (in God's Supremacy) Bothers Men of Pride (in Their Own Supremacy)
1. Proud men are angry when their supremacy is opposed
Neb. had so many servants under him, but could not control his own spirit.
cf. anger of church leaders when opposed in various contexts
 2. Proud men are mystified when confronted with faith
Neb. had gone to great lengths to organize this event; had prepared for the possibility of non-compliance, but didn't really expect it.
Satan, the tempter, is quick to give us a second chance and a third ... to see if we will deny the Lord.
Neb. left the door open for them to rationalize their surrender to the king's threats:
 - a. after all he is the king and he has been good to us
 - b. what's the big deal; why cause any trouble or make waves?
 - c. it's only this one time
 - d. we can bow down outwardly, but not really mean it in our hearts
 - e. what good will it do God if His only testimony gets snuffed out in the fiery furnace (the end justifies the means)
 3. Proud men are arrogant about their own power and skeptical about the power of God
Blind to the spiritual realm; could not imagine how he could lose this confrontation; could not see the Lord's hosts
- B. Idolatry Should Never Be An Option for Those Who Understand the Supremacy of God (:16-18)
1. The issue is cut and dried
 2. There should be no doubt about God's Ability to Save
 3. Loyalty is Man's Obligation
 4. Deliverance is God's Option
very important that we not try to dictate terms to God or condition our loyalty on any factor other than the Person of God
We need a vision for the supremacy and majesty of God; our God is too small

Why do empty things, the things of this world, hold any attraction for us?

- C. The Price of Loyalty May Be Intense Persecution (:19-23)
fiery furnace -- the external circumstances looked hopeless:
1. the wrath of the king -- he has lost control; you can't reason with him
 2. the temperature of the furnace
 3. the assistance of the valiant warriors
 4. the helplessness of being tied up/immobile

picture of submission to the will of God (not putting up any fight)
you don't always come out of the fire alive (Heb. 11:36-38)
Philippians 3:10 "the fellowship of His sufferings"

III. THE SUPREME GOD IS ABLE TO SAVE HIS SERVANTS (:24-30)

Key question: Who is the supreme deliverer? What god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?

- A. The Living God Can Manifest His Presence in the Fiery Furnace
- B. The Supreme God Can Deliver His Servants Out From the Trial
- C. God Can Glorify Himself as "the Most High God"
- D. The Resulting Environment Can Be Made More Secure for Future Worship

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) What principles about proper and improper civil disobedience can we learn from this section?
- 2) How confident are we of the presence of God with us in the midst of our sufferings and trials? Do we have the false expectation that the Christian life is supposed to be a blank check to help us escape from all sorts of difficulty?
- 3) Do we have a testimony to our faith in the Supremacy of our God when we are still in the midst of our fiery furnace or do we wait until we have experienced deliverance?
- 4) How does taking action in the face of fear (instead of being paralyzed by our fear) help us to experience God's grace and sustaining power?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Dan Cormie: The Fire Alarm – You Want to be In the Fire:

In the fire:

- You walk with God.
- You gain freedom.
- Your enemies die.

Surrendering self is the key to the fire.

Wayne Burnett: (3:10-18) Five Facts About Faith

FACT #1 (16 - WE ARE NOT CAREFUL TO ANSWER THEE...)

-We need a faith that cannot be threatened or intimidated by the world, that does not give in to pressure

FACT #2 (17 - IF IT BE SO...) - We need a faith that can stand up in the face of reality

A. You have the power to cast us into the furnace

B. Our faith needs to face the reality that we may go through the fire.

FACT #3 (17 - GOD IS ABLE TO DELIVER US FROM THE BURNING FIERY FURNACE) - We need a faith that is always subject to the divine will of God

FACT #4 (17 - AND WILL DELIVER US OUT OF YOUR HAND...) - We need a faith that knows God will deliver us from the hand of the enemy

FACT #5 (18 - BUT IF NOT...WE WILL NOT SERVE THY GODS) - We need a faith that will be committed to God regardless of the outcome

Ronald George: Let God Take a Bite Out of Your Lions

I recall a story about a man who had to cross a wide river on the ice. He was afraid it might be too thin, so he began to crawl on his hand and knees in great terror. He thought he might fall through at any moment. Just as he neared the opposite shore, all exhausted, another man glided past him nonchalantly sitting on a sled loaded with pig iron.

How like some Christians! Headed for Heaven, they tremble at every step lest the divine promises break under their feet. They need only to look at the context of Isaiah 12:2 to realize that God is their salvation and the Lord is their strength and song. By resting completely upon Him and taking His promises at face value, we can drive out the paralyzing fear that hinders our effectiveness in serving Christ. The biblical antidote always works: *"I will trust, and not be afraid."*

What Fears hold you back from serving the Lord as He would want you to?

1. Fear of what others will think, do, or say?

Gal 1:10 *"For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet*

pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.” Fear of losing our public image before the people that we see every day. They may call you names ...or not look on you favorably. Results in failure to witness, to grow , to become the child God wants us to become. *Fear God not Men...*

2. Fear of Failure. Failure to be successful in the eyes of our peers..(Pride)
What will happen if we are eaten alive by the lions? What if we don't know what to say or do? We may look like a fool. How can anyone ever begin without beginning? What if the Lions eat us and destroy us? Failure isn't final in the Lord. How can you go wrong in God's will?

3. Fear of Change... How can I make it? Will I be able to make it? Afraid we won't be able to make it into the new change. Fear of voluntarily changing our lives. We would rather remain as we are. Remain in the same seats. remain in the same life instead of allowing God to change us to grow us. Change from the comfortable seat to the lions den, so don't rock the boat.

How can we overcome the Fears that devour us daily?

1. Stand Firm in what the Lord wants us to do...Continue to serve the Lord or change our lives to become who the Lord wants us to be. Pray, serve, live, be who the Lord wants us to be....

2. Trust in the Lord's promises.. Mat 28:20 *“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”* Amen.Phil 4:13 *“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”*

3. Continue to go forward in the Lord's Will for your life..Dan 6:16 Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee. Step forward today to follow the Lord's Will for your life. If you will go where the Lord wants you to go, go today.

David Derry: Our God is Able . . . And He Will
What is faith?

According to what we read earlier in Hebrews 11:1 *“faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”*

A modern day equivalent of this is:

You go to a doctor whose name you can't pronounce. He gives you a prescription you can't read. You take it to a pharmacist you have never met. He gives you medication you do not understand and you take it without thinking twice about it.

Faith involves believing that someone else will do something that is not yet visible or that has not yet happened. Thus, to have faith is to relinquish trust in oneself and to put

that trust in another.

Faith is the medium by which the power of God is made visible. Just as an artist may use paint as their medium, or a sculptor uses clay, God works through faith . .

Many people are like this poem that was written by that great theologian “Dr. Sues”

Did I ever tell you about the young Zoad?
Who came to a sign at the fork of the road
He looked one way and the other way too
The Zoad had to make up his mind what to do
Well, the Zoad scratched his head,
And his chin, and his pants.
And he said to himself, "I'll be taking a chance.
If I go to Place One, that place may be hot
So how will I know if I like it or not.
On the other hand, though, I'll feel such a fool
If I go to Place Two and find it's too cool
In that case I may catch a chill and turn blue.
So Place One may be best and not Place Two.
Play safe," cried the Zoad, "I'll play safe, I'm no dunce.
I'll simply start off to both places at once.
And that's how the Zoad who would not take a chance
Went no place at all with a split in his pants.

Dr. C. David White:

1- All of our enemies, Satan included, want us to be controlled by fear. (miserable and ineffective)

The Collins Dictionary defines fear as a feeling of distress, apprehension, or alarm caused by impending danger, pain, etc. - or to be afraid (to do something) or of (a person or thing).

2- God desires for you to experience an “*abundant life*”. (Jn. 10:10)

3- Three types of fear: 1- Rational. 2- Irrational. 3- Imaginative.

4- Believers must learn how to act in faith in spite of whatever fear we might have.