DISCOVERING DANIEL

3
LESSON

WORKBOOK STUDY COMPANION · LESSON 3

Faith *Under Fire*

DANIEL 3

Scripture written out in the NASB95, every question answered in one sentence, cross references, verse-by-verse commentary from three trusted teachers — and for each question, a point of critical thinking and a key question to carry into the week.

Amir Tsarfati
DISCOVERING DANIEL

John MacArthur
GRACE TO YOU

David Guzik
ENDURING WORD

PREPARED FOR ED & PAUL SMITH · BIBLE STUDY

01 CAPTURE THE SCENE

What do I see?

Using my Bible, working through Daniel 3 verse by verse.

1 Whom did Nebuchadnezzar command to take part in the worship of the gold statue (Daniel 3:2)?

P. 60

Daniel 3:2 NASB95

Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent word to assemble the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates and all the rulers of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

IN MY WORDS

He summoned the entire governing class of the empire—satraps, prefects, governors, counselors, treasurers, judges, magistrates, and all the provincial rulers—so that every level of leadership would be present to bow.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 6:7** The same officials later conspire against Daniel—Babylon's bureaucracy is repeatedly the instrument of coerced worship.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes the summons of every official turned the dedication into a loyalty test rather than a religious ceremony—attendance itself was the point.

CRITICAL THINKING

Nebuchadnezzar did not summon the common people first; he summoned the leaders. Compromise at the top secures compliance everywhere beneath it, which is why the enemy has always aimed at those who set the tone for others.

KEY QUESTION

Who is watching how I bow—and who would follow me if I did?

2 What was the crowd ordered to do when the music started (verses 4-5)?

P. 60

Daniel 3:4-5 NASB95

Then the herald loudly proclaimed: “To you the command is given, O peoples, nations and men of every language, that at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe and all kinds of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up.”

IN MY WORDS

At the sound of the orchestra every person of every nation and language was to fall down and worship the golden image.

CROSS REFERENCE **Revelation 13:15** “and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed.”

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur calls this state religion in its purest form—an orchestra instead of an argument, and a furnace instead of persuasion; the crowd's obedience was total and instant.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik observes that elaborate, well-produced music has always been power's favorite accomplice—atmosphere doing the work that truth cannot.

CRITICAL THINKING

Notice the mechanism: no debate, no persuasion, just a cue. Manufactured emotion is the cheapest way to move a crowd, and it works precisely because it bypasses the mind. Worship that can be triggered by a downbeat was never worship at all.

KEY QUESTION

What in my life responds automatically to a cue instead of to conviction?

3 What fate would meet anyone who dared to disobey (verse 6)?

P. 60

Daniel 3:6 NASB95

But whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire.

IN MY WORDS

Anyone refusing to bow would be thrown immediately into a furnace of blazing fire.

CROSS REFERENCE **Jeremiah 29:22** Two false prophets in Babylon were “roasted in the fire” by Nebuchadnezzar—the threat was no exaggeration.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes the death penalty shows the king treated refusal as treason, not merely as irreligion—worship and citizenship had been fused into one.

CRITICAL THINKING

The word “immediately” matters. There was no appeal, no hearing, no cooling-off period. Tyranny always removes the pause where conscience might get a word in—which is exactly why convictions must be settled long before the moment arrives.

KEY QUESTION

Have I decided what I will not do, before someone makes it costly to refuse?

4 Who refused to bow (verse 12)?

P. 61

Daniel 3:12 NASB95

There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the administration of the province of Babylon, namely Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. These men, O king, have disregarded you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up.

IN MY WORDS

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego—the three Hebrew administrators Nebuchadnezzar himself had promoted—refused to bow.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 2:49** At Daniel's request the king appointed them over the administration of the province—the very promotion that now made them visible targets.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur points out that promotion had made them targets: faithfulness in public office does not shield the believer from envy; it invites it.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati marks who is accused—"certain Jews"—a charge religious on its face but aimed at a people, the old script that runs from Babylon through Haman to the last days.

CRITICAL THINKING

Daniel is conspicuously absent from this chapter, likely away on the king's business. God did not arrange for the strongest believer to be standing beside them. Sometimes the test comes when your mentor is not in the room and the faith must be your own.

KEY QUESTION

Would my convictions still stand if the person I lean on spiritually were not there?

5 What was Nebuchadnezzar's response (verses 15-16)?

P. 61

Daniel 3:15 NASB95

Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery and bagpipe and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, very well. But if you do not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?

Daniel 3:16 NASB95

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter."

IN MY WORDS

In rage mixed with mockery he offered them one more chance to bow and then taunted them—"what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?"—to which the three replied that they did not need to give him an answer on the matter at all.

CROSS REFERENCE **2 Kings 18:35** Rabshakeh's identical boast against Jerusalem: "Who among all the gods of the lands have delivered their land from my hand?"

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati hears in "what god can deliver you out of my hands?" the boast of every Babylon, first and last—and heaven's answer already written.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik gives the king credit for asking "Is it true?"—it is one thing to take a stand, another to hold it when asked point-blank.

CRITICAL THINKING

The second chance was not mercy; it was pressure. Nebuchadnezzar understood that most people will hold a conviction once but fold when given a graceful way out. The offer to reconsider is often the sharper test.

KEY QUESTION

When I am offered an easy exit from obedience, do I call it wisdom?

6 What did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego say to King Nebuchadnezzar (verses 16-19)?

P. 61

Daniel 3:17-18 NASB95

If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.

IN MY WORDS

They said their God was able to deliver them and would deliver them—but that even if He did not, they still would not serve his gods or worship his image.

CROSS REFERENCE **Job 13:15** "Though He slay me, I will hope in Him."—trust that does not depend on the outcome.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur calls this the highest expression of faith in the book: they affirm God's power ("our God is able") without presuming on God's will ("but even if He does not"). Conviction that depends on a guaranteed rescue is not conviction; it is a bargain.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes their answer is remarkable for what it lacks—excuses. They might have said we can do more good alive, or it's only ten minutes—anything serves as an excuse when the heart is bent on compromise.

CRITICAL THINKING

Their theology had two halves and they refused to drop either one. Faith that only says "God is able" collapses when He does not act; faith that only says "but even if He does not" has quietly stopped expecting anything. Whole faith holds both.

KEY QUESTION

Can I pray both halves of that sentence over the trial I am in right now?

7 In anger, what did Nebuchadnezzar command be done to the furnace (verse 19)?

P. 62

Daniel 3:19 NASB95

Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with wrath, and his facial expression was altered toward Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. He answered by giving orders to heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated.

IN MY WORDS

He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual.

CROSS REFERENCE **Proverbs 16:32** "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city."

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur observes the changed countenance tells the story of every tyrant—flattery while you comply, fury the moment you will not; and heating it seven times hotter was pure irrationality, since it only made death quicker.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati sees the world's fury against those who will not bow as never rational—and at the end, the dragon's rage grows greatest just before his defeat.

CRITICAL THINKING

Rage always overreaches, and the overreach becomes the evidence. Seven times hotter killed his own soldiers and left the three untouched—so the very intensity meant to erase them became the proof that God had been in the fire.

KEY QUESTION

Where has opposition against me actually enlarged the testimony rather than ended it?

8 What happened to the men who threw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego into the fire (verse 22)?

P. 62

Daniel 3:22 NASB95

For this reason, because the king's command was urgent and the furnace had been made extremely hot, the flame of the fire slew those men who carried up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego.

IN MY WORDS

The flames killed the soldiers who carried them up to the furnace door.

CROSS REFERENCE **Esther 7:10** "So they hanged Haman on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai."

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes everything was engineered for a swift, total burning—bound fully clothed, the furnace superheated, the strongest soldiers to carry them—soldiers the flame killed at the door.

CRITICAL THINKING

The same fire that was fatal at the doorway was harmless at the center. Proximity to the furnace did not determine safety; the presence of God did. The safest place on the plain of Dura that day was inside the flames.

KEY QUESTION

Am I measuring safety by my circumstances or by whether God is in them with me?

9 When the king looked into the furnace, how many men did he see walking in it, and how did he describe one of the men (verse 25)?

P. 62

Daniel 3:25 NASB95

He said, "Look! I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!"

IN MY WORDS

He saw four men walking loose and unharmed, and described the fourth as looking "like a son of the gods."

CROSS REFERENCE **Isaiah 43:2** "When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, nor will the flame burn you."

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur says the pagan king said more than he knew—"like a son of the gods" gropes at what Scripture unveils elsewhere: this is best understood as the preincarnate Christ, the Angel of the LORD, present in the flame.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati stresses that the God of Israel did not watch the furnace from heaven—He entered it; the only things that burned were the ropes.

CRITICAL THINKING

They went in bound and were seen walking free. The fire did not merely fail to harm them—it consumed the one thing that actually held them. God's purpose in the furnace was not damage control; it was liberation.

KEY QUESTION

What has God burned off me in a trial that I could never have removed myself?

10 What did Nebuchadnezzar say about the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego when he saw that the fire had no power over the three men (verses 28-29)?

P. 63

Daniel 3:28-29 NASB95

Nebuchadnezzar responded and said, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, who has sent His angel and delivered His servants who put their trust in Him, violating the king's command, and yielded up their bodies so as not to serve or worship any god except their own God. Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation or tongue that speaks anything offensive against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego shall be torn limb from limb… inasmuch as there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way.”

IN MY WORDS

He blessed their God for sending His angel to deliver them, decreed that no one could speak against Him, and confessed that no other god is able to deliver like this.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 4:37** Only in the next chapter does Nebuchadnezzar finally say “I… praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven”—admiration becoming surrender.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur says listen carefully: it is still “the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego”—admiration, not conversion. He is not yet the king's God; that surrender waits for chapter 4.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes the new decree—death for insulting this God—is coerced reverence, and the three men neither asked for it nor wanted it; forced worship is no better pointed at heaven than at an idol.

CRITICAL THINKING

This is the loudest praise in the chapter and it came from an unconverted heart. A man can defend God publicly, legislate on His behalf, and promote His people—and still not belong to Him. Enthusiasm about God is not the same as submission to Him.

KEY QUESTION

Do I admire God from a distance, or have I actually surrendered to Him?

02 ANALYZE THE MESSAGE

What does it say and mean?

Using both my Bible and my copy of Discovering Daniel.

1 What do you think the creation of the tall statue revealed about Nebuchadnezzar (see page 62 in Discovering Daniel)? P. 62

Daniel 2:38-39 NASB95

…you are the head of gold. After you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth.

IN MY WORDS

It revealed his pride—God had told him he was only the head of gold, so he built an image of gold from head to foot, refusing to accept that his kingdom would ever end.

CROSS REFERENCE **Proverbs 16:18** "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling."

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati puts it sharply: God had just told the king he was only the head of gold—so Nebuchadnezzar built himself gold from head to foot, defying the God who numbers the days of empires.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik describes it as roughly ninety feet high and only nine feet wide—more a towering, stylized obelisk than a statue, almost certainly wood overlaid with gold: impressive on the outside, hollow within.

CRITICAL THINKING

Nebuchadnezzar did not reject the revelation; he edited it. That is the subtler sin. Outright unbelief is easy to spot, but taking what God said and improving it into something more flattering can look like faith while it functions as rebellion.

KEY QUESTION

Where am I tempted to edit God's Word into a version that flatters me?

2 According to Revelation 13:15-17, what future figure will also have an image created for the purpose of worship? What will happen to those who refuse to worship the image? P. 62

Revelation 13:15-17 NASB95

And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed. And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead, and he provides that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark…

IN MY WORDS

The beast—the Antichrist—will have an image made for worship, and those who refuse will be killed and cut off from buying or selling.

CROSS REFERENCE **Revelation 14:9-11** The warning against worshiping the beast and his image, and the eternal cost of doing so.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati reads Daniel 3 as the end of the age in rehearsal—the Antichrist too will raise an image on a plain of this world and command every people, nation, and tongue to worship it on cue, enforced by death.

CRITICAL THINKING

The parallel is nearly exact: a global summons, a single image, music or spectacle as the trigger, and death for refusal—with one addition. Revelation adds economic pressure, which reaches people the furnace never could. Not everyone fears martyrdom; almost everyone fears not being able to buy groceries.

KEY QUESTION

Which would move me faster to compromise—a threat to my life or a threat to my livelihood?

3 What sin caused the fall of Satan himself (see page 63 in Discovering Daniel)? How does Isaiah 14:12-14 describe the way this sin was expressed?

P. 63

Isaiah 14:12-14 NASB95

How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations! But you said in your heart, “I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.”

IN MY WORDS

Pride caused Satan's fall, and Isaiah expresses it as five defiant “I will” statements climaxing in “I will make myself like the Most High.”

CROSS REFERENCE **Ezekiel 28:17** “Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor.”

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur ties the demand for worship in Daniel 3 back to its origin: every claim to worship that does not belong to God is the same ancient ambition wearing a new crown.

CRITICAL THINKING

Satan's fall was not a plan to destroy God but a desire to be treated like Him. That is why pride is so difficult to detect in ourselves—it rarely announces itself as rebellion. It shows up as wanting the credit, the last word, the seat at the center.

KEY QUESTION

Where do my own “I will” statements quietly crowd out God's?

4 Daniel lists the types of people Nebuchadnezzar invited to the statue ceremony (see Daniel 3:2-3). What do you think the king hoped to accomplish by inviting these specific people?

P. 63

Daniel 3:3 NASB95

Then the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates and all the rulers of the provinces were assembled for the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

IN MY WORDS

He wanted to unify a diverse empire under one visible religion by securing the public submission of every official who governed it—binding political loyalty to worship.

CROSS REFERENCE **Genesis 11:4** "Let us make for ourselves a name"—the plain of Shinar, the same ground, the same ambition for a single unified humanity apart from God.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur calls it political allegiance fused with worship: if every governor bows, every province follows.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes rulers have always been happy to blend spiritual and national allegiance—from Babylon's plain to the modern state.

CRITICAL THINKING

A conquered empire is held together by fear or by shared identity, and shared worship is the cheapest identity to manufacture. This is why the state so often reaches for religion—not because it believes, but because belief binds people more tightly than law does.

KEY QUESTION

Where does my culture ask me to treat something other than God as non-negotiable?

5 **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were clear in their refusal to bow before the statue. They respectfully disregarded Nebuchadnezzar's authority. They defied his power and any sense of victory he might have over them. Why do you think they were so determined in their conviction?** P. 63

Exodus 20:4-5 NASB95

You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God…

IN MY WORDS

Because they had already settled the matter with God long before the music played—the first two commandments left them no room to negotiate, and they had practiced obedience in a smaller test back in chapter 1.

CROSS REFERENCE **Acts 5:29** "We must obey God rather than men."

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes these men had settled the matter long before the furnace was lit—tested first at a dinner table in chapter 1—so they could stand without flinching when the stakes became their lives.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik points out they lodged no protest and staged no demonstration; among thousands of officials they simply refrained, and were discovered.

CRITICAL THINKING

Their courage in chapter 3 was purchased in chapter 1. Nobody rises to the occasion under that kind of pressure—people fall to the level of what they have already decided. The furnace revealed a conviction; it did not create one.

KEY QUESTION

What small obedience am I practicing now that is preparing me for a test I cannot yet see?

6 When the three Jewish men said "But if not," were they expressing a lack of faith? Explain (see page 69 in Discovering Daniel).

P. 69

Daniel 3:17-18 NASB95

If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.

IN MY WORDS

No—it was the opposite: they were expressing faith in God's character rather than faith in a particular outcome, refusing to make their obedience conditional on being rescued.

CROSS REFERENCE **Habakkuk 3:17-18** "Though the fig tree should not blossom… yet I will exult in the LORD."

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur says conviction that depends on a guaranteed rescue is not conviction at all; it is a bargain. Obedience was theirs; outcomes were God's.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati calls it the faith of a remnant that serves God for who He is, not merely for what He prevents.

CRITICAL THINKING

Faith that requires a guaranteed result is really a transaction with God, and transactions collapse the moment the terms are not met. "But if not" is the sentence that separates worship from negotiation—and it is the only kind of faith that can survive an unanswered prayer.

KEY QUESTION

Is my faith attached to what God can do, or to who God is?

7 When Nebuchadnezzar saw a fourth man in the furnace with the other three, he was likely witnessing a theophany. What is a theophany, and where else in Scripture do we see this (see page 71 in Discovering Daniel)?

P. 71

Daniel 3:25 NASB95

He said, "Look! I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!"

IN MY WORDS

A theophany is a visible appearance of God to people—often, as here, a christophany, a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ—seen also with Abraham at Mamre, Jacob wrestling at Peniel, Moses at the burning bush, and Joshua before Jericho.

CROSS REFERENCE **Joshua 5:13-15** The Captain of the LORD's host: "Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy."

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur says the pagan king said more than he knew—this is best understood as the preincarnate Christ, the Angel of the LORD, present with His servants in the flame.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati notes that fourth figure is the same Lord who walked with His people through every exile and will walk Israel through the time of Jacob's trouble—preserved through the fire, not spared from it.

CRITICAL THINKING

In nearly every theophany God shows up at a moment of crisis or commission, not in a season of comfort. The pattern suggests that His nearest presence is often reserved for the place we would least have chosen to stand.

KEY QUESTION

Where have I met God most personally—and was it in ease or in fire?

8 God didn't prevent Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego from being thrown into the fire. There are times when God allows us to experience trials by fire as well. Why would He do this (see page 72 in Discovering Daniel)?

P. 72

1 Peter 1:6-7 NASB95

…you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

IN MY WORDS

Because the fire refines faith, displays God's presence and power in a way rescue-from-a-distance never could, and turns His people into a testimony a watching world cannot argue with.

CROSS REFERENCE **James 1:2-4** "the testing of your faith produces endurance… that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur observes God often permits the trial to become impossible precisely so that the deliverance will be unmistakably His.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik says the believer's furnaces come in three makes—those men prepare, those Satan prepares, and those God prepares—and all of them end up serving God's purpose.

CRITICAL THINKING

Had God stopped the arrest, the empire would have learned nothing and the three men would have learned less. Deliverance from the fire saves the body; deliverance in the fire reveals the Person. God chose the outcome that gave them more of Himself.

KEY QUESTION

Am I asking God to remove the fire when the greater gift is His presence inside it?

9 What do you think God wanted to teach Nebuchadnezzar through this fiery furnace incident?

P. 72

Daniel 3:29 NASB95

…inasmuch as there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way.

Daniel 4:37 NASB95

Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride.

IN MY WORDS

That his power had a ceiling and God's did not—that the God of heaven rules over kings, cannot be commanded, and is worthy of exclusive worship.

CROSS REFERENCE **Psalm 2:10-11** "Now therefore, O kings, show discernment… Worship the LORD with reverence."

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati sees the quiet engine of the whole book here: God glorifies His name among the nations through a faithful remnant that will not bow.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes the lesson had to be repeated—Nebuchadnezzar now knows God is powerful, faithful, and worthy of exclusive worship, yet He is not yet his God.

CRITICAL THINKING

God taught the lesson through three men rather than through a sermon or a sign in the sky. The most persuasive argument available to a proud king was people who would not bend—which means our uncompromised lives are still God's chosen method.

KEY QUESTION

Is my life currently making any argument that would be hard for an unbeliever to dismiss?

03 COMPARE THIS PASSAGE WITH THE REST OF SCRIPTURE

How is it supported elsewhere in the Bible?

Letting Scripture interpret Scripture.

1 **Read Isaiah 43:2, then answer the questions below.** P. 73

Isaiah 43:2 NASB95

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, nor will the flame burn you.

a. Where did God say He would be during our trials?

IN MY WORDS

He said He would be with us—not waiting on the far side of the trial, but present in it.

CROSS REFERENCE **Psalm 23:4** "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death… You are with me."

b. In the above passage—or anywhere else in the Bible—does God ever say He will prevent us from experiencing difficult circumstances?

IN MY WORDS

No—every promise is "through" the waters and "through" the fire; He promises His presence and preservation, never exemption.

CROSS REFERENCE **John 16:33** "In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

c. What are some ways we can benefit from life's trials?

IN MY WORDS

Trials refine our faith, produce endurance and maturity, break our self-reliance, deepen our knowledge of God, and equip us to comfort others with the comfort we received.

CROSS REFERENCE **2 Corinthians 1:4** "…who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction."

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati notes the three men stood where Israel will one day stand—commanded to bow with no visible way out, trusting the God who said, "When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched."

CRITICAL THINKING

The prepositions carry the whole doctrine. God never says "over," "around," or "instead of"—He says "through." A faith built on the promise of avoidance is built on a verse that does not exist.

KEY QUESTION

Have I been claiming a promise God never made?

2 **Read Proverbs 4:23. An important aspect of living an uncompromising life is to "keep [your] heart with all diligence." List three or four ways we can guard our hearts.** P. 73

> **Proverbs 4:23 NASB95**
> Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.

> **IN MY WORDS**
> By saturating my mind with Scripture, watching what I let in through my eyes and ears, staying honest and accountable with other believers, and settling my convictions in advance rather than in the moment.

CROSS REFERENCE **Psalm 119:11** "Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You."

> **David Guzik** ENDURING WORD
> Guzik's pastoral note throughout Daniel 3 is that the stand in public was possible only because the heart had been guarded in private.

> **CRITICAL THINKING**
> The verse assumes the heart is not self-maintaining. Left alone it drifts, and it drifts toward whatever it is fed. Guarding is active work—a gate someone has to stand at—not a state you arrive at once and keep.

KEY QUESTION
What am I feeding my heart daily, and what is it producing?

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3 **Scripture gives many examples of people who gave in to the temptation to compromise. What consequences did the following individuals face by making the wrong choice?** P. 74

a. **Adam (Genesis 3:6, 22-24)**

> **IN MY WORDS**
> He gained a moment's knowledge and lost paradise—driven out of Eden, cut off from the tree of life, and bringing death upon the whole human race.

CROSS REFERENCE **Romans 5:12** "through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin…"

b. **Esau (Genesis 25:29-34)**

> **IN MY WORDS**
> He traded his birthright for a single meal and later found no place for repentance though he sought it with tears.

CROSS REFERENCE **Hebrews 12:16-17** "that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal."

c. **Saul (1 Samuel 15:3, 20-28)**

> **IN MY WORDS**
> He obeyed partially, called it obedience, and had the kingdom torn from him—rejected as king because he rejected the word of the LORD.

CROSS REFERENCE **1 Samuel 15:22** "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams."

d. Solomon (1 Kings 11:1-8)

IN MY WORDS

His foreign wives turned his heart after other gods, and the wisest man alive ended up building high places for idols and losing the kingdom's unity.

CROSS REFERENCE **1 Kings 11:11** "I will surely tear the kingdom from you, and will give it to your servant."

e. Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11)

IN MY WORDS

They lied to the Holy Spirit about the price of their land for the appearance of generosity, and both fell dead at the apostles' feet.

CROSS REFERENCE **Acts 5:11** "And great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things."

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur's warning about tolerated compromise fits every name on this list: what is excused never stays small—it desensitizes the conscience and becomes the seedbed for the failures we swore we would never commit.

CRITICAL THINKING

Not one of these men set out to ruin his life. Each made an exchange that felt reasonable in the moment—a meal, a wife, a partial obedience, a better reputation. Compromise never presents itself as ruin; it presents itself as a trade.

KEY QUESTION

What am I currently trading, and have I actually counted what it costs?

4 Based on the examples above, what conclusions do you come to about the dangers of compromise?

P. 75

Galatians 6:7-8 NASB95

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

IN MY WORDS

Compromise always costs more than it promised, it is never contained to one area, and it dulls the conscience so the next surrender comes easier—which is why the line has to be drawn before the pressure arrives.

CROSS REFERENCE **Song of Solomon 2:15** "Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes that are ruining the vineyards…"

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik's list of excuses is the anatomy of every compromise—we can do more good alive, it's only ten minutes, we're not renouncing God—anything serves as an excuse when the heart is bent on compromise.

CRITICAL THINKING

The three Hebrews had every excuse available to them and used none. That is the contrast the chapter is built on: the same reasoning that ruined Esau and Saul was on offer at Dura, and three men simply refused to pick it up.

KEY QUESTION

Which excuse do I reach for most often—and what would it look like to stop?

04 EXECUTE

How does this affect my life?

Bringing Daniel 3 home to my own walk.

1 **On page 60 of Discovering Daniel, we read, "There are occupational hazards when it comes to following Christ. Chief among them is being despised by the world."** P. 60

John 15:18-19 NASB95

If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.

a. **What are some of the ways we can be despised for our faith?**

IN MY WORDS

We can be mocked, labeled intolerant or backward, excluded socially, passed over professionally, misrepresented publicly, or—in much of the world—imprisoned and killed.

CROSS REFERENCE **2 Timothy 3:12** "Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

b. **What are some other occupational hazards Christians face?**

IN MY WORDS

Loneliness when we will not go along, the loss of opportunity for refusing to compromise, weariness in doing good, spiritual attack, and the temptation to quiet ourselves just to keep the peace.

CROSS REFERENCE **Galatians 6:9** "Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary."

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes faithfulness in public office does not shield the believer from envy; it invites it. They obeyed God and let the consequences be God's business.

CRITICAL THINKING

Being despised is described here as an occupational hazard, not an accident—something built into the job rather than a sign you have done the job badly. That reframes it entirely: opposition is not evidence that something went wrong.

KEY QUESTION

Have I been treating opposition as a failure when Scripture calls it a cost?

2 **Read Acts 20:23-24. Why was the apostle Paul willing to suffer "bonds and afflictions"?** P. 61

Acts 20:23-24 NASB95

…except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.

IN MY WORDS

Because finishing the ministry Christ gave him mattered more to him than his own life—he had already decided the gospel was worth more than his comfort or survival.

CROSS REFERENCE **Philippians 1:21** "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur's phrase for the three Hebrews fits Paul exactly: obedience was theirs; outcomes were God's.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati's theme of a remnant that serves God for who He is, not for what He prevents, runs straight through Paul's resolve.

CRITICAL THINKING

Paul knew what was coming—the Spirit told him in every city—and went anyway. His courage was not ignorance of the cost but a settled valuation: he had already decided what his life was for, so the threat could not renegotiate it.

KEY QUESTION

What have I decided my life is for, clearly enough that a threat could not change it?

3 Jesus was with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego in the fiery furnace. What promises can we cling to when we find ourselves in the fiery furnaces of life?

P. 61

Matthew 28:20 NASB95

…teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Hebrews 13:5 NASB95

Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you."

a. Matthew 28:20

IN MY WORDS

"And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age"—His presence is promised without interruption and without an expiration date.

CROSS REFERENCE **Isaiah 41:10** "Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God."

b. Hebrews 13:5

IN MY WORDS

"I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you"—a promise stated so emphatically in the Greek that it rules out abandonment altogether.

CROSS REFERENCE **Deuteronomy 31:6** "The LORD your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you."

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes that whether or not the men recognized who walked with them, He was there—sometimes we sense Jesus in the trial and sometimes we do not, but He is present nonetheless.

CRITICAL THINKING

Both promises are about presence, not rescue. God's answer to the furnace is not a guarantee that it will be cool but a guarantee about who will be standing in it. That is a smaller promise than we want and a far larger one than we realize.

KEY QUESTION

Would His presence alone be enough for me, if the circumstances never changed?

4 Read 1 Peter 4:12-14.

P. 62

1 Peter 4:12-14 NASB95

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

a. How does Peter urge us to respond to fiery ordeals?

IN MY WORDS

He tells us not to be surprised, as though something strange were happening, but to keep rejoicing because we are sharing in the sufferings of Christ.

CROSS REFERENCE **James 1:2** "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials."

b. What benefits do we receive when we are ridiculed for Christ, according to verse 14?

IN MY WORDS

We are called blessed, and the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon us—God draws nearest at the point of reproach.

CROSS REFERENCE **Matthew 5:11-12** "Blessed are you when people insult you… for your reward in heaven is great."

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati's reading of the furnace fits Peter's word exactly: God allows His own to be thrown in—and meets them there.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik reminds us courage is not the absence of intimidation but obedience in the teeth of it.

CRITICAL THINKING

Peter's first instruction is about expectation, not endurance. Much of our suffering in trials is the shock of thinking we should have been exempt. Remove the surprise and the trial is still hard, but it is no longer disorienting.

KEY QUESTION

Am I surprised by the fire—and what does that reveal about what I expected from God?

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Down through the ages, martyrs have stood up to their persecutors to the point of death. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were prepared to lay down their lives for what they believed — and what strikes me most is that they did it without a promise. They did not know a fourth man would be waiting in the flames. They only knew who God was, and that was enough to walk toward a furnace.

James said it plainly: "Show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works… faith without works is useless" (James 2:18, 20) — and again, "faith without works is dead" (James 2:26). Genuine faith is demonstrative faith. It cannot hide behind the pretense that "my religious beliefs are private," because it always bursts forth into some kind of action — helping, praying, encouraging, speaking the truth when silence would be easier.

Three men refused to bow, and a pagan empire heard a sermon no preacher could have delivered. Nebuchadnezzar would never have said "There is no other god who is able to deliver in this way" (Daniel 3:29) if they had bent their knees with everyone else on the plain of Dura. Their uncompromised stand — not a polished argument — was what reached a king.

"But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

Daniel 3:18

Most of us will not face a literal furnace. But we will face the quieter test — the temptation to stay silent, to blend in, to call compromise wisdom because the cost of standing feels too high. The lesson of Daniel 3 is that the decision is not made at the furnace; it is made long before the music plays. Settle it now. And remember that the fire burned nothing except the ropes — what the world means for our destruction, God uses to set us loose.

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