



The faith of Daniel and his friends



STUDY THREE – TESTING TIMES

Read Chapter 4:1-18

It is clear from the first three verses of this chapter that King Nebuchadnezzar is a vastly different man from the one we read about in the first part of chapter 3. He had seen the power of God in delivering Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fiery furnace when there appeared a fourth man, with them who looked like a god. The king realised that the God of Daniel and his friends was more powerful than anything he had previously understood.

- It is so important for our lives, that we do not underestimate the power of God. Ephesians 3:20 says: “Our God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think”. Take some time in the next few days to think and pray about the implications of this statement.
- If we can come to grips with this, what difference would it make to our lives? Do we really believe in the greatness of God?

Read Chapter 4:19-28

I like the honesty of verse 19.

- I’m sure, in Daniel’s shoes, we would have felt no small amount of trepidation. Have we ever been in a situation where speaking the truth could create serious problems for us?
- Are we always honest about our Christian faith when we talk to those who are non-believers?

The website *The Daily Promise* has this to say:

“God Delivers Me From Every Problem

Psalm 34:19

Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all.

This promise is one of the most honest verses in the Bible.

So many people expect the Christian life to be free of struggles, difficulties, or problems.

The Psalmist comes right out and says that those who follow God will have difficulties. In fact, he says there will be many of them.

Nowhere in the Bible does it promise that God will exempt you from every trouble or problem.

Problems and difficulties are a part of life. We live in a fallen world, and sometimes bad things happen to good people. Afflictions are common to everyone.

The Bible does promise that God will deliver those who follow Him out of all their afflictions.

Sometimes God delivers you out of your affliction.

Sometimes God delivers you through the affliction. God gives you the strength to face every problem and stand firm until the trouble passes.

A related promise is found in Proverbs 24:16 – the righteous will fall but will rise again. God will not allow you to fall and not get back up. He will lift you and strengthen you.

God often uses afflictions to strengthen your faith and develop your character. (1 Peter 5:10) Your faith never grows until the fires of life test it. As you go through afflictions, you learn that He is there as your Deliverer.

Finally, God will ultimately deliver you completely when we see Him face to face to spend eternity with Him.”

- Do we believe that? In what ways has God delivered you? It may not be dramatic, and it may seem trivial to other people. However, to us, the problem may have felt overwhelming.
- Can we think of examples in scripture where God has kept his promise of deliverance?

Read Chapter 4:28-33

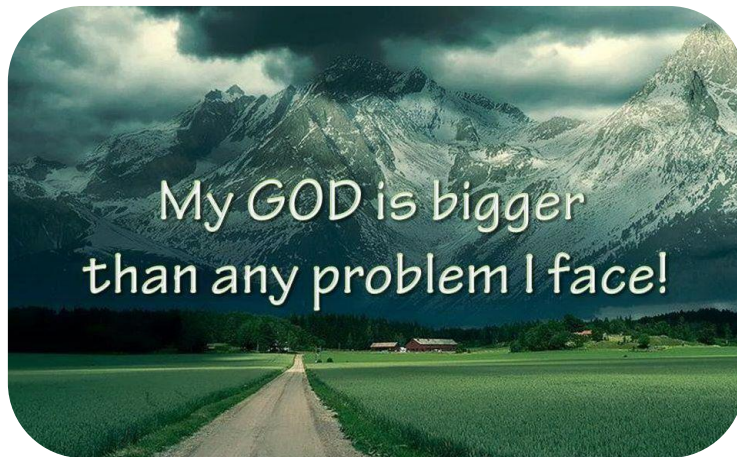
In 2 Samuel 2, David laments the death of Saul and his son Jonathan. Throughout the chapter, the words **HOW THE MIGHTY HAVE FALLEN** are repeated.

In verse 27, Daniel advised the king: Therefore, Your Majesty, be pleased to accept my advice: Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue.” However, for a powerful king, humiliating yourself does not come easily!

Read verses 34-37

King Nebuchadnezzar did have to go through all the humiliation prophesied by Daniel but having done so, he then makes a remarkable declaration in verse 37.

- Have you ever experienced humiliation? It is very hard, but it can become a turning point.
- Verse 35 says that no one can ask God “*What have you done?*” Have you ever gone through an experience that has caused you to question God?
- Nebuchadnezzar made an important declaration in verse 37: “*Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and his ways justice. And those who walk in pride, he is able to put down.*” It took God more than once, to make Nebuchadnezzar realise that there was only one true, God.
- Psalm 34 is one we should take to heart. God is not capricious, whatever he does, it is for our good. We need the type of faith that Daniel and his friends had.



Prayer

Father God, you are bigger than all our problems. Help us to always trust you in all things and at all times. Amen