

Beach, Bonfire, Bento and Bible Study **F.I.R.E.**

Part 3 – God’s Refining Fire

Faithfull, Irresistible, Refining, Everlasting

F. - God Reveals His **Faithfulness** through fire.

I. - Just as we are drawn **Irresistibly** to fire, so God draws us to Himself through grace.

R. - God **Refines** our faith through fire.

E. - God's very presence in **Eternity** will be a Blazing Fire, a terror for one and great beauty for another.

Fire facts: One Fire in Three components

Fires start when a flammable and/or a combustibile material (FUEL) with an adequate supply of oxygen or another oxidizer (OXYGEN) is subjected to enough heat (IGNITION) and is able to sustain a chain reaction (EXISTANCE). This is commonly called the fire tetrahedron.

The Bible teaches that God similarly exists in three persons, referred to as the Trinity. Matt 3:16-17, Eph 4:4-6 One God in Three Persons - God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit

During our first lessons in week one we learned that God has Faithfully revealed himself to us through his creation and that we are reminded that God refreshes His promises to us daily. Lamentations 3:22 & 23 ²²The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; ²³they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

In our second week we learned that God is not passive in our redemption or salvation. He does the work and the pursuing. We are irresistibly drawn to the fire of God because:

1. *God calls us and finds us.* “And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”” (Genesis 3:8-9)
2. *God makes atoning sacrifice for our sin through His Son Jesus Christ.* “but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)
3. *God removed the barrier that separates us from an eternal relationship with him.* “In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”(1 John 4:10)
4. *God has provided us a suitable set of clothes, through the Blood of Christ.* “And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.””(Luke 24:49)

This week we will see how God **Refines** our faith through the fire of sanctification. Perhaps the best place to see how God refines His children is from Daniel chapter 3. To set the stage we see that King Nebuchadnezzar has built for himself a huge idol. It was 90' tall by 9' wide. This really was a pillar of Gold that stood as high as an 8 story building.

Our theological mind bending question this week is: Can you be a Christian and have no fear of God?

Dan. 3:1 King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its breadth six cubits. He set it up on the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. 2 Then King Nebuchadnezzar sent to gather the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. 3 Then the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. And they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. 4 And the herald proclaimed aloud, "You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, 5 that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. 6 And whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace." 7 Therefore, as soon as all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, all the peoples, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

Observation #1: The world is all about image building and tearing down. People exalt themselves at the expense of those around them. The lust of the eyes, the flesh and the pride of life are the god's that Satan and the world demands that we worship:

1John 2:15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world.

Dan. 3:8 Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and maliciously accused the Jews. 9 They declared to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever! 10 You, O king, have made a decree, that every man who hears the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image. 11 And whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into a burning fiery furnace. 12 There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These men, O king, pay no attention to you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

Dan. 3:13 Then Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought. So they brought these men before the king. 14 Nebuchadnezzar answered and said to them, "Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up? 15 Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of

music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, well and good. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands?"

Observation #2: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego could have bowed down and just fitted in. Similarly, we are faced with how we shall choose to live our lives. It is because Christ saved us and that we have been born again that only because we have been made alive in Christ that we now have "Free Will to choose to obey or disobey God, honor or dishonor God:

Rom. 12:1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Dan. 3:16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. 17 If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. 18 But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

Dan. 3:19 Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was usually heated. 20 And he ordered some of the mighty men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. 21 Then these men were bound in their cloaks, their tunics, their hats, and their other garments, and they were thrown into the burning fiery furnace. 22 Because the king's order was urgent and the furnace overheated, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. 23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell bound into the burning fiery furnace.

Dan. 3:24 Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He declared to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king." 25 He answered and said, "But I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods."

Observation #3: Everyone will face the fire of God. For a believer it will be during this life as we are sanctified and for the unbeliever it will be forever in hell. Unbelievers will suffer in this life due to a world that has been cursed by God, but they will not be unbound from the curse sin. God takes the believer and meets him in the fire of testing and suffering then burns away the sinful bonds of our worldly flesh:

Gal. 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Also see Romans 8)

Dan. 3:26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the burning fiery furnace; he declared, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here!" Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire. 27 And the

satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king's counselors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men. The hair of their heads was not singed, their cloaks were not harmed, and no smell of fire had come upon them. 28 Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God. 29 Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way." 30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

Observation #4: The ultimate purpose of is the worship and glorification of God: 1Pet. 1:6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, 9 obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Back to our theological mind bending question: Can you be a Christian and have no fear of God?

Matthew 10:26-33 ""So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven."

Luke 12:4-7 ""I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him! Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows."