

Daniel 3:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

Analysis

The Hebrew phrase *hen itai* (הֵן אֵיטִי, "If it be so") expresses confident trust rather than doubt—"If this is to be the case" or "Our God whom we serve is able." The Aramaic *yakil leshezavutana* (יָכֹל לְשַׁבְּוּתָנָא) means "is able to deliver us," emphasizing divine power and capacity. The threefold description—"our God," "whom we serve," and "is able"—establishes their relationship with Yahweh as personal, active, and founded on His omnipotence.

The phrase "from the burning fiery furnace" uses the Aramaic intensive form for "burning," emphasizing the fire's fierce intensity. Yet the three Hebrews express absolute confidence that their God can deliver them even from Nebuchadnezzar's most extreme threat. This verse demonstrates faith that rests on God's character and power rather than circumstances. The three Hebrews don't know whether God will choose to deliver them, but they know He is able.

This faith anticipates Hebrews 11, which commends those who trusted God whether they received earthly deliverance or not. The statement points forward to the greater deliverance Christ accomplishes—rescuing believers from the fiery judgment of sin through His atoning death.

Historical Context

This confrontation occurred during Nebuchadnezzar's reign (605-562 BC) over the Neo-Babylonian Empire, likely in the latter part of his rule after the events of Daniel 2. The king had erected a golden image, possibly inspired by his dream of the statue with a golden head (Daniel 2:38), but now demanding worship of an image representing himself or Babylonian deities. The plain of Dura, where the image stood, was likely near Babylon proper, making this a highly public event designed to enforce religious and political conformity.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does distinguishing between God's ability (what He can do) and His will (what He chooses to do) protect us from presumption while strengthening genuine faith?
2. In what specific areas of life are you facing pressure to compromise convictions for career advancement, social acceptance, or personal safety?

Interlinear Text

יְכֹל	לִפְלֹחַ	יְנַחֵם	אֶת־	אֱלֹהֵינוּ	אִם	יְהִי
able	serve	whom we	it be so	our God	is	If
H3202	H6399	H586		H426	H383	H2006
יְדִי	אֶת־	אֱלֹהֵינוּ	אִם	יְהִי	יְשׁוּעָה	
fiery	the burning	us from	furnace	and he will deliver		
H5135	H3345	H4481	H861	H7804		
יְדִי	אֶת־	אֱלֹהֵינוּ	אִם	יְהִי	יְשׁוּעָה	
thine hand	us from	furnace	and he will deliver			
H3028	H4481	H861	H7804			
יְדִי	אֶת־	אֱלֹהֵינוּ	אִם	יְהִי	יְשׁוּעָה	
O king	and he will deliver					
H4430	H7804					

Additional Cross-References

Romans 8:31 (References God): What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

Luke 1:37 (References God): For with God nothing shall be impossible.

Hebrews 7:25 (References God): Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Jeremiah 1:8 (Parallel theme): Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD.

Acts 21:13 (Parallel theme): Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

Job 5:19 (Parallel theme): He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.

Isaiah 12:2 (References God): Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.

Psalms 115:3 (References God): But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.

Acts 20:24 (References God): But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

Daniel 6:27 (Parallel theme): He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

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