

Daniel 3:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

Analysis

The Aramaic phrase "the form of the fourth" (reviai, רְבִיעָה) literally means "the fourth one," while "is like the Son of God" (domeh l'var-elahin, דָמֶה לְבָרְאֵלָהִין) can be translated "resembles a son of the gods" (pagan interpretation) or "the Son of God" (Christian interpretation). Nebuchadnezzar, speaking from a polytheistic worldview, likely meant "a divine being" or "an angel," yet the text's inspired wording points to a Christophany—a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ.

This miraculous deliverance demonstrates several profound truths:

1. God doesn't always prevent His people from entering fiery trials but walks with them through the flames
2. Christ's presence transforms suffering from destructive to redemptive
3. the fourth figure being "loose" suggests Christ liberates those bound by persecution
4. the executioners died from the fire's heat (v. 22) while the faithful walked unharmed, illustrating how God's judgments distinguish between oppressors and His people.

This account prefigures Christ's incarnation—God entering human suffering to deliver His people.

Just as the Son of God entered the furnace to save three faithful men, Christ entered humanity's flames of judgment to rescue believers from sin's condemnation.

Historical Context

Nebuchadnezzar's astonished observation came after he had the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual (v. 19)—a deliberate escalation intended to intensify their suffering. The king and his court witnessed the immediate death of the mighty soldiers who threw the three Hebrews into the furnace (v. 22), making the survival of the condemned men even more miraculous.

Ancient Babylonian theology included divine councils and hierarchies of gods, so Nebuchadnezzar's reference to "a son of the gods" reflects his polytheistic framework attempting to interpret a monotheistic miracle. However, the biblical text uses this pagan king's testimony to reveal divine truth—even unbelievers witness and acknowledge God's supernatural intervention.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does understanding that Christ walks with believers through trials, rather than always removing them, change your perspective on current suffering?
2. How does the fourth figure's presence in the furnace illustrate Christ's promise "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5)?

Interlinear Text

שָׁבֵן	אֶרְבֶּעָה	הַגְּבָרִים	אֶת	אֶת	הַבָּא	אֶתְמָרָה	עַנְהָה
He answered	and said	Lo	I	see	men	four	loose
H6032	H560	H1888	H576	H2370	H1400	H703	H8271
walking	in the midst	of the fire	hurt	no	and they have		H0
H1981	H1459	H5135	H2257	H3809	H383		
and the form	H1768	of the fourth	is like	the Son	of God		
H7299		H7244	H1821	H1247	H426		

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 43:2 (Parallel theme): When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

Acts 28:5 (Parallel theme): And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.

Mark 16:18 (Parallel theme): They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

Job 1:6 (References God): Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them.

Psalms 34:7 (Parallel theme): The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.

Daniel 3:28 (Kingdom): Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nege, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God.

1 Peter 3:13 (Parallel theme): And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

Job 38:7 (References God): When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Daniel 3:18 (Kingdom): But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

Romans 1:4 (References God): And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

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