

FROM FURNACE TO PALACE



Lesson 4 for
January 25,
2020

King Nebuchadnezzar required proof of his government official's loyalty. He made them worship a golden statue.

At the End Time, the civil governments will also impose religious duties.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were faithful subjects of the king. However, they couldn't disobey God. They decided to remain faithful to God and their faith, even if they'd be killed for that.



 **The worshipped image.** Daniel 3:1-7 / Apocalipsis 13:14, 18

 **The death decree.** Daniel 3:8-15 / Apocalipsis 13:15

 **The test of fire.** Daniel 3:16-18 / Apocalipsis 13:16-17

 **The liberation.** Daniel 3:19-27 / Apocalipsis 14:1; 15:2

 **Faith that overcomes.** 1 John 5:4

THE WORSHIPPED IMAGE

“Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its width six cubits. He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.” (Daniel 3:1)

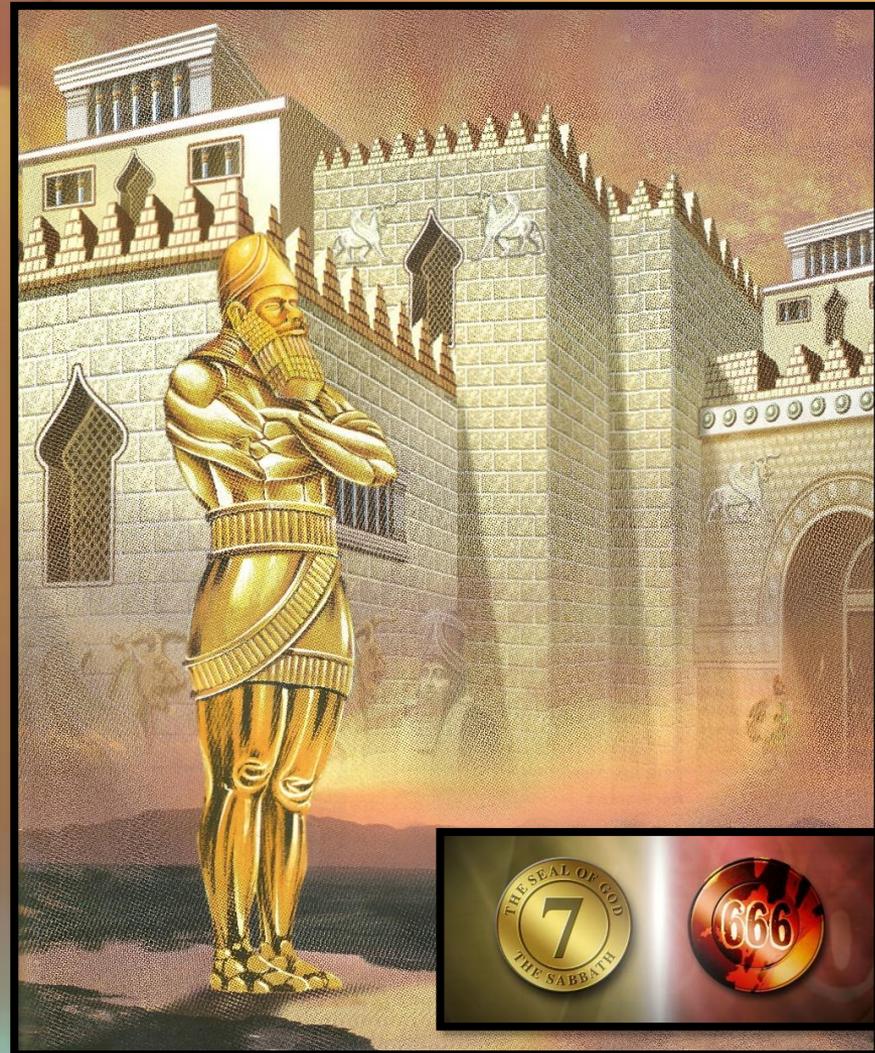
Nimrod founded Babylon with the intention of building a long-lasting name and kingdom (Genesis 10:10; 11:2-9).

Daniel bear witness of God before Nebuchadnezzar, but the king’s pride didn’t let him accept that his golden kingdom would give way to a different silver kingdom.

Therefore, he built a golden statue to proclaim that his kingdom would be everlasting.

Its dimensions were not based in perfection (7), but in the Babylon system (sexagesimal, 60).

The image that will be created at the End Time will also be related with the number 6 (666, the number of a man).





THE DEATH DECREE

**“and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.”
(Daniel 3:11)**

There was an atmosphere of worship. The worshipping crowd bowed down before the magnificent statue (27 m. / 90 ft. high) while melodious instrumental music was playing.

Why not go with the flow? Why not compromise just once? Why not avoid death for such an insignificant matter?

We’re constantly being encouraged to compromise: to adopt a new lifestyle, new ideologies... in short, to abandon our commitment to God.

If we compromise in calm moments, how could we remain faithful when we face a death sentence if we don’t worship the way we’re told?



THE TEST OF FIRE

"If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up." (Daniel 3:17-18)



The behavior of the young men could've gone unnoticed, but their enemies spitefully accused them. The accusation was this: Although they had built trust before the king, they actually didn't serve his gods and weren't obeying his order to worship the statue.

The king was magnanimous and gave them a second chance. A second temptation for them.

"Could any god save you from death?" (v. 15).

"Our God is able" (v. 17).

They weren't completely sure God would deliver them, but they remained faithful to Him.



THE LIBERATION



"Look!" he answered, 'I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.'"

(Daniel 3:25)

Jesus appeared several times as a human to encourage His children. However, the believers have not always been encouraged or delivered.



He appeared to Abraham before destroying Sodom



Isaiah was sawn



He appeared to Jacob in his time of trouble



Zechariah died by the altar



He appeared to Joshua before conquering Jericho



John the Baptist died in prison



He appeared to the three men in the fiery furnace



James was beheaded

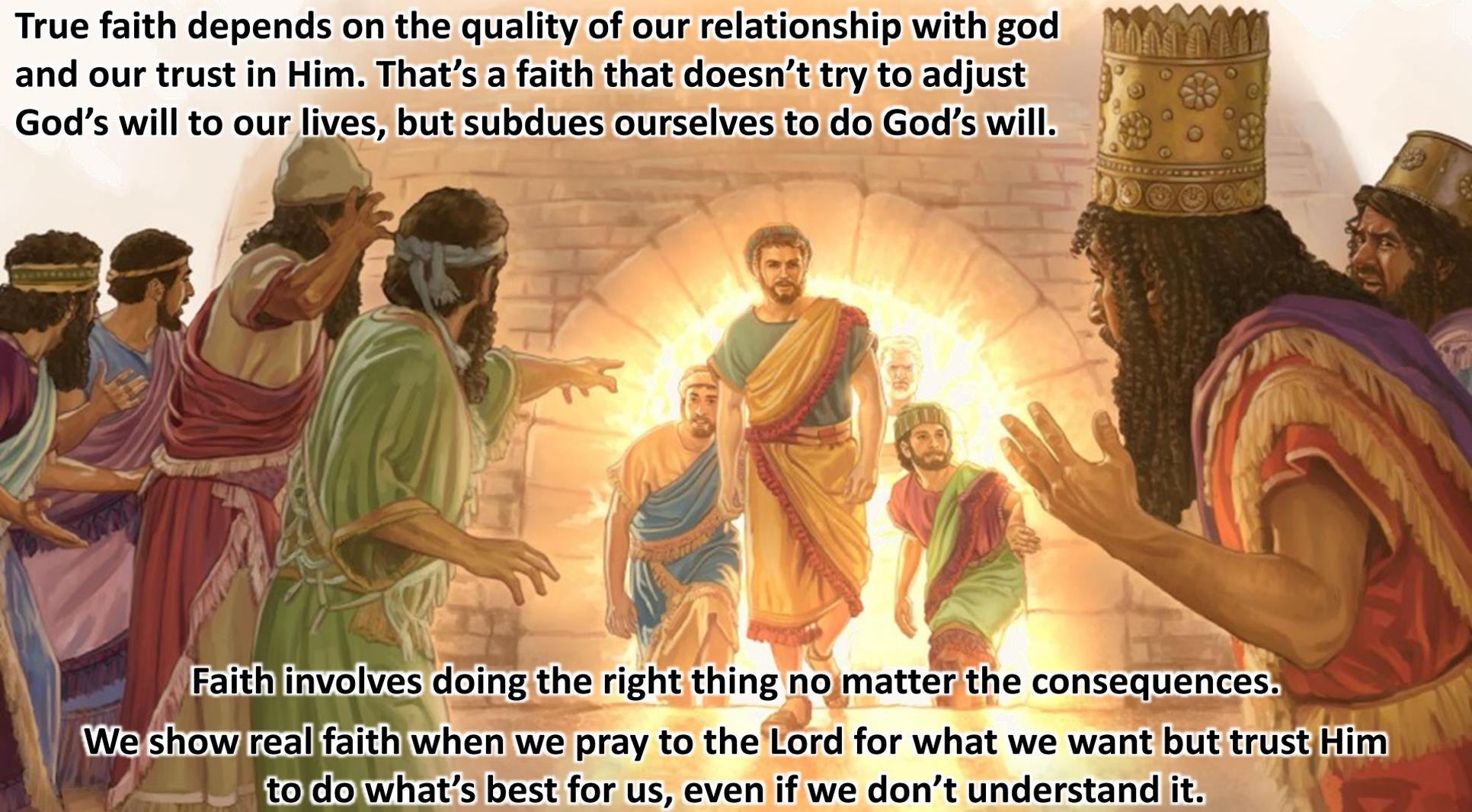
No matter our time of trouble, Jesus will give us victory eventually if we remain faithful to Him (1 Corinthians 15:55).

FAITH THAT OVERCOMES

"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith." (1 John 5:4)

What's the secret of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego's faith?

True faith depends on the quality of our relationship with God and our trust in Him. That's a faith that doesn't try to adjust God's will to our lives, but subdues ourselves to do God's will.



Faith involves doing the right thing no matter the consequences.

We show real faith when we pray to the Lord for what we want but trust Him to do what's best for us, even if we don't understand it.

E.G.W. (Prophets and Kings, cp. 41, p. 512)

“The season of distress before God’s people will call for a faith that will not falter. His children must make it manifest that He is the only object of their worship, and that no consideration, not even that of life itself, can induce them to make the least concession to false worship. To the loyal heart the commands of sinful, finite men will sink into insignificance beside the word of the eternal God. Truth will be obeyed though the result be imprisonment or exile or death...”

“As in the days of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, so in the closing period of earth’s history the Lord will work mightily in behalf of those who stand steadfastly for the right. He who walked with the Hebrew worthies in the fiery furnace will be with His followers wherever they are. His abiding presence will comfort and sustain. In the midst of the time of trouble—trouble such as has not been since there was a nation—His chosen ones will stand unmoved. Satan with all the hosts of evil cannot destroy the weakest of God’s saints. Angels that excel in strength will protect them, and in their behalf Jehovah will reveal Himself as a ‘God of gods,’ able to save to the uttermost those who have put their trust in Him.”

E.G.W. (Prophets and Kings, cp. 41, p. 513)