

# Sorting out the Lines

“But If Not...” Faith

# Daniel 3

8 At this time some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews.9 They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “May the king live forever! 10 Your Majesty has issued a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music must fall down and worship the image of gold, 11 and that whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace. 12 But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up.”

# Stand

- Rack, Shack, and Benny have been brought to Babylon and trained
- Being important officials, they are present for the dedication ceremony of the idol
- They choose not to bow down
- How do they make this stand?
- How did Jesus stand?

Luke 20:21-25: 21 So the spies questioned him: “Teacher, we know that you speak and teach what is right, and that you do not show partiality but teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. 22 Is it right for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?” 23 He saw through their duplicity and said to them, 24 “Show me a denarius. Whose image and inscription are on it?” “Caesar’s,” they replied. 25 He said to them, “Then give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.”

# Stand

Matthew 5:38-42: 38 “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ 39 But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. 40 And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. 41 If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. 42 Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.”

- If we focus too much on doing the right thing we fail to become the right person

Matthew 5:23-24:23 “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.”

- Repairing relationships transcends religious compliance

# Confess

Luke 6:45 - A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.

- When we feel “squeezed” what comes out of our mouth?

Daniel 3:16-18: 16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, “King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. 17 If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty’s hand. 18 But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”

# Confess

- How do they respond?
- How did Jesus respond?
- Modern cultural idols
- “If” faith is easy
- “But if not” faith is hard
- How do we behave when God (seemingly) does not?

# Deliverance

Daniel 3:21-26: 21 So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. 22 The king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, 23 and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace. 24 Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?" They replied, "Certainly, Your Majesty." 25 He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods." 26 Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!"

# Deliverance

- Rack, Shack, and Benny were prepared to be faithful unto death
- They made their stand, submitted to authority, and trusted in God
- God delivered them by walking with them through the flames
- We have the Holy Spirit, we are never alone
- Words of [MLK](#)
- In the end, the only thing destroyed was their bonds
- Hananiah - “God has been gracious”
- Mishael - “Who is like God?”
- Azariah - “God has helped”

...But If not

We do not go alone

