

“Delivered From or Delivered Through”

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Daniel 3:14-18 NLT “14 Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you refuse to serve my gods or to worship the gold statue I have set up? 15 I will give you one more chance to bow down and worship the statue I have made when you hear the sound of the musical instruments. But if you refuse, you will be thrown immediately into the blazing furnace. And then what god will be able to rescue you from my power?”

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you. 17 If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty. 18 But even if he doesn’t, we want to make it clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up.”

Now in these passages, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego put forth two possibilities for deliverance from the fiery trial they were experiencing—God could save them out of it, or He could save them through it.

Either way, they trusted God to be with them!

And these are the only two options for any trial we experience as God's children—He will either deliver us *OUT* of it, or He will deliver us *THROUGH* it.

Both kinds of deliverance are miraculous!

But let's admit it—we like it best when God delivers us *OUT* of it so that we don't have to walk *THROUGH* it.

I think of the disciples at sea when the great storm suddenly arose from nowhere, threatening to destroy them.

Rather than requiring them to walk through the storm from start to finish, Jesus stood and spoke to it, causing it to cease.

In this case, the disciples were delivered *FROM* the storm.

But the Bible is filled with stories of others who didn't receive such a deliverance, but were called to walk through their trial.

Now you have to ask:

Why doesn't God just deliver us every time?

Why require us to walk through it?

Why not just send an angel or two to whisk us away?

After all, that's what I would do if I were God!

I want to answer those questions by showing some of the reasons why God chooses to walk us, as David said, THROUGH the valley of the shadow...

First,

I. That we might learn to trust Him

Trusting God doesn't come easy....We can't see Him, touch Him, or hear His voice the way we do others.

And complicating our trust in Him is the fact that many of us, before coming to Christ, have experienced deep wounding from people we trusted, which taught us NOT to trust.

Some of you once had or have now walls built up in your soul that no one can get through.

There's a sign posted over the door of our heart that reads, "Keep out!"

Hence, we would never learn to trust God unless we were placed in situations that pressured us to do it.

I think of the Children of Israel who passed through what the Bible calls that “great and terrible wilderness.”

Moses reminds the people that God “...led you through the great and terrifying wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water, who brought you water out of the flinty rock. Who fed you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers did not know, that he might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end” (Deut 8:15-16 ESV).

The whole forty years Israel journeyed through the wilderness, God was trying to teach them the simple lesson of trust—*I will feed you, I will provide for you.*

And they never learned it—at the juncture of every trial, Israel freaked out, fell into complaining, and failed to trust God.

Because they never learned to trust, they missed the Promised Land.

Now Paul said that these things were written in the Bible for our sakes:

“All these things happened to them as examples—as object lessons to us—to warn us against doing the same things; they

were written down so that we could read about them and learn from them in these last days as the world nears its end” (1 Cor. 10:11).

Paul the Apostle wrote about an exceedingly difficult trial he and his team experienced in Asia that taught him new levels of trust in God:

2 Cor. 1:9 “It was so bad we didn’t think we were going to make it...that it was all over for us. As it turned out, it was the best thing that could have happened. Instead of trusting in our own strength or wits to get out of it, we were forced to trust God totally.” (The Message)

Notice he says, “We were FORCED to trust God totally!

So Paul admits that the trial itself was the only way he would ever have learned to trust God totally.

A second reason God chooses to walk us THROUGH trials is that He might make us:

II. A blessing to others

Peter Marshall wrote, "God will not permit any troubles to come upon us, unless He has a specific plan by which great blessing can come out of the difficulty."

And one of those specific plans is that we would help people in our future that are hurting like we are right now:

"All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. 4 He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us" (2 Cor. 1:3-4 NLT).

Someone in need is waiting on the other side of your trial!

Who can help someone that loses a loved one better than somebody that has been comforted by God in the loss of a loved one?

Who can hold a struggling alcoholic's hand better than the person that walked through alcoholism and triumphed in Jesus?

Who can comfort a broken hearted parent whose child has gone into wild rebellion better than the parent who walked through the same thing and saw God's goodness and faithfulness?

God never wastes a pain, but will use it to make us ministers to others.

Finally, God chooses to walk us through our trials to bring about:

III. A testimony to a skeptical world

Back to our original text—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were not delivered FROM their fiery trial, but were delivered IN it as Nebuchadnezzar cast them into the oven.

And the Bible says God used it to reveal Himself to King Nebuchadnezzar:

Dan. 3:24-29 "But suddenly, Nebuchadnezzar jumped up in amazement and exclaimed to his advisers, "Didn't we tie up three men and throw them into the furnace?"

"Yes, Your Majesty, we certainly did," they replied.

25 "Look!" Nebuchadnezzar shouted. "I see four men, unbound, walking around in the fire unharmed! And the fourth looks like a god! (It was Jesus)"

26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came as close as he could to the door of the flaming furnace and shouted: "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come

here!" So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego stepped out of the fire."

Notice, they "stepped OUT of the fire" after Nebuchadnezzar saw Jesus IN the fire with them!

Look at the impact their deliverance had on the entire pagan kingdom of Babylon!

27 "Then the high officers, officials, governors, and advisers crowded around them and saw that the fire had not touched them. Not a hair on their heads was singed, and their clothing was not scorched. They didn't even smell of smoke!

28 Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise to the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! He sent his angel to rescue his servants who trusted in him...There is no other god who can rescue like this!"

Someone is always watching the way professing Christians walk through the trials God allows.

When we trust Him, and He walks us "through the valley of the shadow" to the other side, it testifies of the reality of the God we profess to know!

So God allows us to walk THROUGH trials:

**1. To teach us to trust Him, 2. to make us a blessing to others,
and 3. to bring a testimony to a skeptical world that our God is
real and faithful!**