



possessed was the genuine commodity.

Theirs wasn't a conditional bargain that offered to exchange trust in God for deliverance from a superheated furnace (which, by the way, is mentioned or alluded to fifteen times in Daniel 3). They didn't know if deliverance would come—"If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it... but even if he does not... we will not serve your gods," Heb 3:17-18—but they knew what they would do.

And in this, they give us an unforgettable glimpse into true belief. Conditional faith isn't faith at all. "I believe in God because He answered my prayer"; but what if He had not answered your prayer? "I believe in God because He gave me a job"; but what if He had not given you a job? What if you lost your job, would you still believe? Satan claimed Job's faith was conditional ("he only believes in you because of how you've blessed him — take away all his things and he'll curse you"). So in a single day Job lost all his things but instead of cursing he said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." "The problem," countered the Accuser, "is that the furnace isn't hot enough. Take away his health and

he'll curse you to your face." So Job lost his health, not to a lingering cold, but to some hideous sickness. But instead of cursing, Job's response was, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him."

Real faith isn't a quid pro quo, something for something. It's a conviction that says even if deliverance doesn't come, I'll still stand up for Jesus!

Is there reason for us believing in the God revealed in the Bible? And is there reason for continuing to believe even when it seems God has turned against us "without cause," Job 1:3? If the answer is yes (and it is!), THEN LET US BELIEVE, even if it kills us! False faith believes because it's beneficial; real faith believes because it's right.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—these names forever testify to the fact that true faith isn't believing in spite of evidence, but obeying in spite of consequences.

I'll close with how my friend Jim McGuiggan concluded his comments on Daniel 3—"The promotion of the believers follows [their deliverance from the furnace]. But it's not what happened on earth that was of real consequence; it was how they were viewed in heaven. If heaven smiles, then all is really well." At the end of Daniel 3, heaven was smiling. 📖

# Do Not Neglect Your Calling

*By Jim Stauffer*

Paul reminds us of our calling and the need to remain true to it. Eph. 4:1, "I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called."

Summer time [has just hit our calendars,] and vacations for many brethren will take up a certain segment of the next 3 months or so. As we attempt to walk worthily of our calling, it is imperative that our service to God be the centerpiece of our lives when on vacation, just as it is when we are home.

It is true; no one will know the difference when we fail to assemble for worship in a place we are not known. But, of course, God will, Heb 4:13. He has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light, 1 Pet 2:9.

If, indeed, we truly believe in the one body, one Spirit, one hope, one faith, and one baptism, we will submit to the one Lord and one God and Father of all whenever and wherever we are. Our prayer is for the safety and faithfulness of our brethren this season. 📖

## Remember in Prayer

**Bernice** is still in the hospital, but is doing better; current plans are to go back to rehab.

**Buddy** is feeling some better, but tires easily. Pray for **Betty** also; she has been feeling under the

weather at times, too.

Please continue to pray for **Lois Adams, Madelene Britnell, Carolyn Dennis, Tim and Dot Hice, and Polly McNatt...** 📖