

Voice of Baptists

"The Voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."
Isaiah 40:3

VOL. 4

HUNTINGDON, TENN.

FEBRUARY, 1982

NO. 11



THE FIERY FURNACE

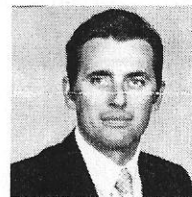
By Harold D. Carver
Buena Vista, Tenn.

"THEN WAS NEBUCHADNEZZAR FULL OF FURY, AND THE FORM OF HIS VISAGE WAS CHANGED AGAINST SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABEDNEGO: THEREFORE HE SPAKE, AND COMMANDED THAT THEY SHOULD HEAT THE FURNACE ONE SEVEN TIMES MORE THAN IT WAS WONT TO BE HEATED. AND HE COMMANDED THE MOST MIGHTY MEN THAT WERE IN HIS ARMY TO BIND SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABEDNEGO, AND TO CAST THEM INTO THE BURNING FIERY FURNACE", DANIEL 3:19-20. This is an account of three great, God fearing men, who would not bend, would not bow, and would not budge. It is a picture of Christian temptations, trials, and tribulations during life. These men would rather face a fiery furnace than to disappoint their Heavenly Father. Their unswerving faith and loving loyalty to God in the face of such ominous threats to the truth are certainly worthy of our notation, deep reflection, thorough study and personal application.

Before we begin the address on this text, a review of the former lives of these devoted children of God is in order. "In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon into Jerusalem, and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the House of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his", Daniel 1:1-2. It was God's purpose to make the descendants of Abraham, the Hebrew Nation, the leading nation of the world, but their disobedience and idolatry prevented this. In 11 Kings 24:8-16 we learn that as a result God permitted Nebuchadnezzar to take the city of Jerusalem, and in the process carry away Jehoiachin, and the princes, and all the mighty men of valor, even ten-thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths, leaving only the poorest sort behind.

"And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes;

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PERSONAL ECONOMICS

By J. A. Reynolds
Davisville, W. Va.

The man who seeks to be Spiritual must seek to understand and practice as nearly as possible all the wise teachings of the Book of God. So often we encounter God's children who disclaim any interest in the practical teachings of God's word and this they do in the name of "Spirituality". These are soon so beset by problems of their own disobedient making that the weights upon them undo them of their spirituality and leave them cold. Being overcome by the self-hung weights about their necks, they have no time for God, and sometimes become bitter at him for "allowing" their predicament. In an age of credit when almost all (not the least our national government) live beyond their means, this sin of economic excess is a great hindrance among our people, especially the younger.

"There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise, but a foolish man spendeth it up." Proverbs 21:20. This proverb from God's word was once believed among our nation's people. When it was prospered because we obeyed God's advice. Many of our older Christians still believe in the wisdom of a bank account and despise the folly of living on money not yet acquired. Somehow this wisdom has not been learned by many of the younger. Some may try to array the teachings of Jesus against this one of Solomon, saying, "Take no thought for the morrow..." and "lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth...., etc., in order to justify their manner of life. Let me say that if you are without means of living because you have obeyed the command of Jesus to neglect your own

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PAPER FEELS FINANCIAL SQUEEZE

This little paper has been sponsored by your donations since it began in April, 1978. The account has been as low as \$30.00 and as much as \$800.00. It presently stands wondering where the funds will come to pay for this issue.

Maybe some of you were of the opinion that this work is underwritten by our church or some other church, but it isn't. While several churches have sent a donation, only a very few have supported the work on a regular basis. Many individuals have made contributions for which we have tried to express appreciation each time with a personal letter.

It costs approximately \$3,000.00 per year to publish, address and mail our present circulation of 2,500.

Unless sufficient funds are received in the immediate to near future the paper will be discontinued.

Pray with us that if it be God's will for this instrument to continue, that means will be made available, and should the work not merit a continuation, that His grace will enable us to apply our energies in other fruitful fields.

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BIBLE STUDY

West End Baptist Church of Gallatin, Tenn. will host a Bible Study on Tuesdays and Thursdays beginning Tuesday evening, February 9, 1982 at 7:00 p.m.

Elder W. T. Russell of Bowling Green, Kentucky will serve as teacher. Bro. Russell has been holding this school annually each Winter and Spring for a number of years.

Pastor William E. Massey and all the members of West End Church send their warmest welcome for all churches and ministers to share with them in this time of "rightly dividing the word of truth."

The church is located at 440 West Main (Hwy. 31-E).

"COME NOW, AND LET US REASON TOGETHER SAITH THE LORD."

Isaiah 1:18

PERSONAL ECONOMICS

(Cont'd from Page 1)

needs to minister to others, you may fully expect Jesus to supply your every need. However, if you are in need because you have disobeyed Solomon's teaching by "spending it up" to acquire for yourself the fulfillment of every covetous lust of the eye you may fully expect no help from the Lord unless on pain of repentance. Do not be hypocritical enough to pretend that what is a result of covetousness is rather the result of obedience to Jesus.

Many saints who have deprived themselves of things desired in order to keep "treasure and oil" in store in their "dwelling" toward the day of true need have been falsely accused of covetousness by the secret envy of others who have "spent it up".

It should be wisely observed that the "love of money" which is the "root of all evil" is not divorced from the love of

what money will buy. The bankroll of many people is the result of Godly wisdom rather than covetousness, while the lack of many other people is a result of the coveting of many luxuries and not of Godly generosity or God's business. I would not in any way attempt to justify those who hoard money while allowing the needy to go unaided, but it is sure that the man who has spent all his substance can not help the next needy cause which comes along.

My earthly Father had the peculiar habit of leaving a small portion of food in every bowl in the event a beggar might happen along. So he said, and I have long admired his scriptural manners in practical living. From him I learned to try always to have a few dollars to give away freely when I found a needy cause. He who so purposes will usually have.

The sin of covetousness, is a terrible one, categorized with, fornication, uncleanness, evil concupiscence, etc., and called "idolatry" (Col. 3:5) It is a shame for the covetous men of this lost world to behold covetous Christians, and this covetousness is so clearly exposed for all to see in the economic dealings of spendthrift Christians. People who live from paycheck to payment create a multitude of evils for themselves and others. They become virtual slaves to their employers because they cannot miss a paycheck. Therefore, God's work must not take precedence over their secular employment. They cannot chance losing their jobs or even a day's pay because of their many obligations. They are making fat the users and buying a whole lot less with their money. Thus they must work more hours and accept the more time consuming jobs when promotions are offered, thus leaving less time to serve the Lord.

When excellent and profitable deals fall their way they often have no bankroll to take advantage of good fortune. Thus they again decrease their substance by such unwise practices.

Often those who live beyond their means have little left to give to the Lord, while others whose incomes are far less give a tenth of their substance regularly. This is an inequality among the church members which is also a great evil. Again, when special needs of great magnitude arise, these have no substances to give for it is "spent up".

When unforeseen obligations arise, there are worries of mind to dull the spirit and hinder God's work. Often the economic bind will become known to others and worry and hinder them also. This is a great and unnecessary evil and deserves a rebuke. You are not your

own, and neither are the fruits of your labor yours to do with as you please. Such trouble caused by failure to heed God's word and the sin of covetousness are beheld by wiser Christians and you are an offence to them. Again this is evil.

If we really have it in our hearts to lay up treasure in heaven and that is our genuine pursuit, surely we had better learn to obey God in the proper handling of treasure here on earth.

TIME TO SPARE?

By Arvella Stapleton
Toledo, Ohio

TIME — days, months, years,
But I have plenty and to spare.
I'll wait until I'm ready
to serve Him — I'll be better prepared.

TIME — It is so endless.
There is so much as I look ahead.
How will I use it
until the silver crowns my head?

But wait — It was only yesterday
I was born.
Now...I am grown.
No longer so young.
Where did the TIME go?

Looking back, such a short span
Was allotted to me for greeting
My loved ones with God's words so
precious.
Only a speck of Eternity — Oh how
fleeting.

What have I done?
Why wasn't I concerned?
Why haven't I used my TIME
as my Savior pleaded and yearned?

NO—NO — I wasted the greater part
just waiting, watching, and relaxing,
While others did serve Him.
What can I do now that I see where I
am lacking?

Is it too late to labor in His vineyard?
can I yet help those who are seeking?
Why—OH Why—Did I not see
How swiftly the TIME was fleeting?

READER REMARKS

"Sure enjoy reading the "Voice of Baptists", and have received many blessings from it."

Otis & Helen Dearing
Alvaton, Ky.



"FAITH WORKS"

January 1, 1982

Dear Brethren:

As I send to you this report and my most humble thanks, my heart is overflowing with both sorrow and joy. Sorrow and grief fill my heart because I have been a tremendous burden to those whom I love, joy because you have exhibited true Christian love in the way you took my financial burden upon yourselves and shared my spiritual burdens with your prayers. The apostle Paul spoke of learning how to suffer need, and also how to rejoice in times of plenty. We have also learned this, and much much more, but most of all we have learned to love the Lord more, and to trust everything to his Divine Providence.

There are so many things I would desire to write to thank you, but due to the lack of space and not wanting to hinder this little paper in its work of spreading the gospel truth, I submit this report, and pray to Almighty God, that it will abound to His Glory, and blessings on your behalf.

Old Union Miss. Bapt. (Ky.)	1,575.10
Bethel Miss. Bapt. (Ind.)	360.00
Grace Bapt. (Hendersonville)	300.00
Fairview Miss. Bapt. (Woodburn)	500.00
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Eld. Rufus Chandler	35.00

Due to the many churches of the same name, some errors may be found, if so it is unintentional. Please forgive me and Thank you so very much.

Your Brother in Christ,

Vernon Roark
310 Driftwood Inn Road
North Bend, OR 97459

THE FIERY FURNACE

(Continued from Page 1)

Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skillful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.....Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names; for he gave unto Daniel the name of Beltezhazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego", Daniel 1:3-4, 6-7. We note that each of them had their names changed; obviously, to more surely sever their relationship with their homeland and religious practices. However, it is refreshing to know that a man's name does not change his character. Regardless of what the world may call us, the child of God can and should remain rooted in the truths of God. These young Hebrew men were to be tempted along the lines of their religious beliefs. They were commanded to be fed from the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank. "And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king," Daniel 1:5.

Surely such treatment from a royal personage was attractive to the carnal nature of these young men. No doubt they were aware of the honor bestowed upon them to have been selected by the king, and of the comforts, luxuries, and pleasures of Babylon. They were aware that to refuse and reject the king could endanger their well being or even cost them their lives. But for them there could be no compromise, because they could not insure the origin of the meat from the king's table. Perhaps it be of a kind forbidden by God's Law; or flesh yet containing blood; or maybe even meat which had first been offered to idols. They did not know and because they did not know they would not run the risk of defiling themselves and displeasing God. "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself," Daniel 1:8. What the world needs today is a return to the dedication to "principles of truth" which these men demonstrated.

Their humble actions did secure the favour of the most high God. "Now God

had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs", Daniel 1:9. Subsequently, these men gained approval to lay aside the king's portion and to be fed on the more common stock, "pulse and water". In a sense an experiment was being conducted. "And at the end of ten days their countenance appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat", Daniel 1:15. The results were astounding. "As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king. And in all matters of wisdom and understanding that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm." Daniel 1:17-20.

The lessons contained here are applicable to all of us but especially to young people. These young men were stripped from their homeland, friends, and families. They were cast into the midst of strange religious practices and heretical doctrines. They would remain captives in this alien land for at least seventy years. Yet they became champions of the "separated life". They remained free and separated from the pollutions, worldliness, and pleasures that surrounded them. In this evil day in which we live there needs to be more "transforming and less conforming" on the part of God's people.

The principles which these children applied in their lives would stand them in good stead in future temptations, trials, and test. Their next rejection of the forces of evil would subject them to a test in a literal fiery furnace. This trial so vividly symbolizes the multitude of temptations and persecutions which the child of God faces today.

The contest would arise over the refusal of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to bow and worship the image of gold made by king Nebuchadnezzar, (Daniel 3:1). The penalty for denying the king and rejecting the idolatrous worship was death by burning. "And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace", Daniel 3:6. We notice from the scriptures that all the people, the nations, and languages fell

down and worshipped the golden image; that is except the faithful children of God. They would not conform. Just as they had "purposed" in the beginning they would not compromise what they knew to be the truth. It's hard to stand against sin in a world racing to hell but to enjoy the full fellowship and blessings of God it is essential that we do.

Some marvelous things may be learned from a study of Daniel chapter three. FIRST. Verses thirteen and nineteen describe the rage and fury which they faced in an angry king. The moral here is, if we are truly saved, living for Jesus Christ and honestly contending for the faith, the world is not going to honor us. If we are living for Christ we will be persecuted. "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you", Matthew 5:10-12. Many people today would not have faced this fury. In olden days their stand brought reproach and if men stand firm today it will do the same.

SECONDLY. Verses fourteen thru eighteen indicate that their faith was genuine. They were not tossed too and fro. Their faith was settled and they did not have to think before they answered. They were sure and certain where they stood with God. We should have our minds made up before temptations occur. Their faith was sure because they knew that God was most able to deliver them. David demonstrated this same faith when he described how God had delivered him from the paw of the lion and bear, and would deliver him out of the hand of the Philistine.

The depth of their steadfast faith is measured by a simple statement found in verse eighteen, "But if not—". They were saying, even if God does not deliver us, even if in his will he does not deliver us; we are still not going to worship the golden image. The Christian of today needs a depth of faith that will allow them to say, "I will with pleasure stand in God's will regardless of the consequences". On this occasion it was God's will to deliver his sons, but this is not always the case as we learn from the twelfth chapter of Acts. James had been killed by the sword of king Herod. Peter was in prison awaiting his execution; however, just immediately before Herod would kill Peter God miraculously de-

livered him from prison. James was killed, Peter was rescued. Did God love Peter more than James? No, this was according to God's divine will. We should never believe that God has forsaken us just because his ways and thoughts are not like ours.

THIRDLY. In verse twenty three the sentence is executed. As a result of their rejection of sin, their obedience to God, and their true faith they found a sweet fellowship with Jesus Christ. The only thing that was burned upon these men were the ropes with which the Babylonians had bound them. "Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors. Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" They answered and said unto the king, True O king. 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", Daniel 3:24-25. He saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them. On, what a lovely picture, "The fourth is like the Son of God", Jesus Christ our Saviour. Just think, what if they had refused the furnace; they would never have experienced this companionship with Christ. We have sweet fellowship with Jesus Christ when we are bearing The Cross. What a lesson, and what a need for the practical application to our lives.

READER REMARKS

"David and I enjoy the "Voice of Baptists" very much. We greatly appreciate all the time and effort you and the staff are giving. May God bless each one that has a part in publishing this paper."

David & Lillian Coleman
Louisville, Ky.

"We all still enjoy the "VOICE" here and hope you can keep up the excellent work."

Elder Terry Foster
Belton, Mo.

"Still enjoying the paper and my son-in-law, Bob Horn, said he was too."

Fount & Delzie Moran
Beech Grove, Ind.