

Faith Under Fire

Daniel 3

Master Manipulator



Master manipulator

1. **Education:** schools, universities
2. **Visual:** flags, photos, films
3. **Group:** Hitler youth, crowds, leaders
4. **Music:** Wagner, military bands
5. **Fear:** torture and death



Education

Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials... to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians. The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king's table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king's service. (Daniel 1:3-5)

Shape the minds of talented youth.



Visual

King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, ninety feet high and nine feet wide.

Impress people with impressive, expensive visual.

Group

He then summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the image he had set up.

Everybody, or at least everybody who is somebody, is doing it. We want to fit in, not stick out. Who wants to be a freak, geek, nerd, dork, wierdo, oddball?

Music

As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up.

Music can create a mood and move people to feel and behave alike.

The background of the entire image is a close-up, high-contrast photograph of a blazing furnace. The colors range from deep, dark reds and oranges to bright, glowing yellows and whites, with intricate, swirling patterns of light and shadow that suggest intense heat and movement. The texture appears rough and metallic, with sharp edges and deep crevices that catch the light.

Fear

Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.

Master manipulator: Nebuchanezzar

1. Education: 3-year training
2. Visual: 90-foot gold image
3. Group: everybody who is somebody
4. Music: horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe
5. Fear: death oven



How are we manipulated?

Worldly power changes its name from age to age and place to place, but it still uses Babylon's basic methods.

1. **Education:** schools, universities
2. **Visual:** movies, TV, tablets, phones
3. **Group:** peers, pundits, stars
4. **Music:** sex, drugs, rebellion
5. **Fear:** mocked, shunned, sued, fired

Conforming to the world

Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp and all kinds of music, all the peoples, nations and men of every language fell down and worshiped the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God. (Romans 12:2)



Dare to be different

They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up.

When everyone else fell down, three young men stood out.

Standing out

These young men stood out, not for being odd or obnoxious, but for commitment, confidence, and and competence.

- **Commitment:** faith and obedience greater than those around them
- **Confidence:** bravery and boldness greater than those around them
- **Competence:** ability and achievement greater than those around them

Commitment

Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. (Daniel 1:8)

They were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. (Daniel 3:28)

Confidence

“Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see.” (Daniel 1:12-13)

The God we serve is able to save us.

(Daniel 3:17)

Competence

Israelites from the royal family and the nobility—young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace... To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning... (Daniel 1:4,17,20)

Competence

The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanterers in his whole kingdom. (Daniel 1:19-20)

Their competence and stature as leaders was why the king wanted them to bow.

Competence

Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. (Daniel 6:3-4)

Less successful people are driven by envy as well as by their anti-God attitude.

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They neither
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nor worship the
image of gold you
have set up.

**If you were
accused of being
a Christian, would
there be enough
evidence to
convict you?**

**Hot temper,
hot furnace**



Confidence and commitment



Heroes of faith

- Faith is full **confidence** that God can rescue us from anything. Heroes of faith know nothing can kill them if God wants them to go on living.
- Faith is full **commitment** to God even if he chooses not to rescue us. Heroes of faith also would rather lay down their lives than deny God.
- “This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4).

The God we serve

“O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But if not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.” (Daniel 3:16-18)



BUT IF NOT



I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods.



Sneak peak at eternity

- **Hell:** Armed troops who serve Babylon's king and his idol perish in flames.
- **Heaven:** Unarmed believers who serve God are saved by the Son of God.

Fireproof

Fear not, for I have redeemed you... When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. (Isaiah 43:1-2).

They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them. (Daniel 3:27)

Fireproof

They will put some of you to death. All men will hate you because of me. But not a hair of your head will perish. By standing firm you will gain life. (Luke 21:16-19)

Promoted

“Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way.” Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon. (Daniel 3:2)

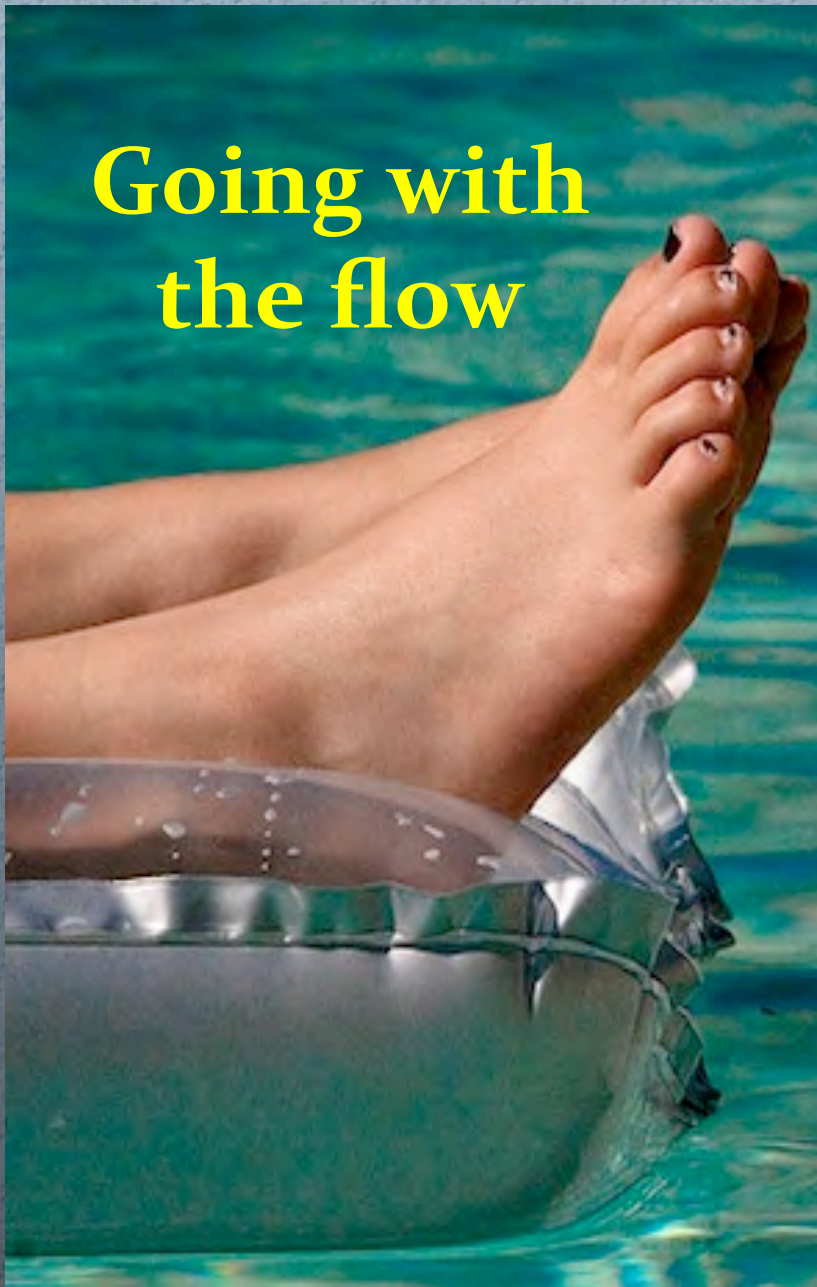
To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne. (Revelation 3:21)



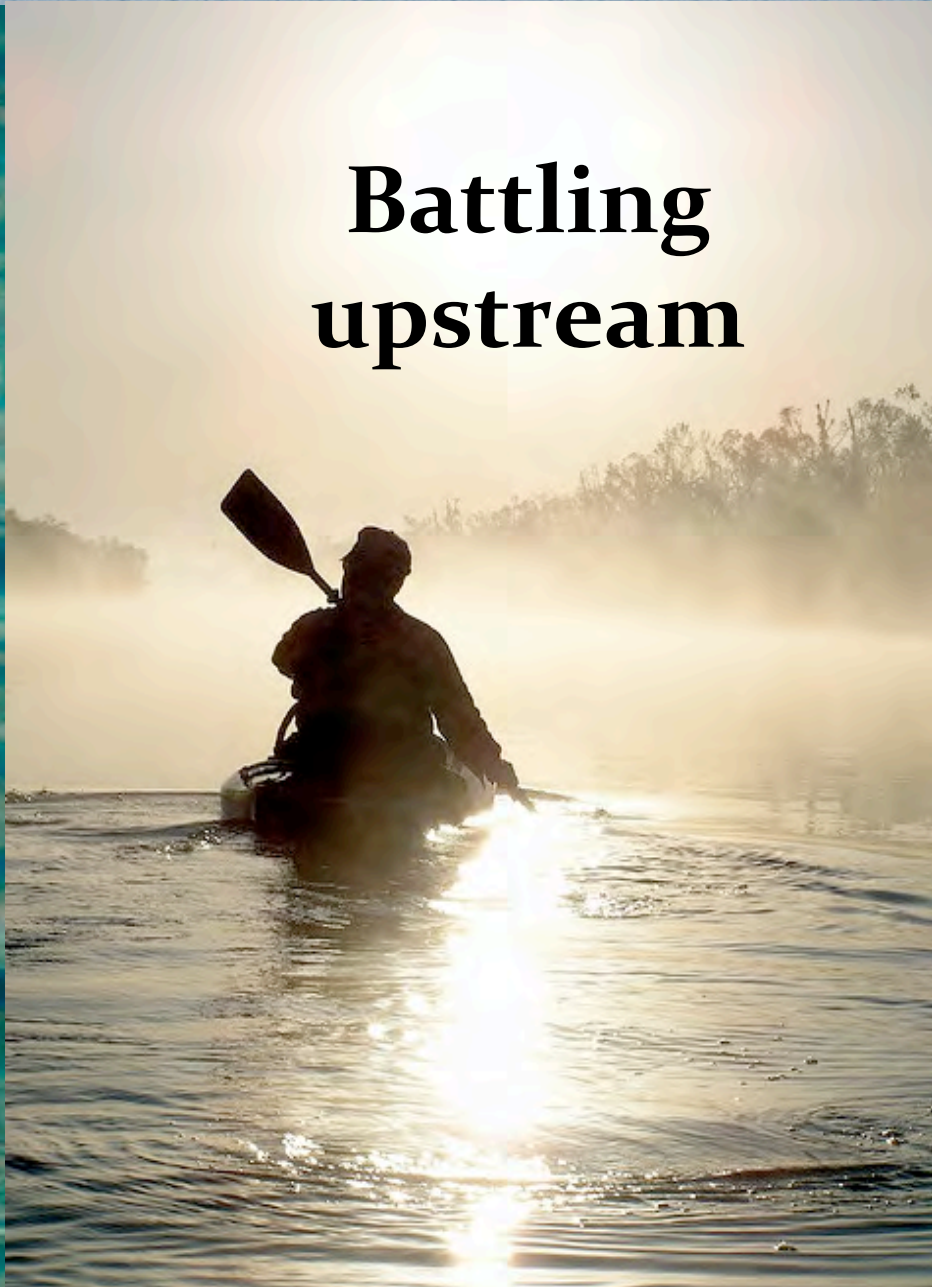
Victorious Kingdom

The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed... It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end. (Daniel 2:44)

**Going with
the flow**



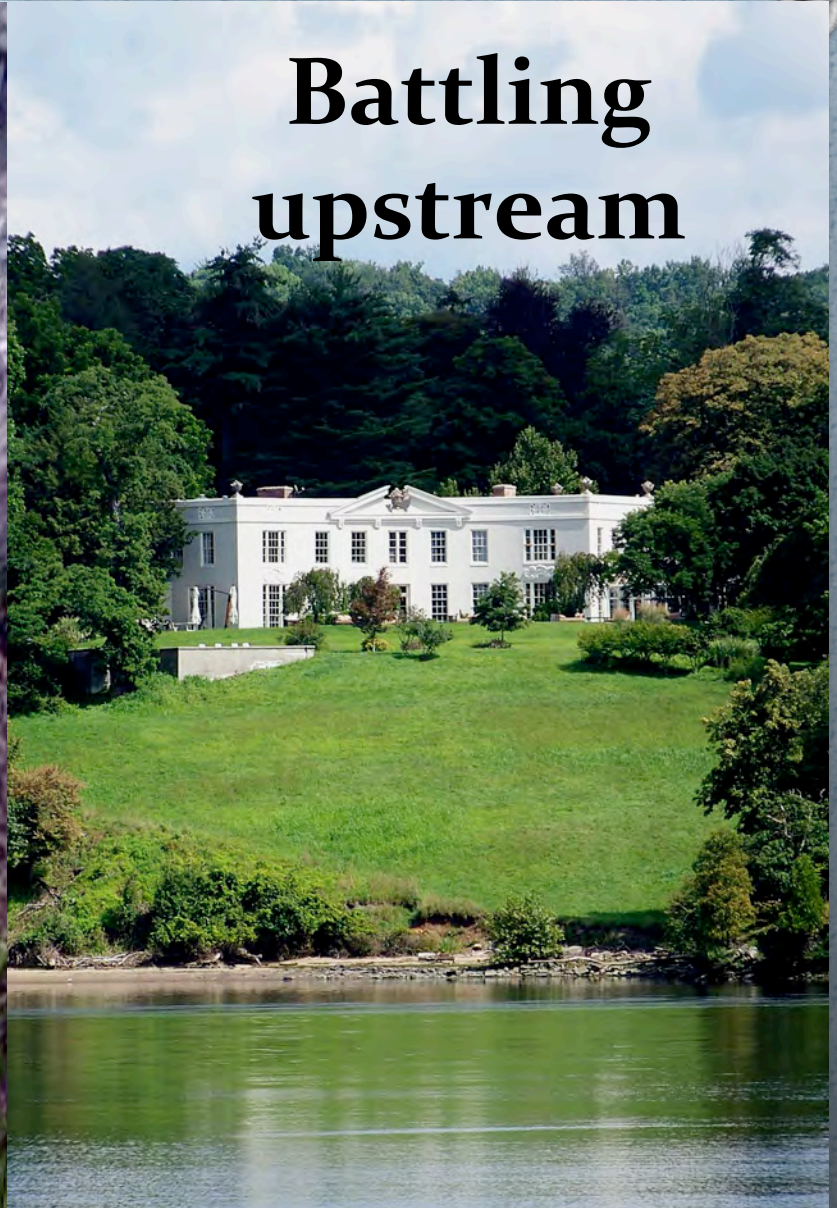
**Battling
upstream**





**Going with
the flow**

**Battling
upstream**





Peace amid trouble

I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.

(John 16:33)