

Songs for the Road “Another in the Fire”

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Digging Deeper

Songs for the Road: “Another in the Fire”

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Background Notes

Key Scripture Text(s): Daniel 3; Exodus 14:13-14, 21-31; Psalm 46:7, 11; Isaiah 8:10; Matthew 1:23; Hebrews 4:16; 12:28; Matthew 28:20.

Introduction

Melody takes memory by the hand and walks music into the future. Our minds simply work that way. Even at my age, when memories are incorrigible and certainly forgettable, small patches of a song become snagged in my brain and refuse to stop repeating. We have the power of the melody to thank for this phenomenon!

Far back in history the celebrated philosophers know as Pythagoreans discovered the tight connection between tones and how the universe worked. They referred to “the music of the spheres,” a glancing reference to the heavenly bodies which mysteriously filled the heavens with their melodies rooted in mathematics. Harmony, vibration, and heavenly bodies in motion shared much in common. What humans called silence was actually the constant presence of universal music and always in the background. Recent studies in the physical sciences bring such an idea to the subatomic level. Dana Samuel from Concordia University has written the following about the subject.

Within particle physics, since the 1970s, string theory has been an actively researched model for understanding the universe. Rather than visualizing the smallest particles of matter as miniscule points, string theory posits that quarks and electrons may be visualized as sub-microscopic “strings” that vibrate, much like on a musical instrument. The tone at which a string vibrates determines its physical form. At present, they remain invisible and are thought to exist in other manifold as-yet-invisible dimensions. Many theoretical physicists, including Stephen Hawking believe that string theory could be a “theory of everything,” a fundamental way of describing the makeup of the universe. Auditory culture is thereby extended to the smallest particles and the largest galaxies. Pythagoras was known for saying, “There is geometry in the humming of the strings, there is music in the spacing of the spheres,” thus also linking the visual and the aural.¹

Would it stretch the point too far if we said, “When God created the world, He sang while he worked?” Nature sings the glory of God while the heavens orchestrate the music of the spheres and humans travel through life humming their own “Songs for the Road.” How impoverished would be the church without its music, both ancient and current, hymns and praise choruses.

From the songbook of Israel, the *Psalms* (or the *Psalter*) comes an intriguing piece of poetry, lyrics from a multi-stanza psalm.

Hear this, all you peoples; give ear, all inhabitants of the world, ² both low and high, rich and poor together. ³ My mouth shall speak wisdom; the meditation of my heart shall be understanding. ⁴ I will incline my ear to a proverb; *I will solve my riddle to the music of the harp.* (Psalm 49:1-4).

In the solid tradition of David whose harp became his *muse* we have this remarkable suggestion that wisdom, meditation, understanding, proverb and riddle find a friend in the music of the harp — an instrument that teases out the truth of the world with the skill of the Sage. Perhaps what the poet meant was simply the power of music to inspire, reinforce, and regularly recall the wisdom of God. The harp is the companion of heart holiness and the teacher of tough truths. With calibrated strings, yielding dulcet tones, the stringed instrument opens up the *being* of things, revealing in them the reality of God and the richness of the world. One thousand years

¹ http://www.sensorystudies.org/picture-gallery/spheres_image/

before Christ the Jewish musician of Psalm 49 knew what Pythagoras would later discover when he taught his students about the “music of the spheres.”

Our weekly worship at C1 follows playlists of tones and tunes, the wisdom of the heart, rendered close and intimate through words that tell stories, offer thanks, lift hearts, and unite our congregation in joyful praise. The tunes imprint our memories with the echoes of their message and become for worshipping Christians their weekly “Songs for the Road,” nurturing thoughts and guiding actions. For the next three weeks our studies gather around the theme of memorable tunes inspired by texts from the biblical witnesses. Poignant narratives of God’s people become journey music through examples drawn from the repository of fresh encounters between the muses of our own time and the lively experience of the gospel.

Our approach is: 1) to give fair and honest treatment to the *text* in which the witnesses to Israel’s remembered-past leave behind the etchings of a story filled with courage, laced with treachery, tinged with mocking, and crowned with deliverance. At the heart of the tale is calm assurance that those at greatest risk when the fire grows fierce are never alone, for there’s “another in the fire”; 2) to share the poetry and tune of gifted songwriters for whom Daniel’s episode fuels the inspired imagination, giving singers and worshippers much to celebrate. Lyrics matter when moving from sacred text to song-filled tune, for the words of the witnesses require faithful rendering in the language of minstrels and poets.

The Text for the Tune (Daniel 3)

King Nebuchadnezzar made a gold statue ninety feet tall and nine feet wide and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. 2 Then he sent messages to the high officers, officials, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates, and all the provincial officials to come to the dedication of the statue he had set up. 3 So all these officials came and stood before the statue King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

4 Then a herald shouted out, “People of all races and nations and languages, listen to the king’s command! 5 When you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes, and other musical instruments, bow to the ground to worship King Nebuchadnezzar’s gold statue. 6 Anyone who refuses to obey will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.”

7 So at the sound of the musical instruments, all the people, whatever their race or nation or language, bowed to the ground and worshiped the gold statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

8 But some of the astrologers went to the king and informed on the Jews. 9 They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “Long live the king! 10 You issued a decree requiring all the people to bow down and worship the gold statue when they hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes, and other musical instruments. 11 That decree also states that those who refuse to obey must be thrown into a blazing furnace. 12 But there are some Jews—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—whom you have put in charge of the province of Babylon. They pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They refuse to serve your gods and do not worship the gold statue you have set up.”

13 Then Nebuchadnezzar flew into a rage and ordered that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought before him. When they were brought in, 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.”

19 Nebuchadnezzar was so furious with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that his face became distorted with rage. He commanded that the furnace be heated seven times hotter than usual. 20 Then he ordered some of the strongest men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. 21 So they tied them up and threw them into the furnace, fully dressed in their pants, turbans, robes, and other garments. 22 And because the king, in his anger, had demanded such a hot fire in the furnace, the flames killed the soldiers as they threw the three men in. 23 So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, securely tied, fell into the roaring flames.

24 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!"

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. 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. They defied the king's command and were willing to die rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. 29 Therefore, I make this decree: If any people, whatever their race or nation or language, speak a word against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, they will be torn limb from limb, and their houses will be turned into heaps of rubble. There is no other god who can rescue like this!"

30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to even higher positions in the province of Babylon.

Structure and Texture

First we make a few observations about how the writer puts this passage together. The story of the three Hebrews and the fiery furnace comprises 3:1-30. As a prequel to that material, we need to consider King Nebuchadnezzar's frame of mind in 2:46-49, a passage which concludes the great dream interpretation by Daniel. This material serves as a hinge within the text, both ending the one account and introducing chapter 3. In this prequel the king falls before Daniel, treats him like a god by offering incense, and commends his interpretation of the dream. He refers to Daniel's God as "God of gods and Lord of kings and revealer of mysteries." He rewards Daniel with new administrative powers. In turn Daniel asks that promotions be given to his three friends. Formerly known in *Daniel* by their Hebrew names, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, they are now called by Babylonians names: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. This is no doubt to underscore the essentially pagan world in which the Jewish people find themselves, and the considerable pressure on Jewish people to lose their distinctiveness. A person's name had meaning, and to change a name usually pointed to a fundamental change in their character or situation. Recall the name changes of Abram to Abraham and Jacob to Israel. In this case, the ability of the three men to function more easily within the Babylonian culture might be one reason for these name changes. Clearly, the suffixes of their Hebrew names connected them to Yahweh and Elohim as identifiers for their God (Note: *-ah* is a common suffix for Yahweh; *-el* functions similarly for Elohim).

Following the story in 3:1-30, we have similar literary hinge in 4:1-3 which both offers retrospective and introduction to the next body of material in chapter 4. What is especially important in this sequel is the way Nebuchadnezzar views the *unbelievable* events which have taken place in his life as a result of God's actions. He refers to these events as "signs" and "wonders," using the Aramaic words *'āt* and *l'mah*. By using these words, the text emphasizes the impact of the actions on the audience, but also that the *meaning* of the actions is not lost on the king. He claims to know that "the Most High God" has performed these remarkable signs and wonders, and that they are "great and mighty" (4:3). Further, that this God has a kingdom which is "eternal" and endures from "generation to generation." Still, the king makes clear that this God has done these things "for me," and we are not certain the degree to which Nebuchadnezzar is willing fully submit his own kingdom to the rule of this God.

The king is ambivalent in his relationship to the Hebrew God. He *seems* to acknowledge this God as supreme over all, but the king's actions continue to contradict that belief. This is true both in the prequel and in the sequel when read in conjunction with the surrounding stories. This week's text in chapter 3 is full of idolatry

and hostility. Much like Pharaoh in the *Genesis* story of Joseph, the king of Babylon continues to harden his heart despite confessions to the contrary. One purpose of miracles, wonders, and signs in this case is to move the pagan king away from his false worship and toward the one true God. Among the ancients, *power* and superior *acts of power* carry substantial weight, especially in the eyes of sovereigns who regularly use power to maintain their rule. Persons of power respect awesome power. This seems to be the case with the story of the three Hebrews in chapter 3.

The account falls into three distinct units:

1. 3:1-7 — The Statue
2. 3:8-18 — The Three Hebrews and the fiery furnace
3. 3:19-30 — The Rescue

In addition the whole story is told using a series of “threads” which are woven together within the three units. We label these with letters and then present the tapestry which they comprise. You will note the change in emphasis for each thread as we move from one panel to the next. The artist’s strategy is to eventually remove the gold image from the story, leaving only God and His faithful worshippers to dominate the scene.

- A**=Image of gold setup by the king
- B**=List of illustrious powerful persons
- C**=List of people in the world
- D**=List of musical instruments
- E**=Fall down and worship image
- F**=Thrown into fiery furnace
- G**=List of three Hebrews
- H**=Furnace heated hotter

The Threads Woven Into the Story Of Daniel 3 In Three Panels

3:1-7		3:8-18		3:19-30	
A	3:1	D	3:10a	G	3:19a
B	3:2a	E	3:10b	H	3:19b
A	3:2b	A	3:10c	G	3:20a
B	3:3a	E	3:11a	F	3:20b
A	3:3b	F	3:11b	F	3:21
C	3:4	G	3:12a	H	3:22a
D	3:5a	A	3:12b	G	3:22b
E	3:5b	G	3:13	E	3:23
A	3:5c	G	3:14a	E	3:24
E	3:6a	E	3:14b	H	3:26a
F	3:6b	A	3:14c	G	3:26b
D	3:7a	D	3:15a	G	3:26c
C	3:7b	E	3:15b	B	3:27
E	3:7c	A	3:15c	G	3:28
A	3:7d	F	3:15d	C	3:29a
		G	3:16	G	3:29b
		F	3:17	G	3:30
		E	3:18a		
		A	3:18b		

Interspersed throughout this fabric are repeated references to King Nebuchadnezzar. When we summarize the literary data, the following information emerges:

	3:1-7	3:8-18	3:19-30
A	5	5	0
B	2	0	1
C	2	0	1
D	2	2	0
E	3	5	2
F	1	3	2
G	0	4	8
H	0	0	3
King	4	11	5

Then, we make these observations:

1. In the first two sections we have heavy emphasis on the building of the gold statue (10x).
2. In the second section much is said by or about the king himself, and he is directly tied to the erecting of the gold statue (15x). Question: Is the statue really a representation of the king himself as a god?
3. The first two sections stress the falling down and worshipping before the statue (8x).
4. The list of illustrious rulers, other than the king, are given brief mention in section one, no mention in section two, and scant mention in section three. All other supposed rulers must surrender their own honor to the honor of the great king! The same is true for the general populace.
5. Musical instruments play a key role in sections one and two (4x). In order to create the environment for the whole empire to worship the golden image, a variety of instruments converged and lent their voices. Music was magic to the ancients. Given the right tune and rhythm, large groups of people could easily be manipulated to engage in all sorts of bizarre religious behavior.
6. Section two has the densest arrangement of threads with the emphasis falling on the image, its worship, the music, the warning about the fiery furnace for those who refuse worship, the mention of the three Hebrews, and the dominant place of the king.
7. Section three contains a repudiation of the whole gold statue enterprise, including the intimidation of those who refuse to participate. No reference is made to the image, and the only reference to worship is the rejection of idolatry by the three Hebrews. The three Hebrews dominate this section (8x)!
8. Though the furnace is made seven times hotter, it has no effect on the three Hebrews who are thrown into it.

With genuine artistry, the writer skillfully weaves the story into the three panels. By the time we reach the end, it is God and His true worshippers who dominate the tapestry, while the image and its worship disappear from the landscape.

We now turn to the text and its specific content.

Content

This chapter begins in a most curious way. If we go back one chapter (Daniel 2), we learn that Daniel had just told King Nebuchadnezzar how all the empires of this world are like a large statue with the king himself as its head. But this is a very unstable statue because it rests on feet of clay, and will ultimately collapse at the final decree of God. Would not a sane king be just a bit wary of such a statue, knowing that it is very unstable? What should be the next reasonable step for the king to take after he hears the interpretation of his statue-dream? How should he show his gratitude to the God of whom he said, “Your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and revealer of mysteries” (2:47)? At first, he gives thanks by richly rewarding Daniel and his three friends with administrative posts (2:46, 48-49), and keeping Daniel himself in the royal court.

But then the king does a strange thing as recorded above in 3:1-7 from our main *text*. Almost as if to defy the message of the dream, the king makes an image *entirely of gold* and places it in a conspicuous place for the

purpose of commanding worship. No sooner had the king given lip service to the God of gods in Daniel 2:47, than the king usurped that honor and majesty by constructing a statue which seemed to mock the meaning of Daniel's interpretation. Perhaps he thought his kingdom could survive the fall if it did not have feet of *clay* but feet of *gold* instead. His statue does not resemble the one in the vision but is a parody of it — a protest of it. When a king sets up an image and commands his subjects to worship it, he is asking them to worship him. Here is *civil religion* in its purist form. Nebuchadnezzar may call Daniel's God by high and holy names, but in practice he much prefers being god himself. How does a person resist the power of civil religion turned into idolatry?

Worship of this statue was compulsory, and the punishment for insubordination was death in a blazing furnace. No doubt the furnaces of Babylon were still hot from preparing the gold for making the statue. Into these furnaces, the herald declares, anyone who does not fall down and worship will be immediately thrown.

1. **3:1-7.** While it is helpful to know that height of the statue in terms of our measurements (90 feet), something is thereby lost in the translation. The Aramaic text says, "Sixty cubit high and six cubits wide." Babylonians used a number system based on six (6) not ten (10); sexagesimal not decimal. For example, in Ezekiel 40:5 we read about a six cubit measuring rod. The repeated emphasis on the number six suggests that the statue is a only *human* invention.

The social and political status of those assembled has prominence in the story. Every grade of human privilege gets leveled out at the foot of this great image. Yes, there are satraps, prefects, governors, counselors, justices, and magistrates. There are officials from high to low in the empire of Babylon. But when the king wants full allegiance and unquestioned loyalty, all of that doesn't amount to much. The whole group looks pretty much the same when they bow down before his image!

Add to the ceremony the fanfare of music from a variety of instruments and the marriage of patriotism and religion is finally complete. It appears that the king of Babylon wants to be both king and god within his empire, and he has found a way to unite the empire squarely behind him. Lurking deep inside his subconscious mind which gave birth to the dream of chapter 2 are deeper and darker secrets: not only the lust for empire but the need for worship.

The king has manipulated the interpretation of his dream for the purpose of becoming its main subject. And anybody who fails to acknowledge him in this way is condemned to capital execution in the fiery furnace.

2. **3:8-18** — From the next section we learn how serious the king is about his decree to set up the statue and seek the worship of the whole society — no exceptions. Informants for the king, members of his intelligence community who belong to the same class of people who failed to interpret his dream in chapter 2, tell their sovereign about the subversives in their midst who refuse to do homage to his statue. They spin their report and incorporate a veiled threat. It was the king, after all, who appointed these non-conformists to their government positions (3:12): "...Jews whom you have set over the affairs..." They remind the king that he had issued a *decree*, not made a *suggestion*. The text refers to these informants as "some astrologers" (3:8). They no doubt belonged to the same guilds as the wise men who failed to recover and interpret the dream in chapter 2. The manner in which they verbally attack the three Jews before the king is vivid. The underlying Aramaic word means "eat the pieces of flesh torn off another's body," the real meaning behind the idea of "slander" in the ancient world.² No doubt a strand of professional jealousy seethes in their words.³ Are these Babylonian wise men trying to recover their lost honor by undermining the loyalty of the Hebrews? It is likely. They see an opportunity to use the occasion of the king's

² Baldwin, 103.

³ Louis F. Hartman, *The Book of Daniel*. The Anchor Bible. Ed. W.F. Albright and D.N. Freedman (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1978), 161.

megalomania to further their own cause. Their power play is formidable. How will the Hebrews overturn this counsel to the king?

At first the king seems to think the Hebrews misunderstood him, and he tries to clarify his intent and give them a second chance to comply with the decree to worship the image. He puts teeth into his remarks, however, when he adds, “What god will be able to rescue you from my hand?” (3:15). The focus of the text is on *rescue*, the equivalent of the idea of *salvation*. Anybody familiar with the ancient stories of Israel would recognize Exodus themes, and persons of faith would readily reply to the king, “God did this before He can do it again!” King Nebuchadnezzar is simply another Pharaoh by demanding that others treat him as a god. He does not say, “Deliver you from the gods hands...” but rather, “from *my* hand.” The whole apparatus for worship is the king’s invention, and he intends to enforce it on everybody throughout his realm. The king presumptuously adds, “So if you are now ready to fall down and worship when you hear the music, *very good!*” followed by his threat to throw the Hebrews into the fiery furnace (3:15).

In their reply, the three Hebrews (now identified by their Babylonian names) tell the king that they do not need to defend themselves before him in this matter (3:16). What they are telling him is that his court is the wrong jurisdiction for hearing any case about which God they are to serve. Further, they reaffirm their allegiance to God, and that he is able to save them from the hand of the king (3:17). That is, God is stronger than the king, and He is able to deliver them from the king’s hand! The king may think of himself as a god, but only God is God. Recall that the king had once acknowledged that the Hebrew God is God of gods and Lord of kings in chapter 2? Nebuchadnezzar may try to make himself an exception to that chain of authority, but the Hebrews refuse his claim. They have willingly served the king and his interests throughout Babylon, but when it comes to the question of worship, their covenant with God draws the line.

Then, in a strikingly ironic move, the three Hebrews allow that God may choose not to deliver them from the fiery furnace, but they will serve Him nonetheless. God will deliver them from the king’s hand, because they are God’s covenant servants, but the fiery furnace is no concern of theirs.

3. 3:19-20. We turn now to the third and final section of this story. In it the writer gathers together all his main themes, like threads in his fabric, and brings the readers to an unexpected climax. Their attitude prompts a furious reaction from the king, who will not be denied. Shamed in the presence of his retinue by foreigners whom he has placed over the province of Babylon, he determines to immediately commit them to the flames. He does several things to intensify their suffering. 1) He orders the furnace to be made seven times hotter. 2) He has them bound. 3) He leaves their clothing on as additional fuel. His impetuous actions result in the deaths of those who throw them in the fire. The text keeps reminding the reading that the place of judgment was a “blazing (or fiery) furnace.” No one who witnessed the deaths of the strongmen and the temperature of the furnace could doubt that the three Hebrews should have died without delay. That did not happen, and so we have the beginning of the miracles, wonders, and signs.

Moreover, the occupants of the fiery furnace — an odd way to talk about them! — had a guest. They do not report the presence of another being who is with them, rather the king himself *sees with amazement* “four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed” (3:25). Curiously, the men are all unbound, suggesting the fire burned off their restraints, while leaving them untouched. We have a similar phenomenon in the story leading up to the Exodus, when Moses saw a bush in the desert which burned but *was not consumed* (see Exodus 3:2-23). From the king’s perspective, the fire meant certain death to those who refused to obey him. That was his intention, and he meant to have it carried out without exception. However, the fire took on a different meaning — here’s part of the *sign* aspect of the miracle — in that the fire became the place where they experienced the presence of God in the form of his messenger, his angel.

Fire in the Bible is not always a source of destruction, but is instead a symbol for God as the source of being and of life. To be consumed by God does not always mean evaporating in His presence, but rather being

surrendered to His purpose and will. The Bible says, “Our God is a consuming fire” (Hebrews 12:29; Deuteronomy 4:24, 33; 5:24-26). The same pillar of fire which led Israel at night through the wilderness was also the judging fire which kept Israel’s enemies at bay. The three Hebrews had God as their ever-present help in trouble, the One who became for them the fire of protection, of life, and of power.

Much has been written about “the fourth man” in the fire. Some scholars suggest this is a Christophany — an early appearance of the pre-incarnate Son of God. The king of Babylon calls the fourth man God’s angel who came to rescue his servants from the fire (3:28). In a loss for words, the king says “he looks like a son of the gods” (3:25). Among the ancients, “a son of the gods” sometimes referred to a member of the divine council. When the Old Testament speaks of them, angels are often in view, as in Job 1:6 and 2:1.

Goldingay comments on the fourth man:

The deliverance comes about through the presence of a fourth person in their midst. The divine aid who camps round those who honor God and extricates them from peril (Ps 34:8[7]) enters the fire himself to neutralize its capacity for harm by the presence of his superior energy. God’s promise “I will be with you” characteristically belongs to contexts of affliction and pressure (Exod 3:12; Isa 7:14; 43:1-3; Matt 28:20; see also Ps 23:4-5). The experience of God’s being with his people not only follows on their commitment to him, rather than preceding it; it comes only in the furnace, not in being preserved from it (Kennedy).⁴

When Nebuchadnezzar assesses the faithful and courageous actions of the three Hebrews, he comments on:

1. Their trust in God.
2. Their defiance of the king’s command.
3. Their willingness to give up their lives.
4. Their refusal to serve or worship any god except their own God.

From these qualities he no doubt concludes, even if it means accepting a lowering of his own rank in the world, that these are the sort of people he can count on as well. They may have defied one of the king’s commands, but they did so because of a firmer commitment — not to themselves — but to their God. Such persons can be trusted to govern reliably. In making this assessment, did the king recognize his own fallibility in issuing such an impulsive and far-ranging decree? We don’t know for sure. Nebuchadnezzar exhibited a quiver of contradictory attitudes and actions, making it difficult to judge his motives in each case. He was a man well-aware of his vast dominion with its various levels of rule and its diversity of language and culture. Such kings have difficulty shedding their pride and fending off their grasping for more power. For such persons it takes a bit more than a single correct dream interpretation to move them. Judging from the next narrative in chapter 4, it would also take more than delivering three men from the blazing furnace.

Still, examined from Israel’s perspective, both in the exile as well as back in the land, such stories as this one confirmed the reliability of the God who kept covenant with his people. God did not perform miracles, wonders, and signs simply to get attention. He did so at carefully selected crossroads when human beings most needed to see and hear and believe afresh His character which is at work in their lives. Just as the king witnessed that day, “no other god can save in this way” (3:29). What “way” is that? Perhaps he means not only under the severest of circumstances — a furnace seven times hotter than normal — but with such clear purpose and with such personal presence. The king had not seen any of his own gods walking in the fire like the God of the Hebrews did.

Supporting Texts

Shout with joy to God, all the earth! ² Sing the glory of his name; make his praise glorious! ³ Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds! So great is your power that your enemies cringe before you. ⁴ All the earth bows down to you; they sing praise to you, they sing praise to your name." Selah ⁵ Come and see what God has done, how awesome his works in

⁴ John E. Goldingay, *Daniel*. Word Biblical Commentary. Ed. John D.W. Watts (OT) (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, 1989), 74-75.

man's behalf! ⁶ He turned the sea into dry land, they passed through the waters on foot-- come, let us rejoice in him. ⁷ He rules forever by his power, his eyes watch the nations-- let not the rebellious rise up against him. Selah ⁸ Praise our God, O peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard; ⁹ he has preserved our lives and kept our feet from slipping. ¹⁰ For you, O God, tested us; you refined us like silver. ¹¹ You brought us into prison and laid burdens on our backs. ¹² You let men ride over our heads; we went through fire and water, but you brought us to a place of abundance (Psalm 66:1-12).

The theme of God's fiery preservation of His people in *unbelievable* ways echoes throughout the Bible. In this passage from the *Psalms*, we have several figures of speech which tell how the world "bows before God" (4). If we wonder why they do so, the poet invites us to "Come and see what God has done" (5). Most of these refer back to the Exodus when He "turned the sea into dry land and passed through the waters on foot" (6). Of significance for our study of Daniel 3 is the way God "watches the nations" (7) in His commitment to "preserve our lives and keep our feet from slipping" (8).

This text also speaks of God's use of fire to "test us" so that we might be "refined like silver" (10). Though at times, the poet says, God allowed "men to ride over our heads," yet "we went through fire and water" and brought us to a "place of abundance" (12). The three Hebrews went through fire, but on the uptake, they discovered God's rescue and His abundance which came through the same king who tried to destroy them.

But now, this is what the LORD says-- he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. ² When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze (Isaiah 43:1-2).

Creation language anchors this passage from *Isaiah*. Because Yahweh created His people, they belong to Him. He has a vested interest in their well-being. Contained in these simple words is the full weight of God's love for His people: "You are mine." And because we are His, it does not matter if we "walk through the fire," He will not allow the flames to burn or set us ablaze. Such was the testimony of the three Hebrews, and it is also our testimony. Babylon knew them with Babylonians names: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. The prophet Isaiah says that Yahweh knows His people by name — the name which shows that they belong to Him: Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

⁷ These have come so that your faith-- of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire-- may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ... 4:12 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. (1 Peter 1:7; 4:12-13).

If we re-imagine this passage from Peter in light of the Daniel 3 story, we can see the inter-textual connections between the image of gold and the purifying of faith as gold. The faith of the three Hebrews proved strong even before they set foot in the blazing furnace. With courage and *hutpah* they told the king about their decision not to worship at his gold image. In so doing, they proved the worth of their faith which would undergo its fiery test. What the king saw in these three men was integrity, genuineness, and utter reliability in the face of adversity. As we noted, he stood amazed at their willingness to die rather than compromise their loyalty to their God. Their faith was a source of "praise, glory, and honor" much as Peter describes Christian faith in this passage. For the three Hebrews, God revealed Himself as the fourth man in the fire. For the three Hebrews, what happened to them was no surprise and was not strange. Again, notice Peter's language with respect to the testing of our faith in the fires of adversity.

³ We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. ⁴ Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; ⁵ in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; ⁶ in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; ⁷ in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; ⁸ through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; ⁹ known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; ¹⁰ sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything (2 Corinthians 6:3-10).

In a previous study, we examined this text in some detail. Paul tells Christians that the world is a deadly place where dangerous things happen, and where devoted followers of Christ are at risk, even as the three Hebrews were at risk living in Babylon and trying to operate within the political power keg of empire. In 2 Corinthians 6:4-10, Paul presents this portrait of the world much like “the fiery furnace” by juxtaposing negatives and positives. The literary structure here is three-fold:

1. Negative: A grim picture of the dark side of the world in which he carry out our ministry (6:4-5). He uses a rich vocabulary which covers the whole range of painful human experiences.
2. Positive: A character description of what is required of us if we are to be faithful servants of God in a dark world (6:7). Like the three Hebrews, God gives us a new nature, empowered with the fruit of the Spirit.
3. In this third section, he takes the negatives and the positives and pairs them up, in effect telling us that there is grace enough for every difficulty we face in bringing life to a dying world (6:8-10). As a literary device, this juxtaposing of God’s provision with the series trials we face is quite effective. As with the three Hebrews, we come to realize that trouble arises without warning and we must be prepared to stand firm and remain unshaken by the difficulties we face. This rich patterning of material climaxes in this third section.

The following table summarizes this arrangement of material:

The Things We Face in the Fire (6:4-5)	What Grace Makes Possible in the Fire (6:7)	Enough Grace for Each Case We Face in the Fire (6:8-10)	
		Grace	Case
Troubles Hardships Distresses Beatings Imprisonments Riots Hard Work Sleepless nights Hunger	Purity Understanding Patience Kindness Holy Spirit Sincere love Truthful speech Power of God Weapons of righteousness	Glory Good Report Genuine Known Live on Not killed Rejoicing Making rich Everything	Dishonor Bad Report Impostors Unknown Dying Beaten Sorrowful Poor Nothing

Jesus Christ is for us *the fourth man in the fire.*

The Tune from the Text (“Another in the Fire”)



[Link for performance: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zmNc0L7Ac5c&feature=youtu.be&app=desktop>]

Another in the Fire

Verse 1

There's a grace when the heart is under fire
 Another way when the walls are closing in
 And when I look at the space between
 Where I used to be and this reckoning
 I know I will never be alone

Chorus 1

There was another in the fire
 Standing next to me
 There was another in the waters
 Holding back the seas
 And should I ever need reminding
 Of how I've been set free
 There is a cross that bears the burden
 Where another died for me

Verse 2

All my debt left for dead beneath the waters
 I'm no longer a slave to my sin anymore
 And should I fall in the space between
 What remains of me and this reckoning
 Either way I won't bow to the things of this world
 And I know I will never be alone

Chorus 2

There is another in the fire
 Standing next to me
 There is another in the waters
 Holding back the seas
 And should I ever need reminding
 What power set me free

There is a grave that holds no body
And now that power lives in me

Bridge

And I can see the light in the darkness
As the darkness bows to Him
I can hear the roar in the heavens
As the space between wears thin
I can feel the ground shake beneath us
As the prison walls cave in
Nothing stands between us
Nothing stands between us

Verse 3

There is no other name but the name that is Jesus
He who was and still is, and will be through it all
So come what may in the space between
All the things unseen and this reckoning
And I know I will never be alone

Chorus 3

There'll be another in the fire
Standing next to me
There'll be another in the waters
Holding back the seas



And should I ever need reminding
How good You've been to me
I'll count the joy come every battle
'Cause I know that's where You'll be
I can see the light

Bridge

And I can see the light in the darkness
As the darkness bows to Him
I can hear the roar in the heavens
As the space between wears thin
I can feel the ground shake beneath us
As the prison walls cave in
Nothing stands between us
Nothing stands between

Chorus 4

There'll be another in the fire
Standing next to me
There'll be another in the waters
Holding back the seas
And should I ever need reminding
How good You've been to me
I'll count the joy come every battle
'Cause I know that's where You'll be

Songwriters: Chris Davenport / Joel Timothy Houston

Jonathan Edwards once wrote: “The duty of *singing* praises to God, seems to be appointed wholly to excite and express religious affections. No other reason can be assigned, why we should express ourselves to God in verse, rather than in prose, and do it with *music*, but only, that such is our nature and frame, that these things have a tendency *to move our affections*.”

Another writer makes the connection between text and tune in this way: “A song is a sermon people remember. People forget a sermon in a couple of weeks. They remember a song forever. That means if we as worship leaders and Christian artists are leading people astray with our lyrics, I believe we’ve got a lot of heavy millstones waiting for us. Songs and art have power, permanence, and influence, especially in the realm of theology. And it probably goes without saying but that which influences theology influences everything.”⁵

The *muse* of authentic Christian music is Scripture enlivened by the Spirit and becoming palpable in human lives. What or who is a *muse*? The Cambridge Dictionary offers one definition: “A person, or an imaginary being or force that gives someone ideas and helps them to write, paint, or make music.” That is, the muse is the inspiration for the productions of the several arts. Focused on music in the sense we are considering in this section of our *Notes*, the muse takes its cues from the Word of God that inspires the witnesses of the biblical text and that continues to awaken hearts that pay heed to those witnesses. The muse has spiritual accountability to the Word of God, constantly attending to the echoes of the Spirit’s voice while imagining, composing, and performing. When congregations “perform” (that is, sing or play) the fruits of the muse’s efforts, they are likewise sharing in the activities of the muse. The power of music produced in this way comes from the Spirit of the Word and through the spirits of the composers. Released into the life-stream of congregations or individuals at worship, music has the power to shape, direct, awaken, and instruct the spirits of those who perform it. Music has capacity to animate the heart toward the praise of the Triune God, calling worshippers to fellowship with this God who is Father, Son, and Spirit. Music has the capacity to inspire new love for the

⁵ Matt Papa from: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/trevin-wax/a-renaissance-of-gospel-centered-music-a-conversation-with-matt-papa/>

Triune God so that followers of Jesus might, in the words of Richard of Chichester (1253), “see thee more clearly, love thee more dearly, and follow thee more nearly, day by day.” Music has the capacity to unite congregation whose spirits are knitted together through joined voices with shared purposes for the common glory of God.

The *example song* printed above reflects the high standards anticipated by Paul in his letters to local churches in the first century.

¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. (Colossians 3:16).

¹⁸ Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, ²⁰ giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 5:18-20).

The music of the church ought to be rooted in “the word of Christ” living “richly” in the congregation with the elevated aim to: “teach and admonish one another in all wisdom with gratitude” in hearts who perform “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God,” made available to them by musicians whose muse is the Word of God.

Let us see how the poets *Chris Davenport* and *Joel Timothy Houston* accomplished their calling and were faithful to the muse of the Word when they composed “Another in the Fire.” We will consider these two poets as one poet in our comments which follow. From the very first line of the poetry in *stanza one*, “grace” takes the central place, but so does the acknowledged threat to human hearts “under fire.” Walls close in, but there is another way. Caught in the middle, the writer sees “the space between” and remembers where he stood between the former life and “this reckoning” — a phrase referring to grace which is God’s resolve *to make things right again*. Early in the song the writer reaches the important conclusion, “I know I will never be alone.” What’s interesting in this first stanza of the poem is the absence of any names for God. The poet practices his craft with subtlety, speaking slowly and even mysteriously about where this grace came from or how this reckoning was accomplished or what is this “other way.” Good poetry keeps its secrets until revealing them has the greatest impact. Of course to the initiated — to followers of Jesus — words like grace and way have immediate references to God and Jesus, and anyone singing them would key their imaginations while the words roll off their lips. To the newcomer, the guest, all is yet to be revealed.

When the chorus is sung, the poet recruits more literary references from the biblical text; they are allusions that assume familiarity with the story of Daniel 3 and the three men in the fiery furnace. Properly, it seems to me, the text ought to have been read *before* the song is sung by the congregation; the muse must speak before the music is sung since the muse is the spirit of this poetry. Given that arrangement, the writer locates himself in the fire where “another” stands alongside, an assurance which reinforces the ending of the prior stanza, “I will never be alone.” But the reference is then expanded beyond the fire to “the waters” and “the sea.” Surrounded by robust metaphors, the singers of this poetry hear a “reminder” of how freedom from fire and waters is made possible through “the cross where another died for me.” “Remember me” Jesus tells his disciples in the Eucharist on the eve of his crucifixion. The poem in front of us places together the cross and “another in the fire,” thereby closing the circle of meaning while setting the poet free in the process. And so, in one stanza and a chorus, the muse guides our poet to disclose the fiery episode followed by a gracious deliverance of another whose identity is known through the cross. Only one other “another” can be described with the words, “died for me.” At this point in the poem, the poet has been faithful to the gospel and to his muse who told the story of Daniel 3.

But there’s more. After all, good poems tell stories, and this one continues, revealing fresh insight in every act of unfolding, every scene of making known. In *stanza two* “all my debt” introduces more testimony from the fire and water poet who discovers that the waters are his friend since they are the grave for his debt! But lest debt is seen as monetary he immediately makes clear that the debt is *sin* that once held him slave but does no more. That’s the past: buried beneath the waters, and yet the present and future remain for the poet says “And

should I fall in the space,” a reference to the first stanza but more fully disclosed. The “space between” refers to the previous separation from past sin and the present “reckoning” made possible by the cross. Water language also reminds us of our baptism where the imagery of death and resurrection becomes our testimony to the watching world, encouraged by the community of the church who bear witness to our confession of faith. “I won’t bow to the things of this world” shows the resolve of the new-born Christian for whom there “is no turning back, no turning back.” Since baptism is intended to be a community experience, the poet affirms that he “will never be alone.” We are “united with him in baptism through death ... raised to newness of life”. And, in the words of the poet: “I’m no longer a slave to sin anymore” (see Romans 6).

The second chorus follows the text of the first chorus but changes the tense of the verb:

Chorus one: “There *was* another in the fire” (past).

Chorus two: “There *is* another in the fire” (present).

This pattern of variations continues into Chorus three: “There *’ll* be another in the fire” (future).

The poet thereby declares that his companion in the fire is the One who was, is, and is to come, a nice play on the words of Revelation 1:4, 8; 4:8 where the full sentence implies the identity of a divine being who shares the nature of God.

In addition to the tense changes there is also another shift in the ending of the choruses.

Chorus one: “There is a cross that bears the burden / Where another died for me.”

Chorus two: “There is a grave that holds no body / And now that power lives in me.”

The theology of the gospel rings true in these lyrics for they properly retain the language of the cross *and* the language of resurrection in much the same way Paul does in the Romans 6 text cited above. We die with Christ, and then we are raised with Christ. The same Christ is also the Son of God who is, was, and is to come.

Twice in the song the writer incorporates a *bridge* which serves a useful purpose. Bridges are most often used to connect the second chorus to the third verse (or chorus) and follow a VCVCBV format. Bridges make the second transition from chorus to verse more interesting and help to reduce repetitive and possibly jarring transitions between verse and chorus. Often the bridge is used to release tension built up during the chorus, but depending on the track a bridge could be used to build up more tension. The bridge is not where a song ends, it is used to create a path to wherever the song ultimately ends up. The poet of our song is skillful in his choice of a bridge at this juncture because it allows him to say that because of all that has preceded he can now “see the light.”

And I can see the light in the darkness
As the darkness bows to Him
I can hear the roar in the heavens
As the space between wears thin
I can feel the ground shake beneath us
As the prison walls cave in
Nothing stands between us
Nothing stands between us

Notice how uses the bridge to resolve the tension of “the space between” so that “nothing stands between us.” Light and darkness are strong creation themes from Genesis 1. Ground shaking and prison walls falling are gestures to the story of Paul and Silas in Acts 16, and they are also rooted in the earthquake of the garden tomb when Jesus rose from the dead. Darkness echoes the eclipse of the sun during Jesus’ crucifixion. In a few lines of crafted lyrics the poet summarizes the palpable effects of “another in the fire” on his own life and then testifies to his relationship to “another” where “nothing” separates.

Arriving at stanza three, after the bridge, the song directly names the one called “another”: “There is no other but the name that is Jesus.” Notice the link between “*another* in the fire” and “*no other*” name but Jesus. Without delay the stanza affirms what we already noted from the verb tense variations of the choruses (above): “He who was and still is and will be through it all.” The poet is not naïve about “come what may in the space between,” but allows for the “things unseen,” and yet “this reckoning” achieved by Jesus gives assurance that “I will never be alone.” Moving to *chorus three* which takes the poet into the future and the things that *will be*, the

song remembers how good Jesus has been in past and present and then takes heart about the future: "I'll count the joy come every battle" knowing that Jesus will be in every one of them. This remembrance becomes "the light" which the poet can now see, or perhaps, through which he can see the way forward.

Building to the final *chorus (four)* is the *second bridge* repeating the first bridge without modification. The truth found in the bridge must *remain unchanged* so that poet can sing about the reliable character of the one who will never leave him alone. Likewise, *chorus four* makes no modifications to its predecessor, but reaffirms confidence in the person and presence of Jesus faithfully into the future. Repetition anchors the great truths discovered throughout the song, guided by the muse of Daniel 3 and the gospel message embraced by the poet.

"Another in the Fire" is *fabric* woven by muse and musician with threads from the great story of Israel and the Church. Besides the powerful narrative of Daniel 3, other texts supply more threads with rich hues and textures. A few are referenced here.

¹³ But Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance that the LORD will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today you shall never see again. ¹⁴ The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to keep still." (Exodus 14:13-14).

²¹ Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. ²² The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. ²³ The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. ²⁴ At the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. ²⁵ He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the Israelites, for the LORD is fighting for them against Egypt."

²⁶ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers." ²⁷ So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the LORD tossed the Egyptians into the sea. ²⁸ The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. ²⁹ But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

³⁰ Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. ³¹ Israel saw the great work that the LORD did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the LORD and believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses. (Exodus 14:21-31).

The *choruses* in our song this week echoed the great themes of the Exodus, the great redemptive event which shaped the covenantal relationship between Lord Yahweh and His people Israel. Recall the phrases: "another in the waters / Holding back the seas." Water ultimately drowns the former masters of Israel's enslavement in Egypt. God also took the form of a pillar where both fire and cloud came together as signs of His presence among His people. The poet might easily elide the fire of Daniel 3 with the pillar of fire in the text above, and also imagine the waters of the Exodus that brought death to slave masters, but life to former slaves. Our poet celebrates his liberation from slavery to sin.

From the ancient Psalter of Israel are more threads to inspire the poetry of this week's song. See if you can identify the connections between the text and the tune.

- ¹ God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.
- ² Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
- ³ though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging.[c]
- ⁴ There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy place where the Most High dwells.
- ⁵ God is within her, she will not fall;
God will help her at break of day.

⁶ Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.

⁷ The Lord Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

⁸ Come and see what the Lord has done,
the desolations he has brought on the earth.

⁹ He makes wars cease
to the ends of the earth.

He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields[d] with fire.

¹⁰ He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth."

¹¹ The Lord Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

The persistent theme of God's continuing presence "in the fire" and "in the water" can be found throughout Scripture. Knowing that "God is with us" marked out Israel as the people of Lord Yahweh, for His presence was palpable, concrete, and visible in His words and His deeds. Consider these additional texts which echo the themes of the chosen *text* and *tune* for this week. Allow all of these Scripture muses to become "stuck" in your thoughts because they remain alive in the lyrics and melody of our "song for the road" this week.

¹⁰ Take counsel together, but it shall be brought to naught; speak a word, but it will not stand, for *God is with us*. (Isaiah 8:10).

²³ "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "*God is with us*." (Matthew 1:23).

¹⁶ Let us therefore *approach the throne of grace with boldness*, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:16).

²⁸ Therefore, since *we are receiving a kingdom* that cannot be shaken, let us give thanks, by which we offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe; (Hebrews 12:28).

And remember, *I am with you always*, to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:20).

Conclusion

Between text and tune is the mystery of the Spirit who is the true muse for the hymnody of Israel and the Church. The One who spoke "to the fathers by the prophets through the Spirit" continues to open hearts of skilled poets, composers, and musicians to guide the worshipping community in praise to God. In the case of our "Song for the Road" this week, the poet invites us to sing about the God-man, Jesus, who is the only name by which we may be saved. His death removes barriers between Him and the church and His resurrection gives us hope, launching our spiritual growth. The future of Jesus is our hope under all the vagaries of human experience. To this lyrical message Scripture gives complete testimony. The God revealed in Jesus is the Triune God who was, is, and is to come, Father, Son, and Spirit by whose name we are saved.

Suffering is the common experience of saint and sinner alike, the rain falling on the just and the unjust. For our poet this week the language of both fire and water forms an agreeable companionship, images that keep true to the message of the cross and of the empty tomb. It is not the justification of suffering that dominates the spirit of the poetry, but rather the "reckoning" with it — the resolution of the sin which lies behind it and the presence of the God who stands beside us through it. Through Jesus and the Spirit the Father is truly "with us" — Immanuel, the God who is present wherever we are and however we are.

Glory to God! Amen.