

Three Men in the Fiery Furnace

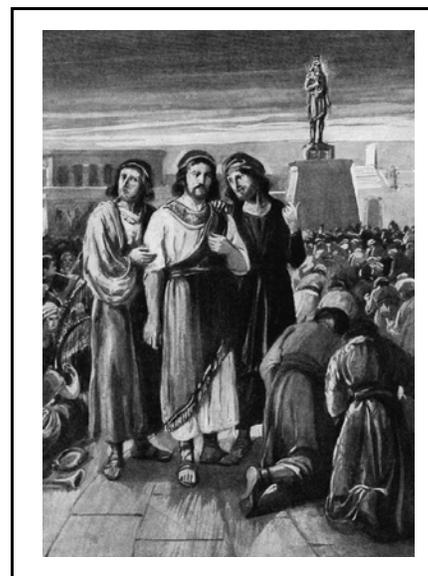
Daniel 3

Would you be willing to defend your beliefs? Are you willing to die defending them?

Today's lesson shows us the faith of three men who showed by their actions that they would not go along with the crowd and worship an idol.

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, be present now,
Our hearts in true devotion bow,
Thy Spirit send with grace divine,
And let Thy truth within us shine. Amen



The Story - Daniel 3 (paraphrased)

Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, made an image of gold, whose height was 90 feet and its width 9 feet. He then sent word to gather together all the important rulers and officials of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which the king had set up. So all the officials of the provinces gathered together for the dedication.

Then a herald cried aloud, "To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, that at the time you hear the sound of the music which the instruments play, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. Whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."

So at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the music, they worshiped the gold image.

At that time certain Chaldeans came forward and accused the Jews. They spoke and said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live

forever! You, O king, have made a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the music shall fall down and worship the gold image. There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up."

Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. So they brought these men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up? Now if you fall down and worship the image which I have made, good! But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?"

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego



answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."

Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. He spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. He commanded certain mighty men of valor who were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, and cast them into the burning fiery furnace. Then these men were bound in their coats, their trousers, their turbans, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Therefore, because the king's command was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. These three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?"

They answered and said to the king, "True, O king."

"Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace and spoke, saying, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here."

Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire. And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king's counselors gathered together, and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them.

Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God! Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this."

Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the province of Babylon.

Outer Aim - Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego confessed their faith in the one true God even though it meant possible death.

What the Story Tells Us - Answer these discussion questions together.

1. What did King Nebuchadnezzar insist that all his people do?
2. Who refused to do this?
3. What was the punishment if they disobeyed?
4. When given a second chance, what was their answer?
5. As a response, what order did the king give to do to the furnace?

6. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were confident that God could deliver them and that He would do so if it was His will. What were they willing to do in case God decided not to deliver them?
7. Whom did God send to deliver the three men?
8. If God allows struggles to come our way, does it mean that He does not love us? Why? What do they help us remember?
9. Will God ever send us more struggle than we can bear?
10. Whom does God send to deliver us from the struggles in this world?
11. Whom did God send to win the battle against sin, death, and the devil? How did he do this?

What God's Word Tells Us - Match the numbers with the letters to find the Bible passage that is a great comfort to us.

A = 1	D = 3	F = 5	H = 7	L = 9	O = 11	R = 13	T = 15	V = 17
B = 2	E = 4	G = 6	I = 8	N = 10	P = 12	S = 14	U = 16	Y = 18

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Passages

Matthew 4:10 - 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'

1 Corinthians 10:13 - God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape.

Hymn - TLH #447

Fight the good fight with all thy might;
Christ is thy Strength and Christ thy Right.
Lay hold on life, and it shall be
Thy joy and crown eternally.

Cast care aside; upon thy Guide
Lean, and His mercy will provide;
Lean, and the trusting soul shall prove
Christ is its Life and Christ its Love.

Run the straight race thro' God's good grace;
Lift up thine eyes and seek His face.
Life with its way before us lies;
Christ is the Path and Christ the Prize.

Faint not nor fear, His arms are near;
He changeth not, and thou art dear.
Only believe, and thou shalt see
That Christ is All in all to thee. Amen

Prayer

Dear Lord God,

We know that we are often afraid of the world. We are tempted and asked to do many things that are contrary to Your Word. It fills us with doubt in Your power. For this forgive us and help us to have no fear of enemies. Thank You for sending Your Son to fight and win the battle against the devil, the world, and our sinful nature. We could not fight that battle on our own. Give us the understanding that You will never tempt us more than we are able. And finally, may Your will be done as You see fit. We look forward to the day when we will join You in the glory of heaven. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.