

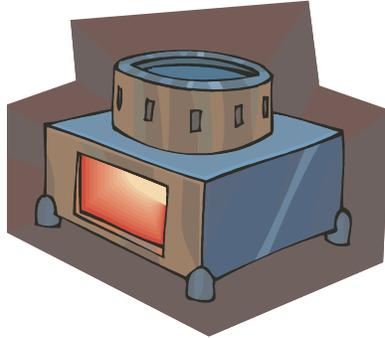


The Fiery Furnace

FAMILIES IN TRUTH

Daniel 3

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were determined to obey the Lord, no matter what. They trusted God, even when their lives were on the line. God proved that He is always faithful.



Day #1: Worthless Statue

King Nebuchadnezzar had come to respect Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He knew that their God was very smart because He had revealed the meaning of the King's dream when no one else could (Daniel 2:47). But Nebuchadnezzar didn't know that their God was the only God. He thought that their God was just one of many gods. So the King continued to worship false gods and manmade idols, or statues.

The King had his craftsmen build a huge statue, nine stories tall. How many stories tall is your house? How many houses would you have to stack on top one another to go nine stories high? The King's statue was covered in gold. It was very expensive, and very impressive to look at. But the lifeless statue could not do anything. It was made by men. It was powerless. The Bible says:

† *People who make idols...will be disappointed, because their false gods are not alive. Idols are merely a joke, and when the time is right, they will be destroyed. But You, Israel's God, created all things, and You chose Israel to be your very own. Your name is the Lord All-Powerful. - Jeremiah 10:14-16 CEV*

* Read the statements below and discuss how the God of the Bible is completely opposite of Nebuchadnezzar's idol.

Idols are made by humans. (God has always existed. Psalm 90:2)

Idols are not alive. (God is ALIVE! Jeremiah 10:10)

Idols can't hear or answer prayer. (God hears His people and answers their prayers. Exodus 3:7-8)

Idols can't do anything. (God created everything and He is always at work. Genesis 1, Psalm 92:5)

Day #1 continued:

All idols will be destroyed. (God will live forever! Daniel 6:26)

Day #2: Ordered to Bow

King Nebuchadnezzar was very pleased with his shiny new statue, and he wanted to show it off. He called together all the rulers, officials, advisors, wise men, and judges from all around. When everyone arrived, a messenger announced that every person there must bow down to worship the statue. If anyone dared not to bow down, they would be thrown into a blazing hot furnace!

A furnace is like giant oven in which metal is melted. It would be the size of a small building. This furnace was probably used to melt the gold to make the huge statue.

King Nebuchadnezzar was very serious about his threat. He had been known to do some really terrible things (2 Kings 25, Jeremiah 29:22). Everyone knew he meant what he said.

All at once, instruments began to play and almost everyone bowed down. Can you guess who did not bow down? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did not bow down! (Daniel is not mentioned at this time. He must have been out of town on the King's business.) These men knew that God's Law told them never to bow down to idols!

† *"I am the Lord your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery. You must not have any other god but Me.*

"You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods." - Exodus 20:2-5a

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had heard the stories of God delivering their ancestors from slavery in Egypt. Through these stories, they learned **about God**. Now they were stepping out in faith, in real life. Soon they would **know God**.

* When you hear what God has done for others you learn **about God**. When you do what God wants you to do in your own life, you begin to **know God**.

Day #3: Standing Up

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego **STOOD UP** to the King, when he told them to **BOW DOWN** to his idol. They told the King:



"We might be thrown into the blazing furnace. But the God we serve is able to bring us out of it alive. He will save us from your powerful hand. But we want you to know this. Even if we knew that our God wouldn't save us, we still wouldn't serve your gods. We wouldn't worship the gold statue you set up." - Daniel 3:17-18

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego trusted God. They knew that He was **ABLE** to save them, and they knew He would only allow what was best for them. They knew that if they obeyed God, they would be under the umbrella of his protection.

The powerful King Nebuchadnezzar wasn't used to hearing the word, "No." He was furious that these three men refused his order. He was so angry that he ordered the furnace to be heated seven times hotter than normal. If this was the furnace that was used to melt the gold for the statue, then its normal temperature would have been over 1500°F! Seven times hotter would have been unbelievably hot!

Even so, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were able to stand up to the King because their faith in God was stronger than their fear of what the King would do to them.



Did you know that each of us will face situations similar to that of Daniel's three friends? (2 Timothy 3:12) We won't be thrown into a furnace, but at different times, we have to decide to do what God wants us to do or do what people want us to do. We have to choose to follow God or follow people. At those times, pray for God to give you the faith to follow Him.

Day #4: In the Furnace

The outraged King ordered his strongest soldiers to tie up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. As the soldiers threw the men into the furnace, the soldiers were killed because the fire was so hot! Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had not been in the furnace very long when King Nebuchadnezzar saw something amazing inside.



Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet. He was so amazed he asked his advisers, "Didn't we tie three men up? Didn't we throw three men into the fire?"

Day #4 continued:

"Yes, we did," they replied.

*The King said, "Look! I see **four** men walking around in the fire. They aren't tied up. And the fire hasn't even harmed them. The fourth man looks like a son of the gods." - Daniel 3:24-25*

Incredibly, God sent his angel to be with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego **IN** the furnace (Daniel 3:28). That day, the three men experienced a new depth of God's love. Now they knew that there was no place that they could go where God would not go with them.



Do you think there is any place too hot, too scary, too lonely, too dangerous, or too far away for God to go with you? At times, you may feel like you are in a "furnace" of some kind. Discuss any place or any situation that you are afraid to be in. Remember that God promises that He will never leave you (Matthew 28:20). God **ALWAYS** keeps His promises!

Day #5: The King Sees

The King could not believe his eyes when he saw a **fourth** man in the furnace. Immediately, he called Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to come out of the furnace. When the three men came out of the fire, not even one hair on their heads was singed! Their clothes didn't even smell like smoke. All the people that had been bowing to the statue gathered around to see this amazing sight.



Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "May the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be praised! He has sent his angel and saved His servants. They trusted in Him. They refused to obey my command. They were willing to give up their lives. They would rather die than serve or worship any god except their own God. No other god can save people that way." - Daniel 3:28-29a

The King began to understand that none of the idols that he ever worshipped were able to do such a thing. No golden statue had ever stepped in to save someone's life. But this God was different. The King gave an order that no one was allowed to say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

The worldly King Nebuchadnezzar was learning **about God** by watching God work in the lives of the faithful men in front of him. Soon, Nebuchadnezzar would get to **know God** for himself.



Don't be afraid to tell others what God is doing in your life. When non-believers see God at work in your life, they will get excited! They, too, may take a step toward knowing God themselves.