

Deliverance from the Fiery Furnace

Key Verse: *“Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king’s word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God.”*
—Daniel 3:28

Selected Scripture:
Daniel 3:1-30

the gods.” (Dan. 3:25, *Revised Version*) Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged it was the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that had delivered them from perishing. He

TODAY’S LESSON TELLS

the familiar story of three young Jewish men in Babylonian captivity who refused to bow down and worship a golden idol when threatened with execution by King Nebuchadnezzar. After having earlier interpreted the king’s dream, Daniel was appointed to the highest position in the royal court. (Dan. 2:27-48) In return for this reward, Daniel requested Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be put in charge of all the affairs of the province of Babylon. —vs. 49

Our Key Verse recounts the king’s reaction following the protection and deliverance of these three from the fiery furnace. Nebuchadnezzar had seen four men walking around unharmed in the furnace and remarked that the fourth was “like a son of

would decree that no one could say anything against the God of these three faithful Hebrews.—vs. 29

Miracles alone, however, cannot make lasting changes to the heart, and there did not seem to be an enduring reform in the king's conduct. Shortly after this account the king would have another dream which Daniel interpreted as showing his downfall and humiliation. (Dan. 4:4-33) Nevertheless, God was longsuffering with Nebuchadnezzar, and the king's last recorded words seem to show a sincere reform. "Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven; all his works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase."—vs. 37

We can learn much from our lesson. First, live a principled life. While disagreeing with Nebuchadnezzar's policies and values, the three Hebrew young men chose to honor God and serve with excellence when appointed to be in charge over the affairs of the province of Babylon. This gave them the platform to speak before the king and be an example of faith to their fellow Israelites in a time of despair resulting from their captivity.

Second, allow trials to give you strength. The Apostles tell us trials are essential in our Christian walk if we are to be made perfect in character, and we should therefore rejoice in them. (James 1:2-4; I Pet. 4:12,13) We are promised there will never be a trial so difficult that we cannot bear it.—I Cor. 10:13

Third, give glory to God through your testimony. He can protect us from any "fiery furnace" experience we may face if it is his will to do so. Otherwise, let our trust in him be testified with words like those of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: "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. 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."—Dan. 3:16-18, *New Living Translation* ■