



The Fiery Furnace

Daniel 3



King Nebuchadnezzar was the powerful ruler of the vast Babylonian Empire.



Within the royal court were people of many different nations and customs - people who had been conquered and then chosen to help King Nebuchadnezzar rule his empire.



One day King Nebuchadnezzar summoned the rulers of the various provinces to gather together. He watched them assemble from his royal pavilion. This was a special occasion and no-one would dare not to come.



The King stood up. The great moment had arrived.



Trumpeters sounded a fanfare.



And the herald whose job it was to make the royal announcement stepped forward with a big scroll in his hands.



The captains, princes and governors all stood quietly waiting to hear the announcement from the King.



"All people, nations and languages hear the Kings command,' the herald announced. Then he went on to say that the King had made a gigantic statue in his own likeness."



The statue was 90 feet (30 metres) tall and made of gold. This was to be their god. At the sound of the musical instruments everyone was to bow down and worship the golden image.



The next thing they heard put fear in the hearts of the bravest men. 'Anyone who does not fall down and worship the image of the King shall be immediately thrown into a fiery furnace.'



So when the musical instruments played ...



... the people fell down and worshipped the golden statue just as the King had commanded.



Two Chaldeans were worshipping close together when suddenly one of them saw something that made him tug at the other one's robe in an effort to get his attention.



‘Look,’ the Chaldean said.
‘It’s just as we thought. The
three of them see, they are
not bowing down. They are
refusing to worship the
golden image.’



The Chaldean was right. Three young princes, the rulers of the capital city itself were openly disobeying the King.



The three men had been brought as captives from the distant land of Judah. Their names had been changed but because of their abilities they had been given high positions in the Kingdom.



Hananiah meaning
'beloved of God' was called
Shadrach or circuit of the
sun.



Mishael's cherished name was changed from 'one who is like God' to the heathen name Meshach meaning 'sun god'



And Azariah whose name meant 'the Lord is my helper' came to be known as Abednego 'the god of commerce'.

Nebuchadnezzar may have changed their names but their hearts remained the same. These men believed in the Lord God Almighty and to bow down before an image was something God had told them never to do.



The two Chaldeans lost no time in reporting what they had seen to the King. They were jealous of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.



So they slyly reminded the King that these men who had refused to bow down were the very men the King had placed over the affairs of Babylon.



‘How dare these men disobey me!’ shouted the King. ‘Bring them here at once.’



Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were hurried to the royal pavilion. And when the king asked them if it was true they had not bowed down to the golden images they told him it was true.



So the proud and mighty ruler of the Babylonian empire decided to give the men a second chance to bow before the image. If they did he would forgive them.



The brave young men replied, 'Our God is able to deliver us, but even if He chooses not to, we will never serve your gods or worship the golden image.'



The King was furious. He commanded the furnace be heated up seven times hotter.



And he ordered that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be taken to the furnace and be put to death for their willful disobedience.



It wasn't long before the furnace was made seven times hotter than it usually was



And the three young Jewish men were securely tied.



Then one by one they were thrown in the midst of the flames.



When the soldiers had thrown them in the furnace they turned to run from the terrible heat.

But the flames leaped out of the blazing furnace and burned them to death.



And then the King saw something that made him jump to his feet. He could not believe his eyes.

‘Look!’ shouted the King. ‘Do you see what I see? Didn’t we throw three men who were bound into the flames?’



‘I see four. And they are loose and walking around. The fourth man looks like the Son of God.’



King Nebuchadnezzar knew in his heart that the Lord God Almighty was the true and living God. He called for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to come out of the fire.



The people were amazed as the three Hebrew boys walked out of the furnace unharmed.

Not a single hair was singed. They did not even smell of smoke.



King Nebuchadnezzar fell to his knees and cried, 'Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego who has delivered his servants who trusted in Him.'



Shortly afterwards a new decree was read to all the nations under Nebuchadnezzar's rule. No one was to speak against the God of the three brave Jewish men. And Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were promoted to higher places within the Kingdom but their real happiness was in their freedom to worship God.

**Let's Talk About
The Story...**



**What did King
Nebuchadnezzar build?**



**What was the king's
law?**



**What law did the Jewish
boys follow?**



**Why did they not bow
down to the idol?**



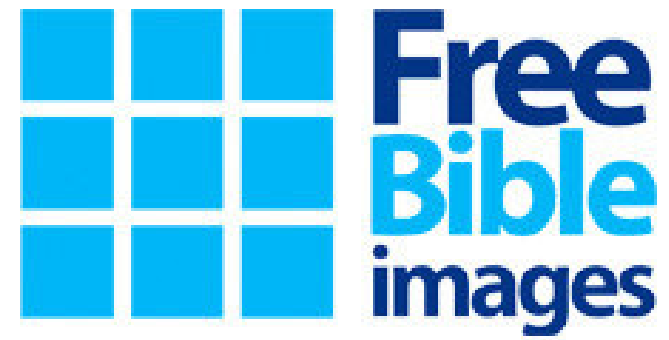
**How did the king punish
them?**



**How many men could
they see in the furnace?**



**What happened when
the men came out of the
furnace?**



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