

THE THREE HEBREW CHILDREN

BIBLE TEXT : Daniel 3:1-30

LESSON 420 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God" (Daniel 3:25)..

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Daniel 3:1-30

¹ Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height *was* threescore cubits, *and* the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.

² Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

³ Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

⁴ Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages,

⁵ *That* at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up:

⁶ And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

⁷ Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Blessings and Trials

Daniel had been promoted to the position of ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and was chief of the governors over all the wise men. At his request, three of his friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, had been selected for a place of authority in Babylon.

Often in the life of a Christian there comes a time of blessing followed by a period of trial: progress and reverses; sunshine and then rain. We read in I Peter 4:12: "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." That is part of the school through which God permits His people to pass. Let us see how the Lord permitted the three "Hebrew children" to pass through a hard trial which followed their promotion.

The Image of Gold

The ungodly king Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold about 90 feet high and nine feet wide and set it up in the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. Then he sent for the princes, governors, captains, judges, treasurers, counsellors, sheriffs, and all the rulers of the province to come to the dedication of the image. When all these men stood before the image, a man known as a herald, one who makes important announcements, stood and said: "To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image . . . and whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace" (Daniel 3:4-6).

What a decree! What a challenge! Would God's children fall down and worship an image of gold? Had not God said: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, . . . thou shalt not bow down thyself to them" (Exodus 20:3-5)?

With such a threat, what would you have done? Would you have lifted your face to Heaven and prayed to the only true God, or would you have bowed down, at least for a moment?

Standing the Test

All the men bowed down, except Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. No doubt, someone was watching, for we read that certain men reported them to the king. Had he not made a decree that when the music began every one should fall down and worship? Had not the king commanded that those who would not do so should be cast into a burning, fiery furnace? Yes, the king had made a decree. But "these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (Daniel 3:12).

In his rage and fury, King Nebuchadnezzar commanded that the three Hebrews be brought before him. "Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?" (Daniel

cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of musick, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down *and* worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

⁸ Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews.

⁹ They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live for ever.

¹⁰ Thou, O king, hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, shall fall down and worship the golden image:

¹¹ And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, *that* he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

¹² There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

¹³ Then Nebuchadnezzar in *his* rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king.

¹⁴ Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, *Is it* true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?

¹⁵ Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; *well*: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into

3:14). Were they not subject to the king's word, even though they had been given a place of authority? Does not God's Word teach us to be subject to powers (**Titus 3:1** ¹ Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, **1 Peter 2:13** ¹³ Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme)? Must we not obey the laws of our land and its leaders? Yes, we should do so when the laws agree with God's Word. But when they contradict the Word of God, we "ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). In some lands even today God and His Word have been set aside and people are forced to make decisions for or against Christ. We are thankful that in our country, our laws give us the freedom to worship God as we please, but some day this freedom may be taken from us.

Even today, the test comes to every one in one way or another. Young people in school are confronted with decisions. No, they may not be asked to worship a golden image or be thrown into a furnace. But they face decisions for God or for the world. Will you go along with boys and girls of the world and act and dress as they do? Will you miss meetings for school social activities? or will you deny yourself of some of the pleasures in order to please God? These may seem to be very small things but by our daily life we are proving to those around us, and to God, whether our master is God or Satan. Every time we make the right decision **willingly**, we are strengthened for the next battle.

Into the Furnace

The king was willing to give Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego another chance. The music would sound again, and if they fell down and worshiped the image, well; but if not, the king said that they would be thrown "the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?"

Fearlessly they answered the king: "We are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." This enraged the king even more and he commanded that the furnace be heated seven times hotter than normal and that the most mighty men in his army should bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and cast them alive into the burning, fiery furnace. The orders were carried out at once. With all their clothes on, their hats, or turbans, they were thrown into the fire, which was so hot that it killed the men who threw them into the fire.

The Victory

Did the Lord permit them to be hurt? No; but He permitted them to go into the furnace and He went in with them, much to the astonishment of the king who said, "Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" They said, "True, O king." The king replied, "Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

He called them by name and said, "Ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither." Out of the fire walked the three champions who had won a great victory through God! Not even a hair of their head was singed; their clothes were not burned and not even did they have the smell of smoke upon them.

the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who *is* that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?

¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we *are* not careful to answer thee in this matter.

¹⁷ If it be *so*, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver *us* out of thine hand, O king.

¹⁸ But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

¹⁹ Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: *therefore* he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated.

²⁰ And he commanded the most mighty men that *were* in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, *and* to cast *them* into the burning fiery furnace.

²¹ Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their *other* garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

²² Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

²³ And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

²⁴ Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, *and* spake, and said unto

What a great change came over the king who declared, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, 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." He commanded that every people, nation and language who should speak against the God of these three should be cut in pieces, because ``there is no other God that can deliver after this sort."

Another Promotion

What did the king do for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego? He promoted them in the province of Babylon. That was part of the reward for their taking their stand for God. But more rewarding than that was the fact that the people knew who was God, because these three Hebrews refused to worship the golden image.

The Challenge

If you are a Christian, remember the young people of the world are watching your life. They are looking to see if you are standing when the test comes or if you are backing down. A young schoolgirl was partaking in worldly activities outside school and she felt condemned for it. Suddenly she said within herself, "This is no place for a Christian." She left the place and went home. Today she is a strong worker for the Lord. If you will take your stand in the seemingly little things you will grow stronger for the "fiery trials" which come your way.

How different would be the end of this account if Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego had failed the test! The ending of this true story would have been defeat rather than victory! Many persons have been helped and blessed because the three Hebrew children trusted in God. Many lessons we may learn from this chapter about "these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power."

QUESTIONS

1. What position did Daniel hold at this time?
2. What place of authority had been given Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego?
3. Describe the image, which the king made.
4. What punishment was promised those who did not bow down to the image?
5. How did the king know that the three Hebrews had not bowed down?
6. What did the king say when they came before him?
7. How did they answer the king?
8. Who threw them into the furnace?
9. Whose was "the form of the fourth" in the furnace?
10. What lessons do we learn from this account?

his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king.

²⁵ He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

²⁶ Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, *and* spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come *hither*. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire.

²⁷ And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.

²⁸ *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.

²⁹ Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.

³⁰ Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon.

|