

THREE BOYS IN A FURNACE

Daniel 3:1-30.

LESSON 139 -- Primary Course

MEMORY VERSE: "His ears are open unto their prayers" (I Peter 3:12).

BIBLE TEXT

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 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 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 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.

Daniel's Helpers

King Nebuchadnezzar had made Daniel a ruler in Babylon, but Daniel needed some helpers. He asked the king if his friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego could take care of certain duties. The king consented, and gave these three young men, who were very wise, important work to do. We have already learned that it was God who gave Daniel and his friends knowledge and wisdom, and that is why the king trusted them. God gives wisdom to those who are saved, always to do their work well.

The Proud King

The king of Babylon had built many great buildings. The streets of Babylon were paved with stone slabs three feet square, and on each stone was written, "Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, am I." Near the entrance to the palace, just inside one of the gates, the blocks are still in their place, as they were when Daniel walked over them. But the great temples, 53 in all, are heaps of ruins. The great city which was once called the "golden city" has become a wilderness for wild beasts, and today even the Arabs refused to pitch their tents there. God said the city would be cursed.

One day the proud king decided to build a big image of gold, probably of himself. This image was at least 90 feet high and could be seen far away.

The Dedication

When the image was completed, the king sent word to all the important men in Babylon to come to a great gathering, when the image was to be worshiped for the first time. Since Daniel's three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were over certain affairs of Babylon, they, too, were invited.

From far and near the great crowd gathered before the huge image of gold, marvelling at its beauty. When the music would sound, all the people were to fall down and worship the image.

The Three Men of God

At that very moment, perhaps, ringing through the hearts of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, were the words of the Law of God, which they knew so well:

“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, nor serve them. . . .”

And cannot you hear them say, “We will obey God rather than man”?

The Signal

Listen! The orchestra is playing! We hear the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and the dulcimer which is a sort of bagpipe made of goatskin and has a reed mouthpiece. This is the signal to fall down and worship the image. Every knee is bent — except the knees of the three young Jews. Every head is bowed — except the heads of the three men of God. The heart of every idol-worshipers turns toward an image which cannot see, hear, or speak. God in Heaven takes notice of the three good men who stand with faces uplifted.

The Angry King

But the devil sees them too, and he causes some wicked people to tell the king that they did not bow down, neither did they serve the gods of the king.

The people of the world are watching the Christians today, just as they did in the days of Daniel. Many times sinners try to cause trouble for God’s people, but God is able to take care of His own. Let us see what happened.

Of course, the king was angry that they had dared to disobey his words. He shouted for someone to bring the three young men to him at once. He asked, “Is it true, . . . do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?” Then he calmed down a little and decided to give them one more chance. When they again heard the music if they would fall down and worship the image, all should be well. But if not, they should be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

Able to Deliver

But the king did not need to give them another chance — their mind was made up! They answered the king, “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, . . . we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.” In other words, they would rather die and go to Heaven than to worship the image.

Oh, how angry the king was then! At once he commanded that the furnace be heated seven times hotter. He called the mightiest men of his army to tie these three men with ropes and cast them into the fiery furnace. The soldiers obeyed the king, but the flames from the open door burned them to death when they cast the three young Jews into the furnace.

What the King Saw

Now for the most wonderful part of this chapter! When the wicked king looked into the furnace, he was filled with wonder at what he saw. He asked his counsellors, “Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?” The three men were walking around in the fire, but they were not alone! The Son of God was in the furnace with them — He was taking care of them so the flames could not hurt them.

Now the king knew that the God whom the three men served was a powerful, mighty God. He called them by name and said, “Ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither.”

Delivered

Like three princes, the three brave, fearless men of God walked out of the furnace. Not a hair of heir heads was singed; their clothes were not burned; and there was not even a smell of smoke upon them! God did not fail them, but went right into the fire with His children who loved and served Him. He took care of His own, regardless of what the devil caused the wicked king to do to them.

Rewarded

The king knew now that the God of the three Hebrew children was greater than all images or idols in Babylon or anywhere. He blessed the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who delivered them from the fiery furnace. He said that no other god could have delivered them. And he made a law that any person or nation that should say anything against the God of these three men should be destroyed.

Were they rewarded for not bowing down to the image? They surely were. Not only were they saved from the flames of the furnace but they proved to the idol-worshippers that their God had power over the fiery furnace. The king trusted them with more important duties than before.

If we love Jesus and serve Him, He will stay by our side all the time. We read in Isaiah 43:2, "When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." Of course, that does not mean that we should walk right into a fire, to see whether or not we get burned. But Jesus does help us, if an accident happens. And sometimes our sickness or trouble is so great that it seems almost like a fire to us, but Jesus will go with us and help us through whatever comes.

The Right Choice

You and I may be in a hard place some day. If we must choose between right and wrong, would we have the grace to do what is right rather than what the crowd does? Sometimes it is easier to agree with unsaved friends than to say, "No." It would have been easy for the three Hebrew children to bow down to the image as the other people did. Then they would not have been thrown into the furnace but they would have lost the love of God out of their heart. If we want to keep Jesus in our heart, we must keep our heart clean, for He will not stay in a heart that has sin in it.

QUESTIONS

1. What were the people told to do when the music sounded? Daniel 3:5.
2. Did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego fall down and worship the image? Daniel 3:12.
3. What did they answer the king? Daniel 3:16-18.
4. What did the wicked king do to them? Daniel 3:21.
5. What did the king see when he looked into the furnace? Daniel 3:25.

LESSON RESOURCES

TOPIC

THREE BOYS IN A FURNACE

Lesson 139

Daniel 3:1-30

MUSIC

There Were Three Hebrew Children

WATCH & PRAY 90 VERSE 2

6
8 ↓

m:- f: m:- r: d:- l: l:-: s:- d: d:- m: m:-: r:-:

m:- f: m:- r: d:- l: l:-: s:- d: d:- t: r:-: d:-:

m:- s: s:-: f:- l: l:-: s:- l: s:- m: m:-: r:-:

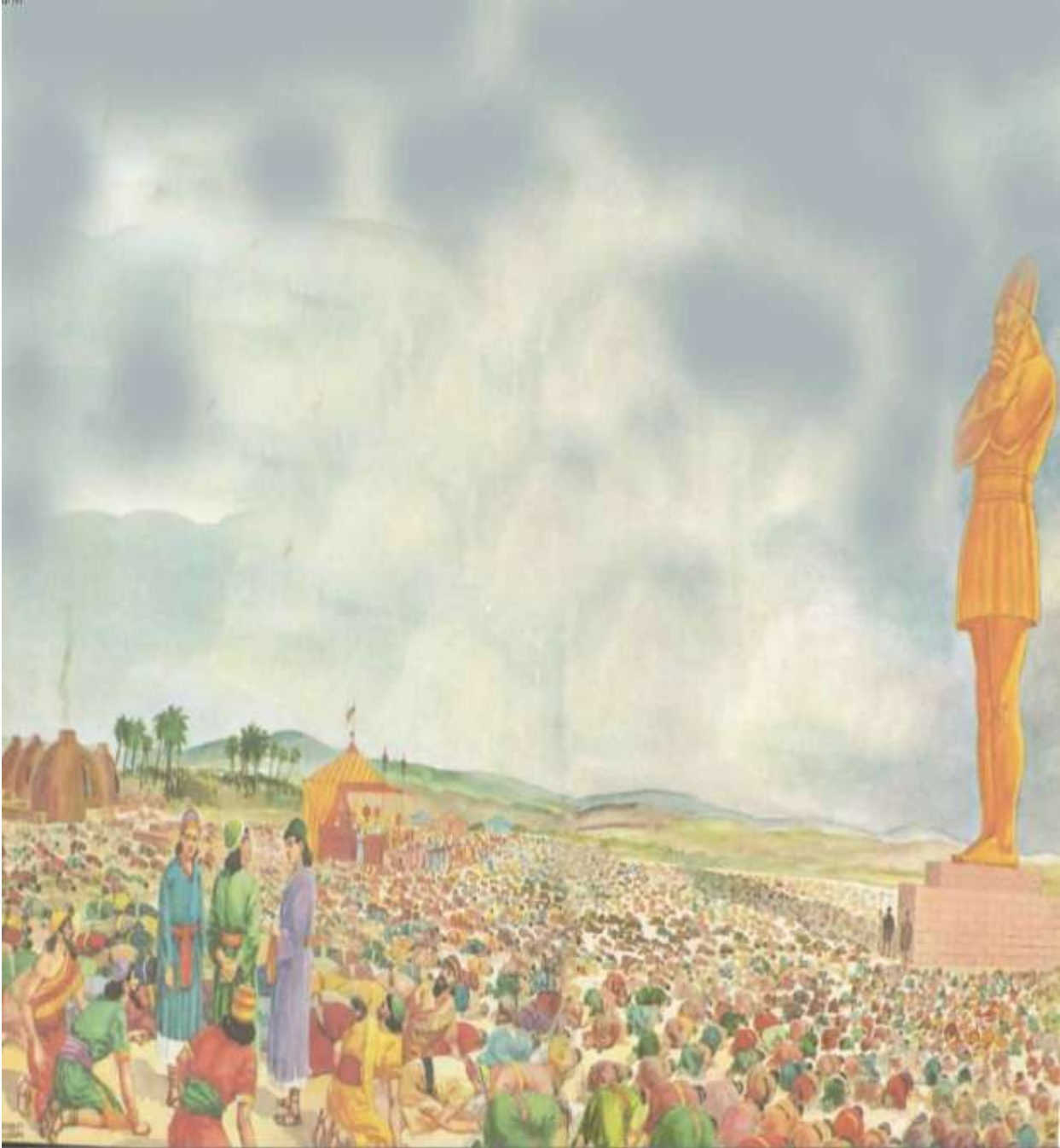
m:- f: m:- r: d:- l: l:-: s:- d: d:- t: r:-: d:-:

SONG

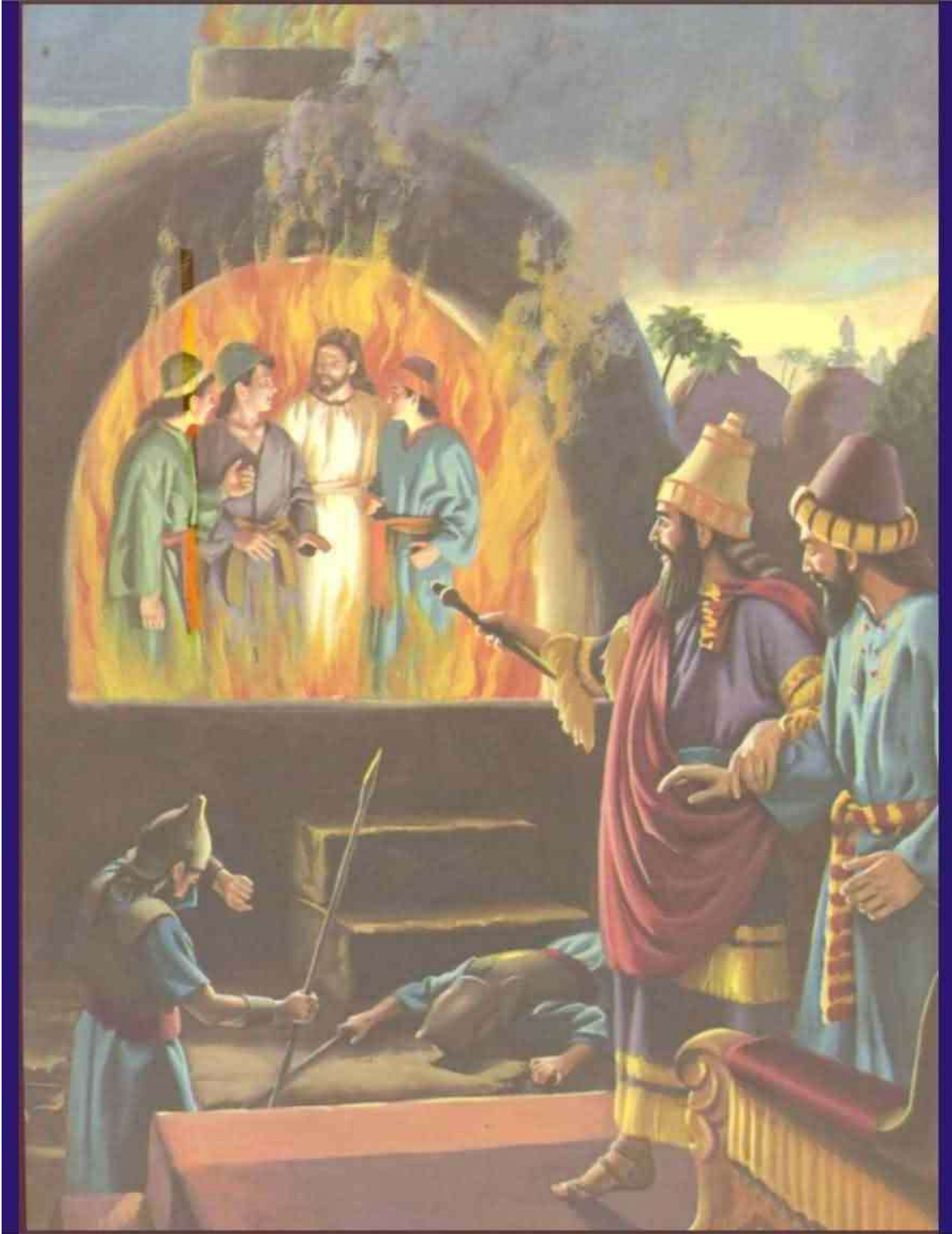
There Were Three Hebrew Children

There were three Hebrew children,
Cast into fiery furnace,
For they would not bow to
Ne-buchad-nezzar's image,
Though hot the, fire was,
Their garments were not burnt,
Because Christ, the Son of God,
Was in the fire with them.

PICTURE 1



PICTURE 2



PICTURE 3

