

Daniel's Lesson

Week of Dec. 30 - Jan. 5, 2020

Introduction

King Nebuchadnezzar ruled Babylon and had defeated Judah in 587. One of the exiles taken from Jerusalem was Daniel, along with his friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Although far from home, they served God above all things. They did not hesitate to put God first even in the face of death. Wow, what great faith they had! Setting an example of how God should really be part of all of our relationships. In this passage, we find these three amigos facing a fiery trial as a team and not backing down. There is strength in numbers and in faith.

Lesson Daniel 3:16-30

16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, "King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. **17** If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. **18** But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

19 Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual **20** and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. **21** So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. **22** The king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach,

Meshach and Abednego, **23** and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace.

24 Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?"

They replied, "Certainly, Your Majesty."

25 He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods."

26 Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!"

So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, **27** and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.

28 Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. **29** Therefore I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way."

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

Questions

1. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego are great friends whose highest allegiance is to God. Is God part of your important friendships?
2. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were pressured to deny God. Have you ever felt that pressure? Have you chosen to be faithful?
3. Would the strength of your important friendships help you in your resolve to not back down to that pressure?
4. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego trusted God even when they did not know what the outcome of their decision would be. Are you able to trust God when you are uncertain of the outcome?
5. What would the world look like if God always answered our prayers the way we wanted Him to? Would we not need faith?
6. What struggles can you hand over to God?
7. There were four men walking around in the fire. God sent a heavenly visitor to join the friends in the fire. Do you feel the presence of God while you are in the midst of a “fire”?

Prayer

Dear Lord, Thank you for the friendship example of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. They served you while facing an imminent threat, and trusted you in the face of great uncertainty. Please help me to trust you no matter how difficult the pressure or punishment and regardless of the outcome; knowing that you are always with me.