

Church of God Sunday School

GOD'S MEN IN THE FIERY FURNACE

Daniel 3

King Nebuchadnezzar, was the great king of Babylon. He was the greatest king on earth at that time. He had conquered many nations. He was a powerful king, so powerful that all the people feared him. He was filled with pride. He thought all he had accomplished had come about by his own power and strength. He felt that he was the strong and mighty one! He did whatever he desired.

King Nebuchadnezzar had a huge image of gold made. It was ninety feet tall and nine feet wide. When it was done, he had it set up in the plain of Dura so that all could see it. Then he sent for all the princes, the governors, the treasurers, the captains, the judges, the sheriffs, the counselors, and the rulers of the provinces to come and worship that great image. They all gathered on the plain of Dura, for the dedication of the image. As all those men were standing there waiting, a proclamation was made.

"To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, That at what time ye hear the sound of . . . all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up: And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace." What a proclamation! Who would want to risk the wrath of King Nebuchadnezzar by disobeying his command?

In that crowd of men were the three friends of Daniel: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. When they had received Nebuchadnezzar's command to come to the dedication of the image, they came; but they knew they could not bow to that image. It was a false god. So, when they heard the music begin, they did not bow but remained standing.

Immediately, some men went to King Nebuchadnezzar. They told Nebuchadnezzar that there were certain Jews who had not obeyed his orders and did not

worship his gods. King Nebuchadnezzar went into a rage. He had the men brought to him. He asked 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?"

In spite of his quick temper, Nebuchadnezzar was ready to give them another chance to worship his golden image, but, he said, if they still would not bow, then they would be thrown into the fiery furnace. "And," he added haughtily, "who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" Meaning, "What God can save you then?"

But Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had already made up their minds. They loved and served the only true God. They knew He would not be pleased if they bowed to a false god. They said, "O Nebuchadnezzar, 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."

Nebuchadnezzar became furious. He went into another horrible rage. (He was always going into rages, wasn't he?) He was so mad that he commanded that the furnace be heated *seven* times hotter than it already was. Then he ordered his mightiest men to tie up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. When they were bound up, they were immediately thrown into the burning, fiery furnace!

Now, because the furnace had been heated to such a high degree, the fire was exceedingly hot! The flame of the fire blew out upon the men who threw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the furnace and killed them! But the three men, who were bound, fell down into the midst of that fire!

King Nebuchadnezzar had been watching as much as he could from his seat. Suddenly, he jumped up! He



said to his counselors, "Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?"

The men answered, "True, O king."

The king said in amazement, "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." (How did he know whom the Son of God looked like?)

God allowed Nebuchadnezzar to walk closer to the furnace without being harmed. He even walked to the mouth of the furnace and called, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither." The three men obeyed him and walked right out of that fiery furnace!

Everyone gathered around them. The princes, the governors, the captains, and all the others could see for themselves that the fire had not harmed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! Their hair had not been singed! Their clothes had not burnt! They did not even have the smell of smoke upon them! Only the ropes that bound them had been burned away.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar said to them all: "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.

"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." Nebuchadnezzar honored Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego by promoting them to greater positions in the province of Babylon.

A very sad thing to notice in this lesson is that King Nebuchadnezzar did not turn to God because of what he had witnessed. He saw for himself how God had protected the three men. He even admitted that no other god was as powerful as the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Yet, he still persisted in his own way, full of pride, never thinking that he needed to humble himself before the Almighty God. How very sad indeed!

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**MEMORY VERSE:**

*"For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee."*

—Isaiah 41:13  
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Scrambled Sentences

Put the words in the correct order to make a sentence.

1. was Nebuchadnezzar Babylon King of _____

2. gold made Nebuchadnezzar an image of _____

3. The didn't bow down three Hebrew boys _____

4. into a were They thrown fiery furnace

5. God Hebrew boys protected the

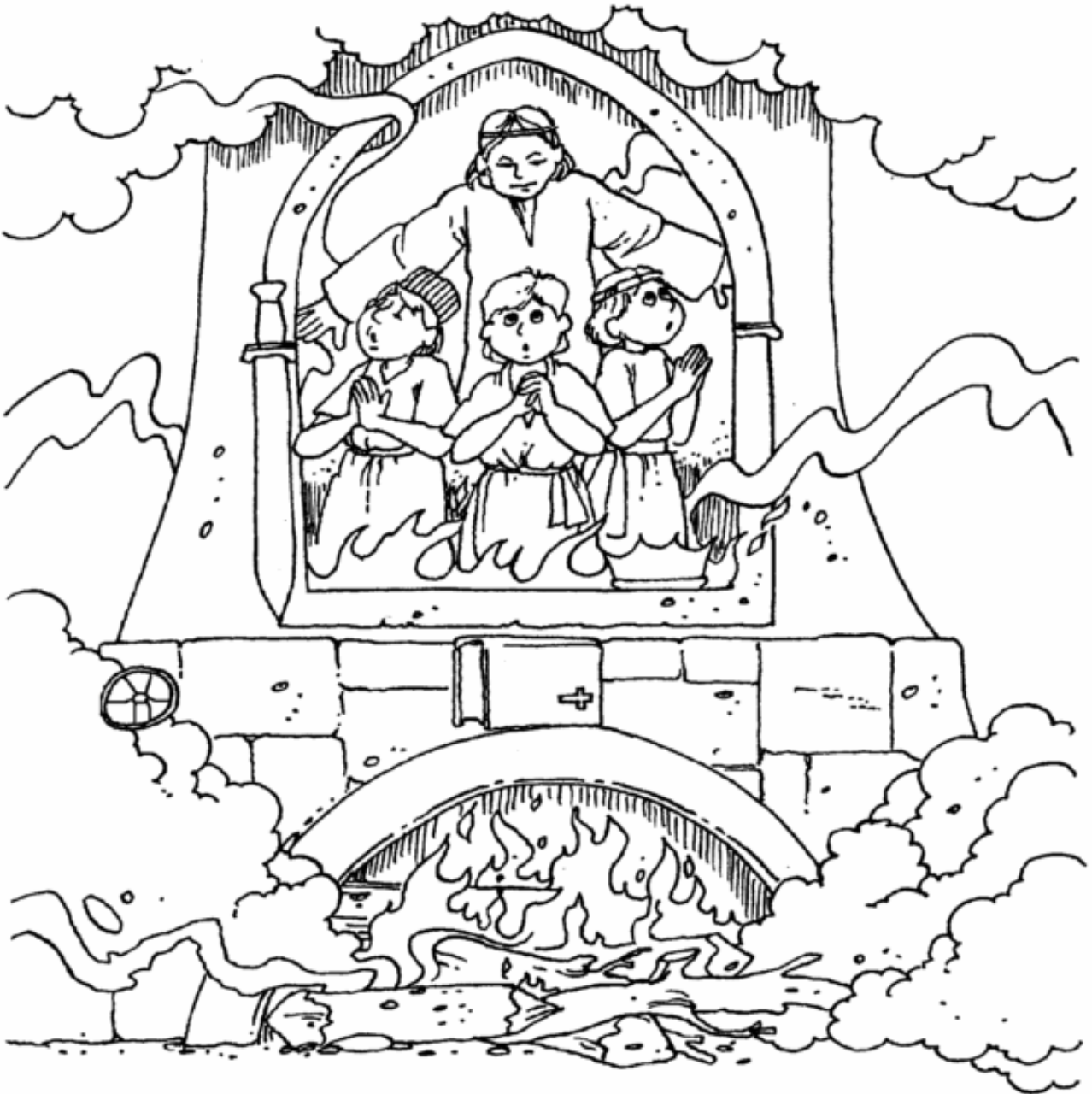
6. Nebuchadnezzar full of was pride



Three Men in the Furnace

"Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished . . . 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." Daniel 3:24-25

Find and circle a Bible, a crown, a sword, and a shield hidden in the picture.





The Hebrews Boys in the Fiery Furnace