

THE FIERY FURNACE

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READING:

Then a herald cried aloud: "To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, that at the time you hear the sound of...music, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up; and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter.... Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."

And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down, bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished...saying to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" They answered..."True, O king."

"Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

(Daniel 3:4-6, 16-18, 23-25).

Today, we have gathered to worship the Lord. We have knelt before Him and prayed.

What if someone made a golden statue of a person and said we should bow down and worship this image? Would that be right?

Now what if the person who made the statue said, "You have to worship the golden statue"? "If you don't you will be thrown into a furnace and be burned up."

Can you imagine being thrown into a fire? Would you want to be put into a furnace?

So, we might think, "I'll bow down to the idol. I don't want to be burned up. That fire would hurt me."

Three men in the story were very brave. They would not bow down to anyone but the Lord. When the king said they would be thrown in the furnace, they still said, "No." These men were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego.

So the king was angry they hadn't obeyed him. He had his men throw them in the fire.

Did they burn up? No. Their clothes weren't even singed.

When the king looked in the furnace he was astonished.

How many people did he see? Not just the three men of Judah, but a fourth man, too. This was an angel sent by the Lord to protect these good men.

Now the king called out to them and brought them out of the furnace. He said people should not say anything against the Lord, the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego.

We should try to be brave like those three men and follow the Lord and worship only Him, for He is the one true God of heaven and earth.

Amen.