



# THE FIERY FURNACE

DANIEL 3: 1-30



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"But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up." Daniel 3: 18

The account found in Daniel chapter 3 offers a compelling narrative that we have seen many times transformed into an inspiring children's tale about unwavering faith in God, illuminated by the remarkable outcome for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. These three friends defied the odds, walking alongside God within the fiery furnace and ultimately ascending to positions of greater influence.

It may appear self-evident to us now that God would protect these men for their steadfast devotion. Yet, as verses 17-18 poignantly convey, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were initially uncertain about the consequences of refusing to bow before Nebuchadnezzar's idol. They clung to their belief in God's deliverance but also accepted the possibility of perishing in the fiery furnace. This uncertainty mirrors the profound tension between faith and doubt that can exist in the face of life's formidable challenges.

The Bible showcases numerous accounts of God's unwavering faithfulness to those who honor His commandments and put Him first. However, it also presents instances where the

Father, thank you for this example of your faithfulness, and the reminder that you are with us always, in the good times and in the fiery trials of our life. Give us the strength and wisdom to follow you, despite unforeseeable earthly consequences. Thank you for your faithfulness to us even when we fall short. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

faithful faced martyrdom while upholding their beliefs.

In Martin Mosebach's book, "The 21: A Journey into the Land of Coptic Martyrs," he vividly recounts a chilling episode that unfolded eight years ago on the shores of Libya. Twenty-one Christians faced unspeakable brutality, standing firm in their refusal to renounce Jesus as their Lord and Savior. While Jesus was not physically present among them, the enduring promise made to the Israelites in the wilderness, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Deuteronomy 31:6), remained unbroken. These men, despite their harrowing fate, were not alone. Jesus was with them then, as He is always with His followers.

In situations where we are pressured to betray our faith, we can derive wisdom from the timeless proverb, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 9:10). Jesus himself underscores this principle in Matthew 10:28, declaring, "And do not fear those who can kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell." Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego demonstrated a profound understanding of God's true power and control. Regardless of the fiery trial that awaited them, they recognized the incomparable might of their God. How did God reward their faith? Not just with protection but His Presence. When the king looks into the furnace to see what had become of the men he threw in, he remarks that not only are the three men not consumed but that have been joined by another and this one "like the son of the gods." God joined them where they were in the midst of struggle. Jesus does the same for us.

As we grapple with our own fears and the prospect of compromising our faith, may we, too, cultivate a deeper understanding of God. This understanding should not lead to fear of His wrath but should be rooted in his overwhelming love for us and our desire for His approval and embrace above all else. Let us ask Him for His protection and His presence in the midst of the difficulties we face.