

Lesson Text

Daniel 3:19-23, 26-28 (NIV)

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.

.....

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."

Today's Lesson Aims

- **Learning Fact:** To summarize the deliverance of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from death, and relate Nebuchadnezzar's reaction to that deliverance.
- **Biblical Principle:** To know that great faith requires refusal to compromise even in the face of deadly consequences.
- **Daily Application:** To identify circumstances or issues that require a response of bold faith.

Power Hour Lesson
Summary for
January 14, 2018

"A Bold Faith"

Lesson Text:
Daniel 3:19-23, 26-28

Background Scripture:
Daniel 3

Devotional Reading:
Romans 12:9-21

Introduction

No Compromise

No Compromise is the title of an album by Keith Green (1953-1982), a Christian musician. But it is also a description of his life. Green's confrontational lyrics and spoken messages put him at odds with believers and unbelievers alike at times.

Probably the greatest controversy he stirred was decrying commercialism in producing Christian resources, including his own music! In 1979, Green began refusing to charge money for concerts or albums. He and his wife mortgaged their home to finance his music personally. By May 1982, Green had shipped out more than 200,000 copies, 61,000 for free. He refused to compromise his principles, accepting the consequences.

We all struggle with doing the right thing—when to speak up and when to shut up. Sometimes we don't even know what the "right" thing is! It can be the same when it comes to our faith. Because we love God, there will be times when we may face derision, isolation, or worse for standing up for Him. Three captives in a foreign land give us a great example of refusing to compromise in the face of deadly consequences.

Lesson Background

Time: 602 B.C.

Place: Babylon, Plain of Dura

Last week's study (from Daniel 1) focused primarily on the young man Daniel, although his three friends in captivity were involved in everything that occurred (Daniel 1:11-20). All four of them had been taken into exile in Babylon in about 605 B.C.

Daniel could understand "understand visions and dreams of all kinds" (Daniel 1:17). He was able to relate to King Nebuchadnezzar the content of his dream when no one else could, then provide the interpretation. Daniel left no doubt as to the accuracy of his words when he concluded by telling the king, "This is the meaning of the vision" (2:45).

In response the grateful king acknowledged Daniel's God as "the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries" (Daniel 2:47). He also made Daniel "ruler over the entire province of Babylon and placed him in charge of all its wise men" (2:48). Daniel then requested that his fellow countrymen Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be placed as "administrators over the province of Babylon" (2:49). But their new positions of authority did not make them exempt from tests of their faith.

Power Hour Lesson
Summary for
January 14, 2018

"A Bold Faith"

Lesson Text:
Daniel 3:19-23, 26-28

Background Scripture:
Daniel 3

Devotional Reading:
Romans 12:9-21

The current lesson text finds Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego on “the plain of Dura” (Daniel 3:1). Its location is not known; some suggest it was a few miles south of the city of Babylon. There King Nebuchadnezzar built an image of gold (approximately 90 feet high by 9 feet wide). Some scholars propose that the image depicted the king himself (based on 2:38). But another possibility is that the image represented the king’s patron god, Nabu (or Nebo in Isaiah 46:1), which the first part of Nebuchadnezzar’s name refers to.

Anyone who refused to bow to the image faced death (Daniel 3:6). Obedience to such a command clearly violated the first two of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:3-6), so the young Hebrew men refused to worship the image. Their disobedience was reported to King Nebuchadnezzar, who had the three brought before him.

The king offered them a chance to change their minds (Daniel 3:15), but the three restated their determination not to bow to the king’s image. They affirmed that their God was able to deliver them from the furnace, but whether He would choose to do so or not made no difference in their devotion to Him. They would not yield to the king’s demand (3:16-18).

We note that this test was quite different from the one recorded in Daniel 1. There Daniel was in a position to suggest an alternative concerning the diet that he and his friends were to eat. But in Daniel 3 no alternatives were available. The choice was clear: bow and live, or refuse and die.

By one act of faith, the three Jewish men became witnesses of the true and living God to the entire Babylonian Empire!

What Do You Think?

- What are some appropriate ways to respond to anger directed at Christianity by secular culture?
- How can we prepare for religious persecution, or is such preparation even possible? Explain.
- In what ways can we show solidarity with persecuted Christians across the globe?
- How can you use a personal experience of God’s deliverance as a witness to others?
- How do we know when we should defy rather than obey earthly authority?

Power Hour Lesson
Summary for
January 14, 2018

“A Bold Faith”

Lesson Text:
Daniel 3:19-23, 26-28

Background Scripture:
Daniel 3

Devotional Reading:
Romans 12:9-21

Points to Ponder

- Bold faith may require refusal to compromise even in the face of deadly consequences (Daniel 3:19-21).
- The fire of persecution can be very intense for those who choose to put their trust in the true, living God (vs. 22, 23).
- God promises to always be with us and to never leave us (vs. 24-26).
- We can be witnesses to others of God's awesome power (v. 27).
- Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. NIV Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven" (Daniel 3:28, Matthew 5:16).

Conclusion

The Flames of Fellowship

The above title is used by Dale Ralph Davis in his commentary on Daniel as he discusses the events described in Daniel 3:19-30. While he is not certain that the "fourth man" in the flames was a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus, he does see the miracle of their deliverance as "a sample of the way Christ preserves his people but not a guarantee of his dramatic deliverance in every case."

We can be assured from Scripture, however, that the Lord is always present with His people. That is true whether seen or not, whether "the flames of fellowship" are literal or not (compare Isaiah 43:2). Whatever flames one may experience while living in a broken, sin-cursed world, their *violence* is abated because of the presence of the Lord. Davis is right when he notes that no matter what fires we face—in operating rooms, funeral parlors, or empty houses— "the Fourth Man can always find his people."

Prayer

Heavenly Father, the account of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego is so well known that it is easy to lose our sense of wonder at the bold faith these men demonstrated. Renew our wonder! And may we draw strength from acknowledging Your presence with us in every circumstance, whether calm or chaotic. We pray in Jesus' name, amen.

Thought to Remember

Our Father never abandons us!

Power Hour Lesson
Summary for
January 14, 2018

"A Bold Faith"

Lesson Text:
Daniel 3:19-23, 26-28

Background Scripture:
Daniel 3

Devotional Reading:
Romans 12:9-21



Anticipating the Next Lesson

Next week's lesson is **"A Prayer for an Obedient Faith"** and summarizes Daniel's prayer to the Lord on behalf of himself and his fellow captives near the end of the Babylonian captivity. Study Daniel 9:1-19.

Power Hour Lesson
Summary for
January 14, 2018

"A Bold Faith"

Lesson Text:
Daniel 3:19-23, 26-28

Background Scripture:
Daniel 3

Devotional Reading:
Romans 12:9-21