



THE FIERY FURNACE WITH SHADRACH, MESHACH, & ABEDNEGO

DANIEL 1; 2:46-49; 3:1-30

GOAL

- ▶ To teach children that God will protect us, and we must be faithful to Him in the face of danger or pressure.
-

CHARACTERS

- ▶ **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego:** Young, Hebrew exiles who were trained in King Nebuchadnezzar's court. These young men had been groomed for leadership in the Babylonian kingdom. They were punished for refusing to bow to an idol, but God saved them from death.

Nebuchadnezzar: The king of Babylon. He built a huge idol, and commanded that everyone worship, or else be thrown into a fiery furnace.

MEMORY VERSE

- ▶ **Daniel 3:29:** "There is no other god who is able to rescue in this way."



OVERVIEW

- ▶ **Read over the passage, Daniel 1; 2:46-49; 3:1-30.** Focus especially upon Daniel chapter 3. Three Hebrew exiles are asked to bow to an idol. When they refuse, they are thrown into a fiery furnace. God protects them, and shows His greatness to the pagan king, Nebuchadnezzar.
-

SUGGESTIONS

- ▶ The story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego is familiar, but we often misapply the story by saying “Be like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego!” instead of “Look how great God is!” Be sure to point to God's greatness in this story.
-

PRE-LESSON ACTIVITY

- ▶ **Protected! | Supplies:** Cardboard and balloons.
- Divide the class into two teams. Mark off a wide path in the center of the classroom, from one wall to the furthest. Equip one team with cardboard shields, and one team with balloons. Have the balloon team line up along the edges of the classroom or path. On the shield team, appoint one of the children as the “target;” he or she does not get a shield. On “Go” the team with the shields must protect the target as they go from one wall to the other. Alternate the teams until both teams have had a chance with balloons and shields.
-

MEMORY VERSE MEANING

- ▶ Have students suggest other situations from which God can rescue us. Remind them of other biblical events in which God rescued people from life-threatening situations, such as Joseph and David. While we may never find ourselves in a life or death situation, God has rescued us all from a fate worse than death. When Jesus died on the cross and rose again, He ensured that we will live for eternity with Him in heaven.
-



**POST-LESSON
ACTIVITY**

▷ **Guard the Leader**

Appoint one child to be a Leader and one the Enemy. The remainder of the class should form a tight circle around the Leader by holding hands. They must not break the circle. The Enemy must chase the Leader. The circle is a safe zone for the Leader. When the Leader gets tagged, he becomes the Enemy, and the first Enemy joins the circle. A child from the circle then becomes the Leader.

**TAKE
HOME**

▷ Give each student a sheet of paper. Ask them to write, "Situations where I need protection," at the top of the paper. Have them write down five areas in their daily life where they need protection (e.g., from fear of bullies at school, for protection from scary storms). Then, have them write a short prayer for protection and comfort. Have them discuss this and pray with their parents.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 1



Q1a: Who defeated and captured the Israelites?

A1: The Babylonian empire.

Q1b: Do you have a nickname?

TN: Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were names given to them in Babylon, but they already had names. They answered to these new names, but they didn't necessarily forget the names they went by at home.

SLIDE 2



Q2a: How long was the study course Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego took?

A2: Three years

Q2b: What is your favorite subject in school?

TN: Learning is important. Doing their best to learn the subjects they were taught helped Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to gain favor with the king.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 3



Q3a: What did the king do at the end of their three-year training period?

A3: He tested them.

Q3b: Name something you're good at doing. How would you feel if someone did it better than you?

TN: It can be hard to deal with the knowledge that we're not the best. A good way to handle such situations is to figure out how the other person is better at whatever it is and learn from them. A bad way to handle such situations is to allow yourself to become jealous of the person and their talents.

SLIDE 4



Q4a: Did the people of Babylon worship the One True God?

A4: No, they were idol worshipers.

Q4b: What is an idol?

TN: Idol has two meanings: 1) a person or a thing that is greatly admired and 2) an image or representation of a god used as an object for worship. In terms of something to worship, neither definition compares to God. A person has flaws, but God is perfect, making Him worthy of praise and worship. In terms of this story, the idols the Babylonians worshiped were representations of gods that did not exist. The idols were made of wood, stone, or metal; but that was all they were—big hunks of common materials. Praying to them was as effective as asking a door knob to make you a sandwich.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 5



Q5a: What did the evil officials propose to the king?

A5: They proposed that the king build a 90-foot statue of himself and command everyone to worship it.

Q5b: Think of your favorite TV show. Have any of the episodes shown the characters doing things you know are wrong?

TN: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had lived in a place where the people there did things they knew were wrong, but they refused to act like those around them.

SLIDE 6



Q6a: What did the herald tell the people would happen to them if they didn't worship the golden image?

A6: They would be thrown into the fiery furnace.

Q6b: Could this statue do anything to help the people who were worshipping it?

TN: No! The statue was nothing more than a statue; it had no power. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego knew this and refused to bow to it.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 7



Q7a: What did the officials do when Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship the golden image?

A7: They ran to tell the king.

Q7b: Joe eats John's lunch, so John burns down Joe's house. Is that an appropriate response?

TN: No! That is way out of proportion! Sometimes, our anger can get out of hand, and it can cause us to act out inappropriately. The officials in this story were jealous of the attention and responsibilities Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were getting, so they plotted to have them killed! That's going way too far. Discuss with the students how the officials should have handled their emotions in a situation like this.

SLIDE 8



Q8a: What did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego tell the king?

A8: They said that God would protect them and that they would never worship the golden image.

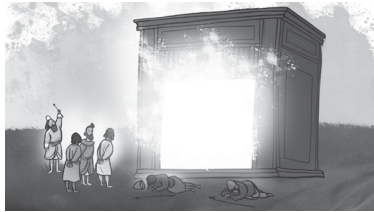
Q8b: Why didn't they just bow down to stay out of trouble?

TN: Even if they knew in their hearts that they weren't really worshiping this golden image, by bowing down to stay out of trouble, they would be saying that they didn't trust God to protect them. When we are tempted to sin, we can count on God to help us.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 9



Q9a: How hot did the king ask for the furnace to be heated?

A9: Seven times hotter than normal

Q9b: Have you ever been mad at someone?

TN: Ask the students how they responded. If they did something they know was wrong, ask them what they would do differently. It is important that we don't let our emotions rule our lives; we should be in control enough that we know to seek the Lord before acting on our impulses.

SLIDE 10



Q10a: How many people did the king say he saw walking around in the fiery furnace?

A10: Four

Q10b: Who do you think the fourth person was?

TN: It was Jesus! Even before He was born and performed miracles as a human man, Jesus was our Savior!



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 11



Q11a: What did the king call Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego?

A11: He called them servants of the Most High God.

Q11b: Have you ever seen something that you thought proved that God is real?

TN: The king witnessed three people thrown into a fire that was so hot, he couldn't even get very close to the door of the furnace. How could it be possible that they didn't burn up and die? At this moment, the king saw God's power to protect His people. While we may not see anything as dramatic as that, we can see the awesomeness of Creation and know that God is real. We can see God in the people in our lives. God is all around us; all we need to do is look.

SLIDE 12



Q12a: What did the king say would happen to anyone who spoke against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego?

A12: They would be punished.

Q12b: Have you ever seen someone act in faith in a way that affected how you believe?

TN: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship a false idol, and they walked into a fiery furnace believing that God would save them. Their faith blessed them, the king, and the others who witnessed it. When we act in faith, others see it, and our actions can bless those around us.



**MEMORY
VERSE**

▷ **Daniel 3:29:** There is no other god who is able to rescue in this way.

.....

BIG IDEA

▷ God will help us through any situation.

.....

**CLOSING
PRAYER**

▷ Dear Lord, You showed how powerful You are by protecting Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. We may never be thrown into a fiery furnace, but we will face scary times. Please protect us, and show us how great and powerful You are. We ask these things in Jesus' name, Amen.



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 1



Israel's ongoing disobedience rose to such an extent that God removed His protection from them. This time, the punishment was their capture and defeat by a foreign power—the Babylonian empire. When the invading army swept into the land, they completely crushed the Israelite opposition. The Israelites were helpless. To make matters worse, the Babylonians carried off the smartest and healthiest Israelites to use as slaves and servants in their vast empire. Four of these captives were named Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. When they arrived in Babylon, they were given new names—Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

SLIDE 2



The Babylonians knew that these men were smart, good-looking, and ready for leadership. They put them on the fast track for promotion within the Babylonian government and started them on a three-year study course to perfect their skills in Babylonian literature, language, and law. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of the land, was impressed with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He quickly promoted these three men to positions of leadership within his government, and gave them authority and power over many.



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 3



At the end of their three-year training period, they came before the king so he could test them. They were the best of the best—ten times smarter than all the king’s magicians and enchanters. They served as excellent leaders, and gained the respect and admiration of the Babylonians; but not everyone liked them. They had enemies.

SLIDE 4



Even though Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were living in a foreign land, serving a foreign king, and speaking a foreign language, they still served the One True God. Babylon was filled with idol worshipers, and these four righteous men remained faithful in their obedience to God. That was one of the key reasons why they were promoted so early and frequently—God was blessing them. As their power increased, their fellow Babylonian officials became jealous and soon plotted a scheme to get rid of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

SLIDE 5



One day, these wicked, jealous officials proposed to King Nebuchadnezzar to build a giant statue in his likeness. It would be 90 feet tall and covered with gold. Everyone who saw it would then be commanded to bow down and worship it. Construction began immediately. Slowly but surely, the huge image rose higher and higher. Its gold covering shone brightly in the sun, and after many long laboring hours, the statue was complete. These conspiring, wicked officials knew Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would never bow to this statue.



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 6



The king commanded all the people to come to the celebration and worship the golden image. Thousands of rulers and officials gathered. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were there too, looking on as a huge band played music. The herald stood up and spoke to the people who were all looking up at the vast statue. "When the music starts, you are commanded to fall down and worship the image! If you don't you will be thrown into a burning fiery furnace!" Therefore, it began. The music started, and everyone fell down on their faces worshiping the golden image—all except for three people: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They refused to bow down. They stood tall above the bent-down crowd.

SLIDE 7



Now, the enemies of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had their chance. They ran to the king and said, "Oh King, look! These Jews whom you appointed to government positions are disobeying you! They refuse to worship the golden image!"



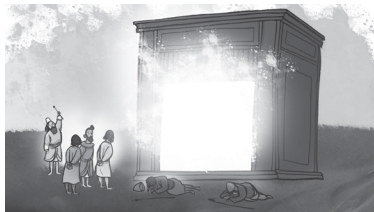
LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 8



Nebuchadnezzar was furious! He commanded Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to come to him immediately. “Is it true that you refused to bow down to my golden image? Well, I will give you another chance. But if you don’t bow down and worship, I’ll throw you into the fiery furnace!” The three brave men responded, “O King, we are not going to argue with you. Even if you throw us into the fiery furnace, our God will protect us. Even if God does not save us, we will never serve your gods or worship the golden image that you set up.”

SLIDE 9



Nebuchadnezzar exploded with anger. He was enraged. He roared, “Heat the furnace seven times hotter than normal! I want my strongest men to tie up these men and throw them into the furnace!” Everyone scurried to do the king’s bidding. They made the furnace hotter than it had ever been, overheating it in the process. Burly soldiers grabbed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, tied them up, and dragged them to the flaming hot furnace to throw them in. The furnace was so hot that it burned up the men who put them in the furnace.



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 10



Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego fell into the hottest part of the furnace, as the people looked on from a distance. They watched, expecting the men to burn up, but they saw something strange. The men were not burning. In fact, they were walking around in the fire like it was nothing, no screaming, no yelling, and no melting. Nebuchadnezzar looked on in astonishment. "Didn't we throw three people into the fire?" he asked his counselors. "True, O King," they responded. "But I see four people unbound and walking around in the fire. They are not hurt. And the fourth one looks like a son of the gods!" It was true. There was a fourth person in the fire—someone who was not an ordinary man. God was protecting Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

SLIDE 11



Nebuchadnezzar came as close to the furnace as he could without burning himself up. He shouted with a voice as loud as a king could muster, "SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABEDNEGO, SERVANTS OF THE MOST HIGH GOD, COME OUT AND COME HERE!" The three men walked out of the fire—totally fine. Everyone gathered around them in shock. They were not harmed at all! They didn't even smell like smoke!

SLIDE 12



Nebuchadnezzar was a changed man. He gave a new command, "Anyone who speaks against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego will be punished! There is no other God but the true God who can rescue people like this!" He promoted the Israelite men even higher in his government!