



Are you walking through a fire right now in your life, a problem that seems all consuming with no victory in sight? Learn from Biblical heroes Shadrach, Meshach Abednego and Daniel. They faced death, but God was with them in their trial and will be with you too!

Day 1: Trust
Isaiah 43:2

Ever play the game “Trust”? You typically stand on a chair, with your back turned away from your friends who are lined up two-by-two with arms stretched out. Without looking, you shout out, “One, two, three!” and then fall backwards, *hoping* they will catch you. You’re putting your complete *trust* in them that they won’t drop you. It’s scary because it involves placing your faith in someone else for your wellbeing.

Chances are, you may be going through some personal trial right now, a trial by fire. It could be a devastating cancer diagnosis, a spouse threatening to leave you, an addiction relapse that seems unbeatable or a mandate that might cost your job. Whatever storm that’s wreaking havoc in your life, you are *not* alone. It’s our hope that this study will encourage you to know that God is with you in the fire and to trust His plan to see you through it.

Our study focuses on four young Jewish men, Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah and Daniel, however you may know three of them better by their Babylonian-given names of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. You’ll learn some fire-proof truths from these amazing heroes of faith:

- Seek God first when calamity strikes
- Obey God and not the crowd
- Refuse to compromise on God’s principles
- Pray with godly people in tough times
- Trust God when you can’t see the outcome

Tomorrow, we’ll start digging deep! In the meantime, if you’re reading this study on the YouVersion Bible app or on Bible.com, please click on our audio podcast called “A Little Extra”. You’ll hear friends from HealingStrong talking about the awesome nuggets of truth we’ve found in each day’s lesson. It’s like having your best buds studying right there with you. So check it out!

Questions:

1. What personal trial are you going through or have in the past?
2. What does trusting God look like for you?
3. Do you have a hard time trusting Him? Why or why not?

Day 2

Exodus 20: 1 - 4
Daniel 1: 1 - 2

Welcome to Jerusalem, nearly 600 years before Jesus was born! King Jehoiakim is reigning in Judah, but unfortunately, not for long. Our heroes Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego are children of Israel living in and around Jerusalem, but before they are taken to Babylon as exiles, you must first know a little background info.

For many years, the Jewish people had been drifting away from God and His commandments and laws. These laws weren't created to hinder them, but actually created by their Heavenly Father to protect them. The Jewish people weren't full-on rebels at first (who really is?), but they started making small concessions here and there until they worshipped idols of other nations, which was against God's law.

To put this into perspective today, think of a diet. Diets have guidelines and rules to follow in order to achieve optimal results. If you continue to follow the diet, you'll start dropping pounds and feeling healthy. But when you begin making little cheats, just eating something off the list here and there, the pounds start creeping up over time. Before you know it, you're hitting the fast-food restaurants and disappointed those pants of yours are feeling tight again. By the way, no judgement here. We all do it, but the real point is showing how little, tiny decisions to disobey can lead to big problems later.

Back to the children of Israel, please don't think that God didn't warn them about their disobedience either! He's a loving Father who will discipline his children when needed. Over and over He used His prophets to tell them to stop worshipping idols and repent. But His children became more and more defiant and stubbornly refused to listen to Him. They wouldn't turn from their sinful ways, so God allowed an enemy nation to take His children captive.

“And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia and put in the treasure house of his god.”

Daniel 1: 2

Tomorrow, we'll actually get to meet our heroes and learn a little more about how they were chosen to serve under a foreign leader. Until then, think about the questions below.

Questions:

1. What little cheats here and there have you been doing, if any?
2. Do you think it's a big deal, why or why not?
3. Why do you think God allowed his children to be captured?

Day 3

Daniel 1: 3 - 7

It's time to put yourself in the shoes of our young heroes Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Imagine as a young person, your hometown is attacked by foreign invaders. Everything you know gets burned and destroyed. If you have the good fortune of surviving the attack, you are taken prisoner and hauled off thousands of miles through treacherous desert wastelands to a foreign country where you don't know the language or customs. The enemy obviously didn't kill you, but what will they do to you now? Will you ever be free? Where is God in all of this and why did He allow this to happen?

We have no idea how long it took them to arrive in Babylon nor if any of their family was alive. However, there are a few clues in the passage we can glean about them.

Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring into the king's service some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility— young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians.

Daniel 1: 3 - 4

These young men were not average teenagers. They were Israel's royalty and nobility - the best of the best! King Nebuchadnezzar wanted to strip them of their Jewish culture and identity so they could serve his kingdom. They were given Babylonian names to further make them forget who they were. Isn't that what our enemy the devil likes to do as well? As believers in Christ, we are sons and daughters of the Most High God, yet the devil likes us to remind us of labels the world has put on us. Can you relate?

But God... when He names you, it's your true identity. And there's a neat hidden message in the Hebrew names of our heroes:

- Daniel (Belteshazzar) = My judge is God.
- Hananiah (Shadrach) = God has been gracious.
- Mishael (Meshach) = Who is like God?
- Azariah (Abednego) = God has helped.

Combine all of the meanings of their Hebrew names and you have a preview into their story's victorious ending! My judge is God. God has been gracious. Who is like God? God has helped! Now just add those statements to the situation you are in right now. I hope this gives you some encouragement! Your victory is still en route!

Questions:

1. What labels has the world put on you?
2. Do you believe those names or labels?
3. What do you think that God calls you?

Day 4

Daniel 1:5, 1:8

As part of King Nebuchadnezzar's 3-year training program for these young men, they were assigned a daily amount of food to eat from the king's table. Most people in Babylon would have loved to eat what King Nebuchadnezzar was eating, but not Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. *"But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way."* v 8.

Why do you think Daniel didn't want to eat this food? What was the issue? There may have been multiple reasons. It could be that the meat was considered unclean by Jewish law. Or, maybe the food was offered to pagan gods as a sacrifice. Daniel was being asked to put something into his body that he felt was morally wrong, even if everybody else didn't see it that way. Others may have seen it simply as food, but to Daniel, it was a sin. He knew in his heart that he could not eat that food.

This had to be really hard for Daniel and his friends. First of all, how delicious must that food have been? It was the best in the land! Plus, there was enormous peer pressure to do what everybody else was doing. Don't forget that Daniel was also a captive and didn't have many rights, so he could have used the excuse that he was forced to eat the food. Finally, this was a moral issue between

himself and God. He could have easily compromised and eaten the food to save his life. But he did not.

Daniel resolved not to defile himself. Resolve means he made a firm decision and there was no turning back. Whatever the consequences, he was willing to take them because he knew that he could not sin against God, no matter how insignificant eating the king's food may have seemed to others. He was respectful in how he handled the situation. Daniel didn't argue or make a scene, he simply went to the king's official and asked for permission not to eat the food.

Resolve takes courage. It means standing alone when everybody else is eating off the king's table. It may mean losing a job, not hanging out with certain friends, or being made fun of by others that don't understand. Taking a stand has consequences and we'll see in tomorrow's lessons what they were.

Questions:

1. Have you ever had to take a moral stand for something?
2. If so, what challenges did you face?
3. What compromises have you been tempted to make because it would be easier than the alternative?

Day 5

Daniel 1: 9 - 21

Ever heard of the "Daniel fast"? It's a fast where a person only eats vegetables and drinks water for a set amount of time in order to seek God for spiritual breakthrough and deliverance. The act of fasting by giving up certain foods is meant to draw you closer to God. Today's passage is the origin of that fast.

Right away we see that God caused King Nebudchadnezzar's official to show Daniel favor and sympathy when he requested to not eat the royal food. Look closely at who the official is really concerned about, "*I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you.*" v 10 This guy was scared for himself and his job, not Daniel! But that didn't sway Daniel a bit.

Daniel had a great idea for an accommodation to this rule. He did not say, "Well, I'm just going to go on a hunger strike!" Nope. He presented the official

with another option - serve us vegetables and water for 10 days and see how we look then. This was to be a “watch and see” test to which the official agreed.

After the ten days, these four guys looked healthier and better nourished than all the other men in the program. This wasn't just a test of their health, it was a test of faith! Daniel and the guys passed! After this, *“To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.”* v 17

Shadrach, Meshach Abednego and Daniel went before the king to enter his service. Because the Lord gave them favor, they stood out among the crowd, so much so that even the king noticed! *“In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.”* v 20

This is another great example of people standing on their faith in God, trusting Him against all odds and leaving all the consequences to Him. As we see tomorrow, the stakes are going to go higher and so are the challenges!

Questions:

1. Have you ever fasted and what were you doing it for?
2. If you haven't fasted, why?
3. What did you learn from how Daniel handled not wanting to eat the king's food?

Day 6

Daniel 2: 1 - 18

Matthew 6:33

King Nebuchadnezzar was not having a blissful night of sleep. He had a dream so vivid that he called in his magicians and wise men to tell him what it meant. After all, this was no ordinary dream. But to make sure he was getting a true interpretation, he demanded they describe what he dreamed and tell it's meaning.

These soothsayers knew this was an impossible task and they told their boss that. But he was having none of that. He said if they didn't tell him the dream, he'd have them all executed. So a decree was put out that all the wise men, including Daniel and his friends, would be put to death if they could not accurately describe and interpret the dream.

Arioch, the king's henchman, heads out to start executing all the wise men. Instead of freaking out when Daniel sees him, he talks to this guy who's

ordered to kill him with **wisdom** and **tact**. He asks to meet with the king. *“At this Daniel went in to the king and **asked for time**, so that he might interpret the dream for him.”* v 16 Although things were moving at warp speed and people were being ordered to be executed, Daniel didn’t rush things. He didn’t quit either. He asked for more time.

“Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.”

Daniel 2: 17 - 18

Hear me on this because it is so critical! If you are walking through a fire right now and being pushed to make decisions quickly that can impact your future, then stop and pray!

**DO NOT ACT BEFORE SEEKING THE
ALMIGHTY GOD WHO IS YOUR DELIVERER!**

Just as Matthew 6:33 tells us to *“seek first the kingdom of God”*, this is especially true in a crisis. Beg God for direction and mercy! Plead for knowledge on what to do and when. Don’t be bullied by the situation that is looming or others that are pushing you to act. Fix your eyes on the one who holds you in the palm of His big, mighty hand and controls everything. THAT’s what Daniel and his friends did.

Questions:

1. Are you in a situation right now which is forcing you to make a critical decision?
2. Have you sought God on your situation?
3. What can you learn from Daniel and his friends that applies to your problem?

Day 7

Daniel 2: 19 - 23

“During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven...”

Daniel 2:19

Who doesn't like starting off with answered prayer? Can I get a big amen!?! Let's just start shouting and praising God right now! He IS worthy of all of our praise! His name is above all names and every knee will bow before Him. EVERY KNEE!!!!

After a night of praying, pleading and begging God for mercy, our Heavenly Father answered their prayers by showing Daniel what King Neb's prophetic dream meant. This was huge! So much so that Daniel and his friends began praising God. Let's breakdown what he said in his prayer of praise to God:

- Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever
- Wisdom and power are His
- He changes times and seasons
- He sets up kings and deposes them
- He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning
- He reveals deep and hidden things
- He knows what lies in darkness
- Light dwells within Him

I hope this encourages you in your situation to be reminded of how powerful, wise and all-knowing is our God! He is the one who allows people to be in power, and He can so choose to remove them as well. No president, no prime minister, no CEO, no judge, no general, no board member and no boss is more powerful than our omnipotent God!

Our Abba Daddy also knows what lies in darkness ahead of you on your path. He knows what hidden traps are out there because light dwells within Him. He can shine that light to show you the best way forward. If you seek Him and desire to know His will for you, He'll give you wisdom and discernment because He knows what the future holds for you. What good father wouldn't want to walk his kids around landmines waiting for them?

Daniel ends his praise session by thanking God and praising Him because He answered his prayer by revealing the meaning of the dream. When the time of testing came, Daniel put his faith in God and not himself to solve the problem. Are you doing that today?

Questions:

1. What can you thank God for today?
2. Did reading Daniel's praise open your eyes to how God can help with your situation?
3. Do you believe God is more powerful than who or what is causing you problems?

Day 8

Daniel 2: 24 - 49

If you ever wondered if God can speak to those that don't know Him, King Nebuchadnezzar's dream is a great example of this. God gave this pagan Babylonian king a prophetic glimpse into the future.

Daniel meets with the king to explain the dream, and consequently puts an end to the execution of the wise men. When asked if Daniel can interpret the dream, he says, *"No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, **but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries.** He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come."* v 27 - 28

Daniel is not taking credit for interpreting the dream, but instead gives God all the glory. Here is the dream in a nutshell. Neb sees a statue with a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, legs of iron and feet made partly of iron and partly of baked clay. At a point during the dream, a rock strikes the statue at its feet and breaks the entire statue to pieces. Only the rock remains.

Daniel explains that King Neb's kingdom is symbolically represented as the gold head, and other kingdoms that follow are represented as other parts of the statue. Then he says a rock, not made with human hands, will come and destroy them all. That rock will *"crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever."* v 45

So how was this prophetic? Biblical scholars believe we can now see the future kingdoms God was predicting through the dream:

- Gold head = Babylonian empire
- Silver chest and arms = Medo-Persian empire

- Bronze belly and thighs = Greek empire
- Iron and clay legs and feet = Roman empire
- Rock = Jesus Christ the Messiah

All these major kingdoms were built and later destroyed, except for one, God's eternal kingdom that Jesus set up when he died for the sins of everyone in the world, including you and me. Jesus represented the rock that would never be destroyed. He still is our rock today!

After Daniel's correct description and interpretation of the dream, King Nebuchadnezzar recognized that Daniel's God was the "God of all gods and the Lord of kings" v. 46. How cool is that? The king was so impressed that he promoted Daniel.

"Then the king placed Daniel in a high position and lavished many gifts on him. He made him ruler over the entire province of Babylon and placed him in charge of all its wise men. Moreover, at Daniel's request the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego administrators over the province of Babylon, while Daniel himself remained at the royal court."

Daniel 2: 48 - 49

Questions:

1. Have you ever had a dream that actually came true? What happened?
2. Why do you think God allowed a pagan king to have a prophetic dream?
3. What can you learn from God in this passage?

Day 9

Daniel 3: 1 - 7

After King Nebuchadnezzar had that crazy dream about the statue, he felt the need to make it a reality. In grand style, the king commissioned a 90-foot statue of gold to be constructed for everyone to see. Here's a little background on King Nebuchadnezzar II who was known in history for his opulence. Have you ever heard of the Hanging Gardens of Babylon? You can thank him for that one.

Once the golden statue was completed, King Nebuchadnezzar summoned everyone to attend its dedication. Again, no big deal as we have dedications for monuments all the time, but here's where things turned bad. *"Then the herald loudly proclaimed, 'This is what you are **commanded** to do, O peoples, nations and men of every language. As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute,*

*zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. Whoever does not fall down and worship immediately will be **thrown into a blazing furnace.**” v 4 - 6*

Wow! That's crazy! The king didn't want people to come and simply admire his great creation. Nope! He wanted it to be worshipped. That's seriously messed up. And he didn't say that only Babylonians were to bow down to this idol. Nope again! This was for every single person in his entire kingdom. He gave no religious accommodations! This was a one-size fits all, everybody has to do it kind of mandate. For our exiled Jews living in captivity in Babylon, this edict was in direct opposition to God's laws.

“Do not make idols or set up an image or a sacred stone for yourselves, and do not place a carved stone in your land to bow down before it.

I am the Lord your God.”

Leviticus 26:1

Bowing down, no matter how easy it might seem, would be a sin. They would be setting up an idol before God. And just so we don't miss this point, what is an idol anyway? The dictionary definition is a false god or something that is worshipped. But for practical purposes, anything or anyone that you place as more important than God is an idol. A job, a relationship, a child, a spouse, a hobby, celebrity, etc., these all can be idols in our lives.

The heat is about to get turned up tomorrow on our heroes. Stay tuned!

Questions:

1. Is there something or someone you have in your life that you put ahead of God?
2. Have you been asked to do something you knew was contrary to God's law? What did you do?
3. Why do you think the punishment was so severe?

Day 10

Daniel 3: 8 - 12

“At this time some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews.”

Daniel 3:8

In today’s reading, we have a great example of some disgruntled employees who don’t like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. This group of “astrologers” is who we will focus on today. They’ll open the door for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to be tested in their faith.

Having people watch us isn’t always a bad thing. You may not realize it, but we all have someone watching how we conduct our day-to-day lives. You may have voyeurs on Facebook, at the office, at school or even at church. And this is a good thing! People can learn how you are handling problems, how you raise your kids, how you treat others, and how you are doing when battling cancer or a disease. Times of crisis are your opportunity to truly show who you rely on to get you through. If Jesus is your rock during your storm, you have a personal audience and opportunity to share what Jesus is doing for you.

Now back to the story! The astrologers are reporting the non-compliance of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to the king. They are trying to get these guys in trouble by saying, *“They neither serve your gods...”* So it’s possible these astrologers have been watching if Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego have been going to the Babylonian temples for sacrifice.

Lest we forget, the magician-types have reason to be mad. Remember how Daniel asked the king that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be “set over the affairs of the province of Babylon”? The magicians’ egos were bruised and it most likely fueled their flame of jealousy to see high officials like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego disobeying the king’s decree.

These astrologers wanted to ignite King Nebuchadnezzar’s anger so they told him that these Jewish young men, “pay no attention to you.” They were making it personal, hoping this proud ruler would eliminate their competition and execute these men. Tomorrow, we’ll see what Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego have to say when confronted.

Questions:

1. Have you had anyone admit they were watching how you handled a crisis? What did you think?

2. Does knowing that you may have an audience change what you say or do in your time of need?
3. Do you feel God is challenging you to be more vocal about your faith?

Day 11

Daniel 3: 13 - 23

King Nebuchadnezzar decides to summon Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego into his presence. Let me state the obvious here. Daniel is not mentioned in this chapter nor during the fiery trial. We have no idea where Daniel is at this point. Could it be that he was away on a mission sent by the king? All we can assume is that if Daniel was indeed around, he too would have not complied with this worship of the statue. After all, he is the guy that would later be thrown into a lion's den due to his faith in the one true God.

King Nebuchadnezzar asks Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego if they have obeyed his command and if they haven't, he gives them an opportunity to do it right on the spot. *"...if you are ready to fall down and worship the image of gold I have made, very good."* v 15 He's giving them a chance to be compliant to his order. Essentially, no problem if you guys didn't do it before, but now you can bow down right here before me. But then true evil is revealed in his next statement. *"But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace."* v 15

Let's examine his motives a little further. King Nebuchadnezzar really had no care in the world if these Jewish young men wanted to accept the faith of the Babylonian gods. He wasn't trying to make them good followers of his pagan deities. No! This was all about CONTROL, plain and simple. These guys were defying his mandate and he didn't like it. If they defied him on this, what else might they do?

The king makes his most outrageous statement after threatening them with death by fire. *"Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?"* v 15 Talk about extreme arrogance! I'd be stepping away from that man for fear a huge lightning bolt might come down and strike him. Strangely, King Nebuchadnezzar was right about one thing. No little g-o-d would be able to save them. Only the all powerful, almighty, all knowing and big GOD was able!

Now we finally have a chance to hear Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego speak up to the king. *"O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But*

even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.” v 16 - 18

I could reflect on this passage all day because there are so many good lessons here. First of all, they didn't feel the need to defend themselves. They knew God's laws and knew that this order was against His laws. Secondly, they KNEW that God was able to save them. Remember how he saved them from death by providing the interpretation to the king's dream after they prayed with Daniel? Oh and there was the time that they only ate vegetables and water for 10 days to prove the need not to defile themselves with the king's food. They had seen God work before and knew He could do it again if He chose to.

Here's the part I love the most about what they said. They believed that God would rescue them, but they also allowed God to do the choosing. They said, "*But even if he does not...*". So many times as Christians, we tell God what to do. We essentially write the script and hope that He signs off on it. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego are a great example to us because they believed God was able and that He'd do it, but even if He didn't, they still were not going to bow down. THAT my friends, is a great example of truth faith when the heat is cranked up.

Questions:

1. What do you think about Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego giving God the option to save them or not?
2. Do you think this showed a lack of faith?
3. Why is it important to remember God's past actions on your behalf when in the fire?

Day 12:

Daniel 3: 19 - 27

If we were watching a movie, this would be the "do or die" climax of the story. Our heroes are faced with imminent death because they simply won't bow down to a large statue. Think about it, they could have easily just bowed down but thought to themselves, "I don't believe this, but I'll do it for show." Or, "I really don't want to lose my life, so I'll do it even though I may be disappointing God." As they were feeling the heat of the flames, how easy would it have been to drop a knee and bow down? They were about to get burned!

To make matters worse, King Nebuchadnezzar demanded the fire stoked up seven times hotter than normal. He also ordered his strongest soldiers to quickly

tie up these young men. The king was in such a rush to do this and so fired up with anger, he had Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego keep their clothes on as well. Normally, those to be executed would be stripped down to humiliate them even further, but the king just wanted them dead!

The heat of the fire must have been intense. I got a slight sensation of this when burning some twigs and logs on a bonfire recently. I had the job of throwing more wood on the fire and trying to rake up the twigs around it to continue the flame. I was about five feet from the fire and couldn't look straight at it because the heat made me feel like my face would melt off. Now imagine the horror of knowing someone was about to throw you into that fire!

Remember the brute soldiers who tightly tied up our heroes? As they walked the bound up men to the top of the furnace, these soldiers were killed by the flames. There were no optical illusions here! This was a real blaze!

Oh, but here is the best part of the story. It comes when all seems lost. As King Nebuchadnezzar was looking into the furnace, he saw something really strange and out of this world. "He said, 'Look, I see four men walking around in the fire, **unbound and unharmed**, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods.'" v 25

God was with them in the fire! He did not abandon them! He sent either an angel or Jesus Himself to untie them and protect them when the flames surrounded them. Friends, what hope this gives! You too have God's protection in your fire. He will not leave you or forsake you!

We'll see tomorrow how Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego looked when they came out of the fire.

Questions:

1. Do you feel like the fire has been made 7x hotter in your life?
2. What thoughts do you think were running through Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego as they were being tied up?
3. How does it make you feel that Jesus is there in the fire with you?

Day 13

Daniel 3: 27 - 29

When we last saw our heroes, they were in the middle of the fire, but a fourth man was there with them. Seeing these guys were not incinerated to charcoal, King Nebuchadnezzar yells at them, "*Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!*" v 26 Did you catch that

change in what the king said? He called them **servants of the Most High God**. King Nebuchadnezzar saw the one true God deliver these young men from an impossible situation, a blazing fire that had already killed some of his strongest soldiers.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego walked out of the fire without a single burn. The political officials and advisors that saw the miracle, crowded around them. We don't have any record of what Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego when they came out of the fire. Seeing was believing for everyone that witnessed it!

"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." v 27 They didn't even smell like smoke! Not a single one of them had burnt hair. Have you ever smelled burnt hair? It's AWFUL. But the Lord protected even the hairs on their heads. They were also unbound and not tied up any longer. Notice the ropes and bindings that tied them up were the only things burned in the fire. They were FREE because of God! All existence of the fire was wiped away once they walked out.

As the crowd came and surrounded them, they didn't need to speak. Actions spoke louder than words. God had saved them. Their deliverance from their fiery trial caused even the toughest enemies to be in awe of the one true God!

*"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.'" v 28* This isn't some preacher saying this. This is proud King Nebuchadnezzar declaring this to all of his officials.

Because God saved these men, the king issued a new decree, *"...the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way."* v29 Okay, so that's a bit too much, but the point is that this pagan king viewed a life-changing miracle of the deliverance of the one true God.

Finally, I want to remind you what we said at the beginning of this study about the Hebrew names of our heroes and how it was a hint of their future.

- Daniel = My judge is God.
- Hananiah = God has been gracious.
- Mishael = Who is like God?
- Azariah = God has helped.

We'll end today with a challenge for you to say out loud over your problem, "My judge is God. God has been gracious. Who is like God? God has helped!"

Questions:

1. What hope does this story give you while in your trial?
2. What audience do you have that's watching to see what happens to you?
3. Do you think God is able and willing to help you out?

Day 14:

Daniel 3:30

Romans 8:28

Isaiah 41:10

For everyone that feels the heat in your own personal fire, we couldn't resist ending this study with one more bit of encouragement. After Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of their fiery trial, King Nebuchadnezzar promoted them in the province of Babylon. They went into the fire with one job, but due to God's deliverance in the fire, they came out with even better jobs! Who is getting a sense of hope from seeing that?

Friend, I feel your pain. It's so easy to grow weary in a trial. Who hasn't thought of quitting? The enemy likes to bring you down, question your motives, tempt you with taking the easy way out. But I challenge you to do what Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego did:

- Put your faith in God to save you
- Stand firm when the flames surround you
- Don't believe the lies
- Recognize you aren't alone in this battle
- Trust God's plan in the fire

Declare this out loud during your personal battle:

“God, I trust you with my _____. Although I can't see the outcome right now, I know you are with me and are able to save me.”

I hope you feel more encouraged today no matter what you are going through. God reminded me in my own fiery trial of Isaiah 41:10. I pray this encourages you as well!

“So do not fear, for I am with you;

*do not be dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you;
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”*

Finally, we don't want to ever end a HealingStrong study without giving you the chance to repent and ask Jesus to forgive you of your sins and to help you forgive others. You see, each of us is a sinner and there's nothing we can do to earn salvation on our own. But Jesus Christ, God's perfect Son, took your sin and mine and He died on a cross for us so that we can have eternal life. If you haven't asked Jesus to be the Lord of your life and to forgive your sins, we want to invite you to do that now. Pray this prayer out loud:

“Dear Jesus,
I know that I am a sinner and need your forgiveness. I believe you died on the cross for my sins and rose from the dead. I trust you as my Lord and Savior. Please help me to daily surrender to your will. In Jesus' name, amen.”

If you prayed that prayer, please tell someone. You can email our prayer team at: prayerrequest@healingstrong.org and we will be praying for you!