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Daniel's Friends

There are a few people we'd like to mention, who give us a great example of faith and obedience to God, and who we thought would make a good theme for the website.

A long time ago, thought to be about 2600 years ago, the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem. He ordered that some Jewish men be brought to him in Babylon, trained, and put to work. The famous Daniel who was in the lion's den unharmed was one of them, and three others were called Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. You can read their story in the Bible, in the book of Daniel, in chapters 1 to 3.

King Nebuchadnezzar made a huge gold statue, thirty metres or ninety feet high, and ordered his people to fall down and worship it when they heard music. If anyone didn't, they would straight away be thrown into a furnace. But Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego didn't obey this evil command. They refused to worship any god but the Lord. Nebuchadnezzar summoned them.

and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?"

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied 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."

Daniel 3:14-18 (NIV)

The king was furious! He had the furnace heated up so that it was seven times hotter than normal, and had the men tied up and ordered to be thrown into the furnace. It was so hot that the men who took them to be thrown in were killed by the flames, and Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego fell in.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He declared to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king." He answered and said, "But I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods."

Daniel 3:24-25 (ESV)



Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the burning fiery furnace; he declared, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here!" Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire. And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king's counselors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men. The hair of their heads was not singed, their cloaks were not harmed, and no smell of fire had come upon them.

Daniel 3:26-27 (ESV)

Nebuchadnezzar was moved to praise God and honour the men.

Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God. Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way." Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

Daniel 3:28-30 (ESV)

What an amazing example of faith these three men showed. It was faith which wasn't just an acknowledgement that God exists. It wasn't hypocritical or half-hearted. It was faith which had actions. This is a fantastic example of how God wants us to be. It's the kind of faith which loves, obeys, serves, and seeks God with all of a person's heart, soul, mind and strength. God loves faith like that.

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