



Lesson 154

Daniel's Friends and The Fiery Furnace

Story Elements

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text: Daniel 3:1-30 • Setting: circa 608 BC, in Babylon • Main Characters: God, Shadrach Meshach, Abednego, and Nebuchadnezzar • Plot: Daniel's three companions miraculously survive the punishment they received for refusing to worship a pagan image. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key word(s): "who is that _____ who shall deliver you out of my hands?" • Climax: <i>Daniel 3:20 And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.</i> |
|--|---|

The Great Image Dedicated

1. (v 1) Though Nebuchadnezzar had previously paid homage to Jehovah, he was still an arrogant king and a pagan at heart.
 - (a) He commissioned an image made with fine gold. The image measured approximately ____ feet tall and 9 feet wide.¹
 - (b) (vv 2-7) The civil and military leaders of the kingdom were assembled for a dedicatory service of Nebuchadnezzar's image; all were commanded to _____ before the image when ceremonial music was played.

A Great Faith Displayed

2. (vv 8-12) After the dedication of Nebuchadnezzar's image, certain of the Chaldeans charged Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego of dishonoring the king by refusing to pay homage to his image.
 - (a) (vv 13-18) Enraged, Nebuchadnezzar condemned the three Jewish men and ridiculed their faith.
 - (b) But Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego unflinchingly stood their ground, saying, "*If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. _____, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.*"

Our Great God Delivers

3. (vv 19-23) The king was so angry at the three for their unflinching commitment to God that he commanded the fiery furnace to be heated _____ times hotter – which probably meant to use seven times the usual amount of fuel and air – and that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego should be bound and immediately cast into the furnace.
 - (a) The fire was so hot, that the guards who were entrusted with casting the Jews into the furnace perished from the heat.
 - (b) (vv 24-25) Through some kind of aperture, the king peered into the furnace to see the smoldering remains of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. But instead, he saw four men walking around

¹ The disproportionate height/width ratio is probably due to a large pedestal being included in the image's height or the width is measured from the front of the chest to the back. See Jamieson, Faucett, and Brown on this passage.

unbound, and the fourth “was like the _____ of God.”

4. (vv 26-27) Astonished, Nebuchadnezzar commanded the men to come out of the furnace, and they came out without so much as a singed hair or _____ clothes.
5. (vv 28-30) Nebuchadnezzar honored Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego for their faith in the face of persecution and commented that they had “*yielded up their _____, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God.*” The king then made a proclamation that any who speak ill of the God of the Jews would be executed.

Application

6. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego demonstrated several important virtues of the Christian life. Here are two:
 - (a) They demonstrated _____ decision-making. When confronted with a choice between following God or worshipping idols they did not even take time to consider their options. They knew there was only one choice – faithfulness to God. When we let God’s truth be our guide, we will find that the right decision is easy to discern even if the consequences may be hard to endure.
 - (b) They demonstrated firm _____. They were committed to serving the one true God – even at the expense of their own lives. They illustrate the words of the Savior when he said, “*Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*” (Matt. 10:28)
7. Nebuchadnezzar is an example of a man who had been shown the truth of God, understood it, feared God, and yet went on again into sin. The same king who was so shaken by the God who gave a vision of a statue makes a different statue in defiance of that same God. Matthew Henry remarks, “[Notice] How the good impressions that were then made upon him were quite lost, and quickly. He then acknowledged that the God of Israel is of a truth a God of gods and a Lord of kings; and yet now, in defiance of the express law of that God, he sets up an image to be worshipped, not only continues in his former idolatries, but contrives new ones. Note, strong convictions often come short of a sound _____. Many in a pang have owned the absurdity and dangerousness of sin, and yet have gone on in it.”²

Notes: _____

Answer Key: Key word(s): “God” • 1. a) 90; b) bow • 2. b) *But if not* • 3. seven; b) Son • 4. smoky 5. bodies • 6. a) principled; b) resolved • 7. conversion

How to use this worksheet for personal Bible study: (1) Read the Bible passage given in the **Story Elements** section. (2) Read through the worksheet and try to fill in the blanks without looking at the **Answer Key**. (3) Check your answers with the key and make the necessary corrections. Keep in mind that some answers are a matter of opinion, and often more than one answer is correct. (4) Write down your own thoughts, applications, and questions for further study in the **Notes** section.

² Henry, Matthew. *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994. Print.