

### THE FIERY FURNACE: DANIEL 3

**-If you know anything about the South, iced tea is a staple. They drink it like water. One lady talked about growing up in the South and shared how much they loved their iced tea. Her mother seemed to always have water boiling and tea bags steeping whenever she was over visiting. Her mother took no short cuts. She knew the right way to get the most flavor out of those tea bags. She knew when the water was at the right temperature (always at the boiling point!) and how long to let the bags steep to get the best flavor from them.**

**-Having the right heat for the right amount is vital in other processes too:  
For Gold: they need extremely high temperatures to remove the impurities.  
For Brick making: they use extremely high temperatures give the bricks strength.**

**-God uses the same methods in our lives: He applies the right heat for the right amount of time to bring out His flavor in our own lives.**

**-There are many reasons why the “heat” (or let us say “trials”) may come in our lives. Can you think of some reasons why God may allow us to go through the heat of trials?**  
(Sometimes it’s to remove impurities – like our sin, sometimes it’s to strengthen us, sometimes it’s to be a testimony to others as we walk in faith with Him through it and most of the time it is to make us more like Him. He allows things in our lives because He is God and is refining His image in us.)

**-Let’s read our 1st verse together on our Verse Sheet:** (I Peter 1:6-7: “In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.”)

**-When your faith is proved genuine, it is tested. A Christian can trust God in the suffering because the trial has meaning: it produces His (God’s) character in us. This is a testimony to all.**

**-Have you gone through a trial and been able to say it was a blessing, maybe because you felt God’s peace and presence? (...)**

**-Can you share a little bit of that today with us? (...)**

**-It’s not the pain we rejoice in, nobody would choose pain. It’s the closeness of Jesus you experience as you go through the trial. It’s His strength that carries you as you totally depend on Him.**

**-Let’s read verse #2 together:** (1 Peter 4:12-13 “Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.”)

**-That is supernatural! And we’ve experienced it personally as well as seen it in others.**

**-Daniel 3 is an account of a “Fiery Trial” where Shadrach, Meshack and Abednego, Daniel’s best friends who were also exiled with Daniel when they were teenagers, experienced a real fiery furnace. They met this trial with absolute trust in the Lord. They had total resolve to serve the One True God, not all the little gods in Babylon during that time and we see how God miraculously saved them.**

**-Does anyone know how these boys came to Babylon and why they were chosen to serve the king?** (They were taken from their families as young boys during a raid on their village. They were placed in service to King Nebuchadnezzar because early on, they had distinguished themselves by resolving to be set apart for the Lord by not eating the food sacrificed to the idols, and the Lord blessed them. The king found “none equal” to these 4 young men’s wisdom so they entered King Nebuchadnezzar’s service. This next scene takes place about 20 years later and does not involve Daniel.)

**-Remember that King Nebuchadnezzar is very wicked. He had already witnessed the true God’s superiority to all of his little gods, but he refused to worship our God. He built this huge 90 foot image of gold of himself. King Nebuchadnezzar thought very highly of himself and wanted the people to worship him.**

**-Not only did he build this 90-foot-high image, but also he sent out a command that whenever the people of his kingdom heard his special music, they were to “fall down and worship the image.” Can you imagine? They may have been eating and they’d have to fall down on their knees or if they were standing in line, the whole line hit the floor. So if you didn’t fall down, you really stuck out!**

**-Does anyone remember what Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego did when this happened?** (They chose not to fall down. Daniel 3:12 says King Nebuchadnezzar’s officials tattled on them, saying, “there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon... who pay no attention to you. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up.”)

**-Why in the world would Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego choose to do this?** (The answer is found in the Bible, God’s Holy Word, the same Word these men chose to live, and to die by.)

**-Let’s read verse #3 together to find out:** (“Exodus 20:3-5: You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in Heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep My commandments.”)

**-That is very clear! No other gods, no idols of any form...and we are probably thinking “We would never do that!!!” But, before we get too confident, what could be some things we might worship today?** (How about big retirement funds, big houses, big cars, fine clothes, etc? If I came today all decked out in big jewelry and fancy clothes, wouldn’t it run through your thoughts: who is she trying to impress?)

**-Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to get caught up in that, no matter what it may mean.**

**-These Godly men had resolved to love God. They knew God's Words. Let's read verse #4 together:** ("Deuteronomy 6:5-6: Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.")

**-They were totally willing to receive whatever the king was going to deliver because their love and faith was in God. They said 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."**

**-Their commitment was to God, even if God still chose to let the fire consume them. Can you choose that kind of faith even if God allows you to go through tough trials that you feel may consume you? (...) Hard decision isn't it?**

**-Do you remember what happened next to the young men?(It is all written in Daniel 3)**  
(The king was furious. He commanded that the furnace be fired up seven times hotter than usual...so hot that when the king's soldiers threw these three into the furnace, the flames killed the soldiers first. Then they were thrown into the fiery furnace, firmly tied and fully dressed. It appeared they were doomed...except their trust was in the Lord God who was in total control.)

**-Then do you remember what happened?** (In Daniel 3:25 it says that the king looked into the furnace and was amazed: "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?" 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.")

**-Who did he see?** (He saw Jesus!)

**-Nebuchadnezzar called the men out...it was almost like they would have been content to remain in the furnace with Jesus forever.**

**-But isn't that understandable? When we go through the fiery trials of life and we experience Jesus' presence with us in unmistakable ways, we know He is there with us...carrying us, strengthening us. He is making us look more like Him.**

**-There is no doubt: Jesus is the One who walks in the fiery furnace with us today!**

**-Let's read verse #5 together to see what God's word tells us about His presence with us:**  
(“Isaiah 43:2-3: When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.”)

**-Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire. All those watching, the ones who tattled on them, the king, all saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair on their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them. The Lord completely covered them.**

**-Can anyone tell us what happened next with King Nebuchadnezzar after seeing God's provision for these young men in a time of trial? (...King Nebuchadnezzar praised God, calling Him: the One who sent His angel and rescued His servants.)**

**-Daniel 3:28 says, "They [Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego] trusted in Him [God] 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." Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego walked into the fiery furnace with total trust in God and whatever He chose to do! They had complete confidence in God's love for them and His Presence with them and in His choice for them. Their faith didn't look for a way out. They trusted God completely.**

**-Can you do this too? Do you trust Him completely right now in whatever situation He has allowed you to be in?(...)**

**-Do you trust that His presence is with you in this because He loves you? (...)**

**-Let's read our last verse together to confirm how He feels about you and me, verse #6: (Isaiah 42:4-5 "You are precious and honored in My sight, and I love you. Do not be afraid, for I am with you.")**

**-According to this verse, how does He see us? (Precious and honored. He loves us.)**

**-When the God of the universe says we are precious in His sight and He loves us, do we need to be afraid? (...)**

**-What is His promise in the very last 5 words of this verse? (... "for I am with you!")**

**-This is His promise to us...No matter what trial we are going through or will be going through, God loves us and promises us that He will go through them with us. He will see us through till the very end and will be there even after that! Let us Praise the Lord!**

## “THE FIERY FURNACE” VERSE SHEET

- 1. 1 Peter 1:6-7:** In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.
- 2. 1 Peter 4:12-13:** Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.
- 3. Exodus 20:3-5:** You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in Heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep My commandments.
- 4. Deuteronomy 6:5-6:** Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.
- 5. Isaiah 43:2-3:** When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.
- 6. Isaiah 42:4-5:** You are precious and honored in My sight, and I love you. Do not be afraid, for I am with you.