

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the Fiery Furnace !



“If the God whom we serve is able to save us from the blazing furnace and from your power, then He will.

“But even if He doesn't, Your Majesty may be sure that we will not worship your god, and we will not bow down to the gold statue that you have set up.”

Daniel 3:17,18

The Fiery Furnace — Daniel 3

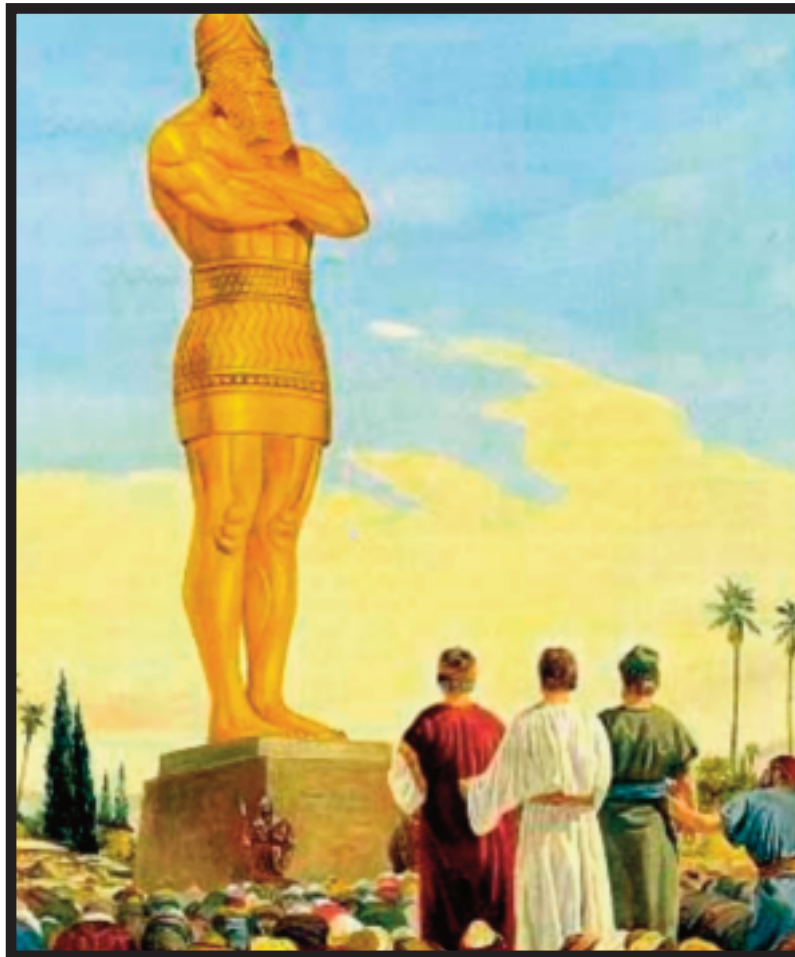
Daniel and his friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were captured in Israel and taken to Babylon along with other Jews. After being in Babylon for about fifteen years, Daniel was given a very high position in the empire.

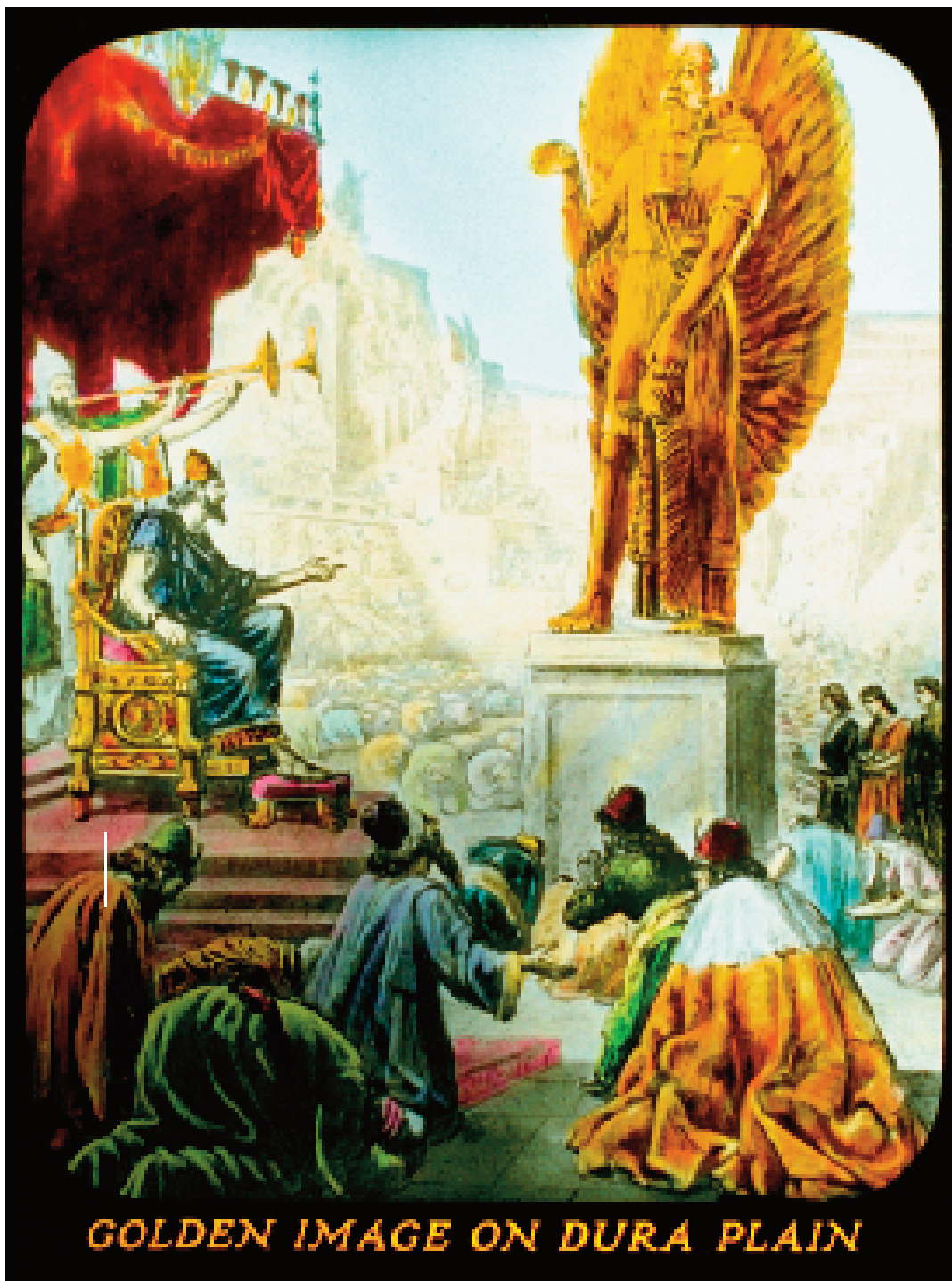
Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were also put in charge of the business of the empire. They were not only judges and managers, but supervised business for King Nebuchadnezzar. The king had chosen them for these high positions because he knew they were very smart and honest men.

In such high positions, they had many enemies. Their enemies were jealous of the king's favor to them and plotted against Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. But they could find nothing they could say against these men of God whose every act was good and honest.

The Golden Image

King Nebuchadnezzar decided to make a huge golden statue of his god. It was a huge statue—a hundred feet high and ten feet wide. That would be as high as a modern ten-story building. Nebuchadnezzar's idolatrous image was made of gold.





GOLDEN IMAGE ON DURA PLAIN

All the rulers of the empire were called to Babylon. There were thousands of them from all the different nations. Each one came dressed in his fanciest robes to honor the great King Nebuchadnezzar.

The huge golden image stood in the center of the parade ground. Beyond it, against a hillside, an enormous furnace had been built. The furnace was burning so furiously that the heat of it could be felt even from far away.

In front of the statue was a big orchestra, with musicians who played every kind of instrument. Next stood the rulers and officials of the empire, row after row. On one side, overlooking the entire crowd, there was a very decorated platform where King Nebuchadnezzar sat. He was surrounded by his court. All eyes were fastened upon the huge golden image.

The King's Command

Then an official stood up and announced:

**“People of every nation,
hear the king's command!**

**Music will soon start
playing.**

**When you hear the
music, you must bow
down and worship the
golden statue that King
Nebuchadnezzar made.**

**Anyone who will not
bow down and worship
the golden image will be
thrown into a hot fiery
furnace and die.”**

At a signal from the king, the orchestra started to play music. Every man bowed down before the image. Everyone, that is, except three men! Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego bravely stood on their feet, their heads held high.

Actually if all the others had strictly obeyed the king's command, no one would have noticed that the three Hebrews did not obey. One who is bowed down, with his face to the ground, cannot look around him.

But Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were being constantly watched. Their enemies had been spying on them day and night to find something they could hold against them.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego Refuse to Bow Down

The enemies of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego used this as a chance to accuse the three Hebrews to King Nebuchadnezzar.

They said to King Nebuchadnezzar,

“Great King Nebuchadnezzar, live forever! You commanded everyone to bow down and worship the gold statue when the music played. And you said that anyone who did not bow down and worship it would be thrown into a flaming furnace. Oh King, you appointed three men to high positions in the empire, but now they have disobeyed you. Those Jews, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, refused to worship the golden image you set up.”

The king could hardly believe his ears! His beautiful plan Babylon ruling over millions of people in his great empire was frustrated by only three men. But to think that these three were the men he himself had favored, exalted and made what they were. These men, by their example, were encouraging rebellion against him, the greatest king, using against him the influence of their high positions in which he himself had placed them.

THIS WAS TOO MUCH!



Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego Refuse to Bow Down to the Image

King Nebuchadnezzar was furious. He sent for the three young men and said, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, is it true that you refuse to worship my god and to bow down to the gold statue I made? Now I am going to give you one more chance. If you bow down and worship the statue when you hear the music, everything will be all right. But if you don't, you will be thrown into a fiery furnace. No god can save you from me.”

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego said, “Your Majesty, we don't need to defend ourselves. The God we worship can save us from you and your fiery furnace. But even if he doesn't, we still won't worship your gods and the gold statue you set up.”



Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego Stand for their God

What made Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego take this brave stand? These young men knew the commandments of the God of Israel and followed them. They were familiar with these commandments:

“Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven—image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them.” —Exodus 20:3-5

“Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image.” —Lev. 26:1

“Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them.” —Ex 23:24

Obedience to God Came First! In obedience to their God, they were willing to lay their lives on the line, going against the decree of the most powerful ruler in the world.

The Fiery Furnace

Then Nebuchadnezzar lost his temper. His face turned red with anger at Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace to be heated seven times hotter than usual.

He commanded the strongest men in his army to tie the three men up and throw them into the blazing hot furnace.

The king wanted it done at that very moment. So the soldiers tied up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and threw them into the furnace. The fire was so hot that flames leaped out and killed the soldiers who threw them in.



The Fiery Furnace

Because of the brilliant white heat of the furnace, every detail inside of it could be clearly seen through the arched doorway. Watching intently, the king saw the three young men thrown into the flames, one after another.

Then the king saw an astonishing thing which made him stand up quickly from his chair!

He had seen men burn before. In such heat they would be reduced to ashes in seconds. But now he not only saw the three Hebrews walking around, alive and unbound in the furnace. He also saw another person walking with them and having such a glorious brightness that it shone even above the bright glow of the furnace!

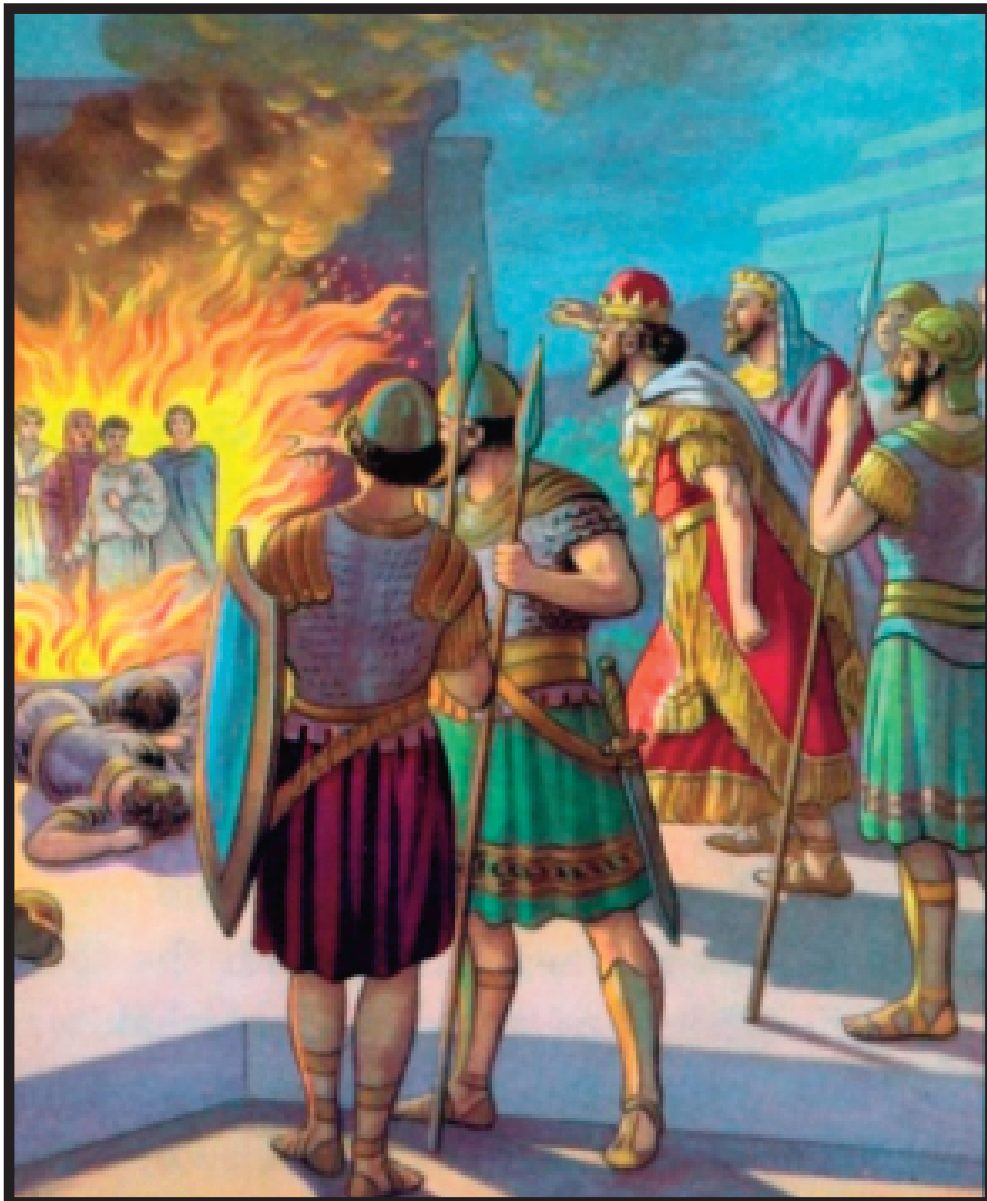


Four Men Walking in the Fiery Furnace

“Why do I see four men walking around in the fire?” King Nebuchadnezzar asked. “They are not tied up, and they show no sign of being hurt—and the fourth man looks like an angel!”

King Nebuchadnezzar went to the door of the furnace of blazing fire and called: “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, you servants of the Most High God—come out!” So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out of the fire.

The king’s high officials, governors, and advisors all crowded around them. The men were not burned! Their hair wasn’t scorched! Their clothes didn’t even smell like smoke!



The God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego Is Honored by the King

King Nebuchadnezzar said, “Praise the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! He sent his angel to rescue these men who serve and trust him. They disobeyed my orders and risked their lives rather than bow down and worship any god except their own God of Israel.

I command that if anyone of any nation speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, they will be chopped up and their houses will be torn down, because no other god has such great power to rescue like this.”

After this happened, the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to even higher positions in Babylon.

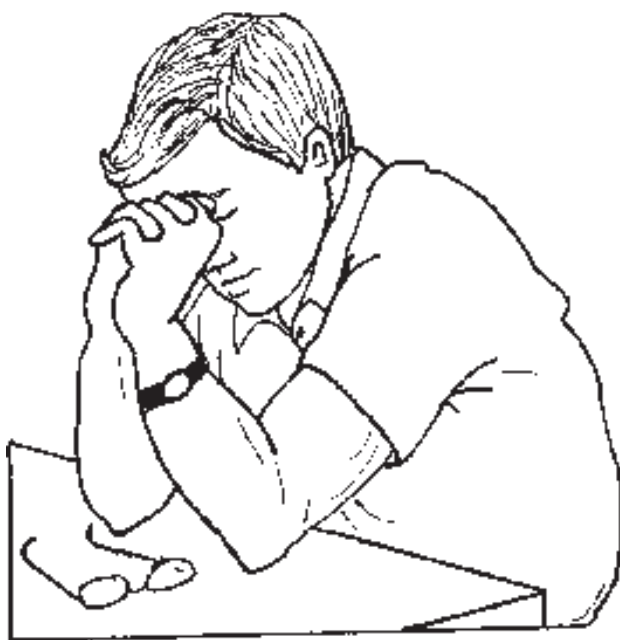
Lessons for Us

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were only about fourteen years old when brought to Babylon as captives. At the time they refused to worship the image they were young men of thirty-five occupying important positions in King Nebuchadnezzar’s government.

What was their secret? They had been reared by godly parents. They had never departed from God. In spite of their exalted positions in a heathen government and their daily contact with corrupt and crooked idolaters, they strictly obeyed the laws of their God. There was a great difference between them and others. They stood out as shining examples of good for all to see.

Remember that God is with us in our trials. God has promised to be with us when we pass through the “deep waters” and “fiery furnace” of trouble.

“When thou passest through the waters,
I will be with thee;
and through the rivers,
they shall not overflow thee:
when thou walkest through the fire,
thou shalt not be burned;
neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.”
Isaiah 43:2



We Are Never Alone!!!



As Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were not alone in the furnace, neither are we.

How alone they must have felt when they were the only ones standing, surround by thousands who bowed before the image.

How alone they must have felt when facing an angry king and court.

How alone when they were seized by rough and powerful soldiers. How terribly alone when they were thrown into the flames!

But as they dropped into the fire a wonderful thing happened. Their cords of rope instantly burned and fell away from them. They were free! We know this because they were seen walking around inside the furnace. Their cords burned but not one hair of their heads was singed!

Most wonderful of all, they were no longer alone. A glorious being, brighter than even the flame of fire, greeted them, embraced them, and walked with them in the furnace. This was the angel Logos, the personal representative of God. Our Lord Jesus will walk with us, too, in our fiery trials.

After their fiery furnace experience, the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in Babylon. The three young Hebrews learned a lesson they would never forget! And they taught us a lesson we should never forget! They believed God absolutely, obeyed him at all cost, and relied on him implicitly. Because of their supreme faith, they received a miraculous deliverance. They lived in faith all their lives, and they finally died in faith.

We thank God for these inspiring examples of faith, and of His great power to preserve His people in every situation. May the Son of God walk with us in our fiery furnace so that ultimately we come forth as gold!

Fiery Furnace Quiz Time!

- 1. *Who was Nebuchadnezzar?***
 - a— A janitor in the palace.**
 - b— A prisoner in jail.**
 - c— A slave.**
 - d— The king of Babylon.**
- 2. *What were the names of Daniel's three friends?***
 - a—Jack, John, Joey.**
 - b—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.**
 - c—Mickey, Ricky, Dicky.**
 - d—Huey, Louie, Dewey.**
- 3. *What kind of jobs did they have?***
 - a—Dishwashers.**
 - b—Street cleaners.**
 - c—In charge of camels and pigs.**
 - d—High positions as managers under the king.**
- 4. *Why did some people hate them?***
 - a—Because they were so good looking.**
 - b—They were rich and famous.**
 - c—They were jealous of the king's favor to them.**
 - d—Because they were mean.**
- 5. *What did Nebuchadnezzar's image look like?***
 - a—It was a tiny little mouse.**
 - b—It was made of mud.**
 - c—It looked like a dinosaur.**
 - d—It was gold, and 100 feet high and 10 feet wide.**
- 6. *Who came to see the king's golden image?***
 - a—Just the Jews.**
 - b—Only little children.**
 - c—All the rulers and nobles of the nations of the empire.**
 - d—No one.**

7. *What was near the image?*

- a—A beautiful lake with swans.**
- b—A large fiery furnace.**
- c—A circus with clowns and acrobats.**
- d—A K-Mart store.**

8. *What did the king command the people to do when they heard the music?*

- a—They were to dance in circles.**
- b—They were to clap their hands in time with the music.**
- c—They were to sing as loud as they could.**
- d—They were to bow down to the image.**

9. *What would happen to anyone who did not bow down to worship the image?*

- a—They would be paid \$1,000,000.**
- b—They could take the image home to put in their garden.**
- c—They would be thrown into a fiery furnace.**
- d—They would be thrown in the river.**

10. *When Nebuchadnezzar gave them a 2nd chance to bow down to the image, what did Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego say?*

- a—They would think about it and let him know.**
- b—They thanked him for a second chance.**
- c—They cried and would not talk.**
- d—They would NOT bow down. God would save them, and even if he didn't they still would NOT worship the gods and image of the king.**

11. *Why did Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refuse to bow down to King Nebuchadnezzar's golden image?*

- a—They obeyed God and his 10 commandments not to worship any other god except the true God of Israel.**
- b—They didn't know what the king wanted them to do.**
- c—They didn't hear the music playing.**
- d—They didn't like the king.**

12. *How many times hotter was the furnace heated for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego?*

- a—1 time hotter**
- b—7 times hotter**
- c—700 times hotter**
- d—1,000 times hotter**

13. *What happened to the men who threw Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego into the fiery furnace?*

- a—They sat down to watch them burn in the fire.**
- b—The fire was so hot it killed the soldiers who threw them in.**
- c—They ran around dancing in circles.**
- d—They laughed and sang songs.**

14. *When the King watched to see them burning, what did he see instead?*

- a—He couldn't see anything because the fire was so bright.**
- b—He couldn't see anything — it was so dark in the furnace.**
- c—He didn't see anyone in the furnace.**
- d—He saw four men walking around in the furnace!**

15. *Then what did the king say and do?*

- a—He scolded Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.**
- b—The King called them to come out of the furnace.**
- c—Nothing.**
- d—He sat down and cried.**

16. *Were Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego burned?*

- a—Only a little bit.**
- b—No—they didn't even smell like smoke.**
- c—They looked terrible, and their clothes were scorched.**
- d—They were burned all over.**

17. *Then what did King Nebuchadnezzar say and do?*

- a—He scolded Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.**
- b—He yelled and threw them back into the furnace.**
- c—Nothing.**
- d—The King said if anyone speaks against the God of Israel, they will be killed and their houses destroyed. The King gave Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego a higher position in the Empire of Babylon.**

The Fiery Furnace

Help Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego
Out of the fiery furnace

