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Dani'el's Friends Punished

3: 19-23

Dani'el's friends are punished DIG: Why was Nebuchadnezzar so overwhelmed with rage? Why were Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego thrown into the fiery furnace wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes? What happened to the soldiers who threw them into the furnace? Why was that ironic?

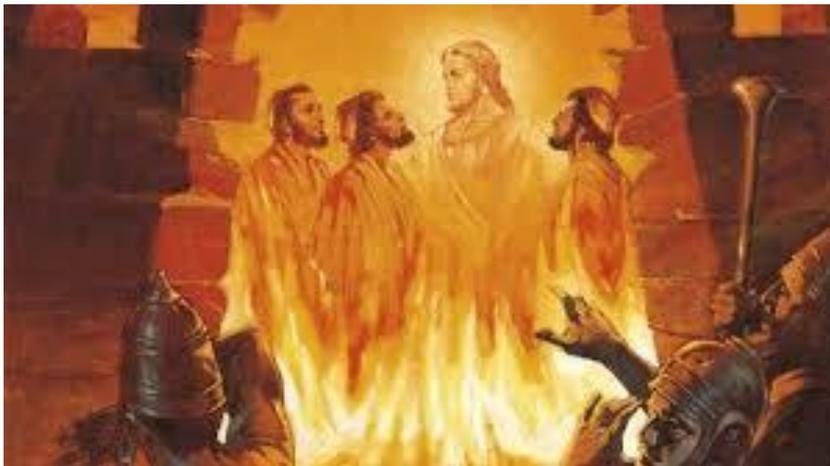
REFLECT: When have you been so angry that you couldn't think straight? Haste makes waste. What did Yeshua mean when He said, "whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it?" Why would ADONAI be with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, but not with His own Son?

Like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Yeshua's obedience was tested and found faithful until death.

The three Jews confession of faith in **the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob** (to see link click [Bo](#) - **The Jews Confess Their Faith**), courageous to us, exasperated **Nebuchadnezzar**. **He was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego** for refusing to **serve his gods or worship the statue of gold that he had set up**. **He** was so overwhelmed with **rage** that **he** couldn't think straight anymore and **his facial expression changed toward them**. **The king's** pride was severely wounded, so **he ordered a furnace**, evidently burning in the background of the scene, **heated seven times hotter than usual (3:19)**. This picture is not to be understood literally, perhaps reflecting **the heat of his own anger**. The writer is using a proverbial expression meaning *as hot as possible* (**Proverbs 24:16** and **26:16**).¹³⁸ This decision showed a lack of thinking because if this was supposed to be torture, **the hotter the fire**, the shorter the period of suffering during the execution.

And the king also **commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing**

furnace. But this didn't make any sense either. It was not as though **the three Jews** could have escaped those powerful **soldiers**. **The king** was so anxious to carry out the death sentence that **the executioners** were not even permitted time to strip **the prisoners** of **their clothes**. Again, it seems that **Nebuchadnezzar** just wasn't thinking logically. **So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace (3:20-21).** This detailed reference to **their clothing** serves to heighten the extraordinary nature of **their** eventual deliverance, since even **their clothes** would not even **smell like smoke (3:28)**. As government officials, **Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego** were **clothed** in upper-class **garments** that were befitting the occasion. Yet, **Nebuchadnezzar** didn't bother to have **them** removed. The whole scene gives us a sense of haste; a hurry to carry out **the king's** decree. Having bound **the three Jews**, **the soldiers** carried **them** to **the furnace** and **threw them in.**¹³⁹



The king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace (3:22-23). **The furnace** was used for smelting ore. **It** had a large opening at the top through which fuel and vessels full of ore could be placed **into the fire** and there was a door at the bottom through which the metal was taken out. An opening in the wall enabled the smelters to check on the progress of their work, and through the holes in the wall they could use bellows to make **the fire blaze** even more. **It** was large enough for at least four people to walk around in. It was into this **furnace** that **Nebuchadnezzar** cast **the three faithful Jews**, fully clothed and bound.¹⁴⁰

When **the soldiers** approached **the furnace** from the edge of the cliff or

ascending slope, **they** were able to get close enough to its opening to throw **their** prisoners inside. Evidently, because of the extreme heat or a shift in the wind, **the soldiers** were consumed by **the flames**.¹⁴¹ There is a great irony here, to be sure. **The ones** who obeyed **Nebuchadnezzar's** commands died, while **those** whom **he** condemned to **death** emerged alive! What a vivid demonstration of **Yeshua's** statement that **whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it (Matthew 16:25)**. The issue was not whether **Isra'el's God** could keep **His servants** alive, but whether **Nebuchadnezzar** could! In a similar way, our own **idols** often turn out to be liars, unable to deliver either the rewards that **they** promise or the judgments **they** threaten.¹⁴² But what about those who refuse obedience when it comes to a choice between faithless **Nebuchadnezzar** and to **ADONAI Himself**? Was there a **God** who could rescue **them** from the hands of such a powerful **ruler**?¹⁴³ **Nebuchadnezzar himself** gives us the answer (see [Bq - The Vindication of the Jews](#)).

Like **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego**, **Yeshua's** obedience was tested and found faithful until death. **He** went through **His** own personal **furnace** experience completely alone. **ADONAI** was with **the three Jewish men in the fire**, and we have the promise of **the Lord's** sustaining presence with us in our trials, but on the cross **Yeshua** felt the utter loneliness of total abandonment by **YHVH**. When **the fire of God's wrath** burned **Him** to the core and blazed unchecked over **Him**, **He** was entirely alone. There was no companion to share **His** burden, no angel was sent to relieve **His** agony, no saving hand from **God** stretched down to preserve **His** faithful **Servant** in **His** moment of greatest need. For **Yeshua**, there was no deliverance from experiencing the power of the final enemy, death itself.

Now why would **ADONAI** be with **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego**, but not with **His** own **Son**? Why would **He** be faithful to **His** promise to be with **Isra'el, sinners** as **they** were (**Isaiah 64:5**), and then abandon **Yeshua, His** perfect chosen **One**? You would expect it to be the other way around.

The answer to that question is that on the cross, **Yeshua** was taking into **Himself** the **fiery** pains that we deserve for our compromise to idolatry. Unlike **Dani'el's three friends**, we are no heroes of the faith. Every time we bow down to **the idols** of our own hearts, we deserve the judgment curse of **Ha'Shem**. We choose to escape the fiery threat of our idols, but only at the cost of earning the fiery judgment of **God** for our unfaithfulness. **Nebuchadnezzar** is not the only one who condemns to the **fire** those who will not bow the knee to **Him (Revelation 20:14)**.

ADONAI rightfully demands the wholehearted worship of those whom **He** has created. Yet, in the case of **His people, the LORD** took all of our **fiery** judgment curse and laid it on **His** own **Son. Yeshua** personally paid the price of our hell during those six hours on the cross so that we might pass through the threatening **fire** unburned and emerge safely out on the other side. What is more, all of **Messiah's** perfect righteousness was transferred to our spiritual bank accounts at the moment of faith. Therefore, a faithfulness that far exceeds that of **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego** is now ours as a free gift. And we are welcomed into the presence of **God** for **Messiah's** sake.¹⁴⁴

*Dear heavenly **Father**, praise **You** that nothing is impossible for **You (Luke 1:37)! Your** Steadfast Love, Infinite Wisdom and Almighty Power work together so you are totally able to rescue me from any spiritual problem or trial. Thank **You** that **You** were willing to put on human flesh and come down from **Your** heavenly home and be there with **Dani'el's three friends. But King Nebuchadnezzar answered saying: Look! I see four men walking about unbound and unharmed in the middle of the fire, and the fourth has the appearance like the Son of God (Dani'el 3:25)!***

***You** appeared to **Abraham** at **Mamre** when he saw "**three men**". Then **ADONAI** appeared to him at **Mamre's large trees while he was sitting in the entrance of his tent during the heat of the day. When he lifted up his eyes to see, suddenly, three men were standing right by him. When he saw them, he ran from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed down to the ground (Genesis 18:1-2) . . .Then He said, "I will most surely return to you in about a year's time, surprisingly, Sarah your wife will have a son."** (Genesis 18:10 also 16-22). **Your** children worship and exalt **Your** holy **Name** and we love to live our lives trusting **You** with a heart full of love and joy to put **You** first at all times- even in circumstances when death is possible. In **Messiah Yeshua's** holy **Name** and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*