

Catechism Story 1

*The First and Second Commandments
Memory Verse and Catechism Prayers from Congregation at Prayer*

BIBLE STORY: THE THREE MEN IN THE FIERY FURNACE

Daniel 3:1-28

Central Thoughts

- The Holy Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is the only true and living God.
- The First and Second Commandments teach us to trust in God above all things and to worship Him alone, even if we are called upon to suffer and die for our faith.
- The Son of God, our Savior Jesus Christ, is the One who saves us from the fires of hell and protects us in every time of trouble.
- We have nothing to fear by remaining steadfast in our confession of faith, even if we are persecuted and threatened with suffering and death.
- If we suffer and die for our confession of faith, we have the promise of eternal life with God.

Discussion Questions

What is the First Commandment?

You shall have no other gods.

What does this mean?

We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

Who is the only true God?

The Holy Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He alone is the Lord God, the Creator of all things and our only Redeemer and Savior. Apart from Him there is no god.

What is a false god?

Anything or anyone we trust in more than the true God.

What is the Second Commandment?

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

What is worship?

It is to trust in God, pray to God, listen to God, and rely upon God for everything that we need, even if we suffer because of it or it costs us our lives. It is to “fear, love, and trust in Him above all things.” It is to call upon His name in every trouble, to pray to Him alone, and to praise and give thanks to Him even during suffering, hardship, or death.

What had King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon done?

During the time of the Babylonian Captivity of the Southern Kingdom of Judah, he erected a 90 foot tall idol in the form of a gold image and called upon the people to worship the image at any time they heard “the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with a all kinds of music.”

What did this image represent?

The power, glory, and dominion of Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom, including everything that he had accomplished. To bow down to the image signified complete and total allegiance to the king and his achievements.

With what did Nebuchadnezzar threaten those who refused to worship the gold image?

They would be cast into the fiery furnace.

Nebuchadnezzar had placed three Jews—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego—over the affairs of Babylon, why did certain Chaldeans accuse them of not paying due regard for the king and of not worshipping the gold image?

They were jealous of the power and favor that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego enjoyed in the kingdom, and they hated the true God of Israel and everything the Jews believed in.

What was Nebuchadnezzar's response to the refusal of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego to worship the gold image?

He was filled with rage, gave them a final chance to worship the image, and if they refused, they would be cast into the burning fiery furnace.

Were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego prepared to suffer and die for their faith?

Yes

With what words did they confess their faith in the true God?

"Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."

What happened to the men who cast Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego into the fiery furnace?

They were killed by the fire which had been kindled seven times hotter than usual.

What did this signify?

God's enemies will eventually suffer the very condemnation that they try to give to those who believe in Christ.

What astonished King Nebuchadnezzar after these three men were cast into the fiery furnace.

A fourth man stood with them, one like the Son of God.

Who stood with faithful Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, so that they were saved and delivered from the flames of the fiery furnace?

The Son of God Himself, who would suffer the fire of hell for us in His death upon the cross in order that we might be saved from condemnation and be reconciled to eternal life with God.

What would Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego have forfeited if they had worshiped the idol?

They would have forfeited their salvation and eternal life with the only true God.

What did King Nebuchadnezzar confess after he had witnessed the faithfulness of the Jews in their confession and the salvation the Son of God gave them?

That there was no other god, but the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, and that all should worship only Him.

Meditation on the Bible Story

A false god or idol is whatever we might want to hold on to more than anything else. If Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego had bowed down to the gold image, they would not only have been worshiping that idol, but they would have confessed that their own lives, comforts, and safety meant more to them than the true God. They would have made a god out of their own lives and comforts. The First and Second Commandments teach us to trust in God above all things, to pray to Him at all times, and to even give thanks and praise to Him for the things we suffer for the sake of our faith. The First and Second Commandments call us to repentance for the sins of idolatry, false worship, seeking help from ourselves or Satan, and the failure to pray and praise God always. Jesus, the Son of God our Savior, stands with us in the midst of the burning fiery furnace of Christian persecution and suffering. He has rescued us from the jaws of hell because He suffered the condemnation we deserved in His death upon the cross. By His saving Word and the Holy Spirit, He strengthens and preserves us steadfast in the true faith, so that we are enabled to suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from Him in whom we have eternal life and salvation.

Prayer on the Bible Story

O Son of God, our Savior and Lord, as You stood with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the burning fiery furnace, and strengthened them to confess the true God, even though it could have cost them their lives, so stand with us in times of persecution, and grant us to be faithful to You, even unto death, and so receive the crown of glory and eternal life with You, the only true God; for You live and reign with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.