

Bible Stories for Daily Prayer

Catechism Stories

The Three Men in the Fiery Furnace

Daniel 3:1-28 (29-30)

The Ten Commandments: First and Second Commandments (Year I, Week 1)

Who was King Nebuchadnezzar? (See Daniel 1:1.)

The King of Babylon.

What did he erect in Babylon?

An image of gold in the plain of Dura.

Why were there Jews—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego—serving as officials of Nebuchadnezzar in the land of Babylon? (See Daniel 1:3-7.)

Because they had been carried off into captivity when Jerusalem was destroyed.

What did the decree of King Nebuchadnezzar demand of all the people at the dedication of the idol?

At the time they heard the sound of the musical instruments, they were to fall down and worship the gold image.

What would happen to someone who did not worship the idol?

He would be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

Why might someone be tempted to worship the gold image?

To avoid death.

Why were the other officials of Babylon so intent upon doing away with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego? (See Daniel 1:19-20 and 2:48-49.)

They were envious of the way they had gained favor with the king and had been elevated over them.

Of what did these officials accuse the three men?

They had not paid due regard to the king because they did not serve his gods or worship the gold image.

Was their accusation true?

It was true that the three men did not serve or worship the king's gods, but they did have due regard for the king.

How did Nebuchadnezzar respond to this news?

In rage and fury he sent for them.

What question did Nebuchadnezzar ask the three men?

Who the god was who would save them from him.

Who else would face such a challenge? (See Matthew 27:43.)

Jesus.

What came out of the mouth of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego when King Nebuchadnezzar gave them the opportunity to save their lives by worshiping the idol?

They had no need to answer because their God was able to deliver them from the fiery furnace and would deliver them from the king's hand.

Whom do they fear, love, and trust in above all things?

The Blessed Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

What order did King Nebuchadnezzar give concerning the furnace?

Heat it seven times hotter than usual.

What did the fire represent?

The fire of hell.

What did they do to the three men before casting them into the furnace?

They bound them in their coats, trousers, turbans, and other garments.

What happened to the soldiers who cast the men into the fire?

They were killed by the fire.

What happened to the three men?

They fell into the midst of the fiery furnace.

What did Nebuchadnezzar see in the furnace?

He saw four men walking in the fire and they were not hurt.

Who was this fourth man?

One like the Son of God, that is, the Second Person of the Trinity.

What did Nebuchadnezzar do?

He called the men out of the furnace.

What is recorded about the men after they came out of the furnace?

The hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them.

What Gospel promise is indicated here?

Those who believe in the Son of God will not perish in the fire of hell.

What confession did the miracle of God's salvation, revealed through this sign, call forth in King Nebuchadnezzar?

He confessed that the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him.

Who might this Angel be? (See Exodus 23:20-25.)

The Second Person of the Trinity who led Israel out of Egypt and promised to deliver them, but warned them to worship no other gods.

What decree did Nebuchadnezzar make?

Any people, nation, or language that speaks against this God shall be cut in pieces and their houses made an ash heap because there is no other God who can deliver like this.

What did the king do for the three men?

He promoted them.

Meditation:

King Nebuchadnezzar thought of himself as a god. A god is anyone or anything that you trust in for the good in your life. He not only trusted in himself, but he wanted all his subjects to fear him and trust in him for their good. The three young men feared the torments of hell more than the fiery furnace. They loved the living God who could bestow life upon them even if they died in the furnace. Nebuchadnezzar could not raise them from the dead, but the Messiah who was promised to Abraham and David could do exactly that. It was that Messiah, the Son of God, who came to the men in the furnace, comforted them, and preserved their life. Just as there was no smell of smoke upon them, so we trust that the Son of God is with us so that there will be no smell of death upon us.