

GOD’S LOVE IN ACTION

Faithfulness in the Fire Daniel 3

“Then Nebuchadnezzar said, ‘Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him 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.’”
Daniel 3:28

Day 1: Read Daniel 3:1–7.

1. What have we learned so far about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? (1:1–7, 18–20; 2:49)

2. What is the occasion for the events in this chapter?

3. This 90-foot statue is impressive, but who is all this to-do really about? (See Dan. 2:36–38.)

4. Commentator Tremper Longman III notes that “behind every idol is the *self*.” This is certainly true in Nebuchadnezzar’s case. Idols such as this Babylonian one are not common in our time and place. But if “idol” is defined as the thing, person, or goal that is the focus of your thoughts and desires, what are the idols in your life? How is it true that behind such idols lurks the self?

Day 2: Read Daniel 3:8–18.

5. What possible motivation do you see in the accusers of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? (cf. 1:19–20) How would you describe the way they speak to the king?

6. How would you characterize Nebuchadnezzar’s attitude as he interrogates the three Israelites?

7. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are in a tight spot, yet they boldly assert before an offended king, “we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter.”
 - a. What two-part explanation do they give for why they do not need to defend themselves? (vss. 17–18)

 - b. Think about a time when you have been on the spot and it felt natural to defend yourself. Where did the impulse to defend yourself come from? Did you in fact need to defend yourself? Why or why not?

Day 3: Read Daniel 3:16–23.

8. Despite their extensive Babylonian education, these Israelites adhere faithfully to the most fundamental commandments of their Jewish faith. What are the first two commandments? (Ex. 20:1–6) How does God identify himself as he issues these commandments? (Ex. 20:2) How might the memory of these commandments and the identity of the God who made them have strengthened Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? (Compare the imagery used in Deut. 4:20.)
9. List the details from verses 19–23 that show just how helpless Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are, and how dire their situation is.
10. It has been noted that God does not save Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego *from* the fire but *in* the fire. What is the difference?
11. Look at 1 Peter 1:6–7 and 4:12–14. What do we learn about trials from these passages?

Day 4: Read Daniel 3:24–30.

12. What extraordinary thing does Nebuchadnezzar see? How does he address the three Israelites now?
13. List the details from verse 27 that show how meticulous God’s care for his servants was.
14. What answer does Nebuchadnezzar now have to the brazen question he posed in verse 15?
15. King Nebuchadnezzar says some fine things about the true God, but future events will show that he has not in fact experienced a conversion. What is missing from his confession that suggests that his heart has not changed?

Day 5: Review Daniel 3.

16. As modern readers in the United States, many of us breathe a sigh of relief that we haven’t had to face death for our faith and perhaps wonder if we would exhibit the same steadfastness these ancient Israelites did. But what kinds of trials have you faced or do you now face? How have you

responded? How does God equip us for the trials (present or possible future ones) we face?
(Eph. 6:10–18; Heb. 4:16)