

# He'll Meet You in The Fire

## Introduction

---

This week, Elder Stevin Hamilton brought our attention to Daniel chapter 3 and **The God Who Stands Still in the Midst of the Fire**. As the scripture tells it, there were three Hebrew young men Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah who were part of a group of Hebrews who had been taken into captivity. The Babylonian custom at the time was to take the brightest and most outstanding of the captives and educate them to take advantage of their gifts for the benefit of Babylon. The 'education' included taking away the clothes, customs, names and by implication the identities of the glorified slaves. This is how they came to be called Shadrach, Mishach and Abednego. Their original names meant "Yahweh is gracious", "Who God is" and "Whom Yahweh helps". Their Babylonian names meant "may Bel protect his life", "command of Aku", and "servant of Nebo". For reference Bel, Aku and Nebo were names of Babylonian Gods. I imagine the plan hatched in Babylon's warfare headquarters was something like this "If we can make them forget who they are, if we can replace their love for God with respectable titles that make them look good in front of people, if we can feed their pride instead of their spirits...then we can keep them as slaves and they won't even know it." Sounds a little bit like the enemy's plan for us.

In the beginning of Daniel chapter 3, we meet King Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon (who is known for being a bit unstable), having an enormous gold statue being constructed. He had it set up in the valley of Dura right beside Babylon and commanded that all the people when they heard the music playing should bow down and worship the statue. Anyone who refused, would be thrown into the fiery furnace. I'm sure that most of you remember that the three Hebrew boys refused to bow. Can you imagine being in the room when King Nebuchadnezzar heard this? The bible says he was furious, and he sent for them right away. How inspiring that Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were not even tempted to bow. In fact, in Daniel 3:16, they let King Nebuchadnezzar know in no uncertain terms that they would not be bowing. Most of us, after taking such a bold, powerful stance for God, would expect God to come down from heaven and intervene...but He didn't. We would expect the 'Angels that encamp around them that fear Him' to show themselves to Nebuchadnezzar and his minions...but they didn't. At the very least we would expect to be spared the trip to the fiery furnace.... but they weren't. In fact, the furnace was heated to seven times its usual temperature.

he bible explains that the fire was so great, that it killed the men who were assigned to put Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah in the furnace. Have you ever wondered why they didn't simply walk away? There was no one to throw them into the flames. We don't know for sure, but maybe they saw something in the fire, that they would not have access to on the outside of the fire. The encouragement here is that there is something in the fire for you. There is a reason you have to face the things you have to face. And the scripture goes on to say that when Nebuchadnezzar looked in the furnace, he saw four men and the fourth looked like God in flesh. God himself will meet you in the fire. Your furnace experience is not a forsaking, it is a forging, which prepares you for the next level of your life.

## **Getting Started**

---

Read Daniel chapters 1-3 and answer the following:

1. Why did the Babylonians choose specific children of Israel to teach a new language? What was the criteria for being chosen? Daniel 1:3-4
2. What was the significance of changing the boys' names from Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah to Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego? Daniel 1:6
3. What did Daniel and the three Hebrew boys do in Daniel chapter 1, that proved their dedication to God? Daniel 1:8-12
4. Why do you think Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah still ended up in the furnace, even though the soldiers assigned to put them in were dead? Daniel 3:22

## **Let's Get Personal**

---

1. What are some of the ways in which the enemy tries to get you to compromise on the job; in your marriage; in your obligations?
2. Have you ever been through a fiery furnace experience in your life? One where you felt you stood up for the right things and refused to compromise, but you got punished for it instead of rewarded?
3. How has God met you in the fire before? How did you come out of the fire better than you went in?

## **Take The Next Step**

---

This week, your assignment is to consciously remember the goodness of God using these three steps.



1. **Think.** What are some events that you can look back on as a pile of stones marking a defining moment for you — a moment when God showed his power in your life, when he was guiding you in a very clear way, when he answered a prayer, fulfilled a promise? “I will ponder all your work and meditate on your mighty deeds” Psalm 77:12.
2. **Thank.** Engage your heart in gratitude for what He has done. “I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds” Psalm 9:1.
3. **Tell.** Once we’ve spent time remembering and thanking the Lord for the great things He has done for us, allow the joy of those memories to overflow into conversations with those around you. In Joshua 4, we find this instruction specifically regarding children: “When your children ask their fathers in times to come, ‘What do these stones mean?’ then you shall let your children know, ‘Israel passed over this Jordan on dry ground’ Joshua 4:21-22.

Have a great week!

