

HEROES

Firefighter

Lesson 1

Scripture: Daniel 2-3

Memory Verse: Daniel 3:28b - " . . . *Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him. . .*"

INTRODUCTION: A FIREFIGHTER is a man or woman who bravely enters a burning building to save any person who might be trapped inside. The firefighter then does all he can to put the fire out. It sometimes takes hours and even days to put out a big fire. But, the firefighter's first responsibility is to get all people from the burning building to safety. Many people have been rescued by these brave, heroic firefighters. In the Bible there were three men whom the King threw into a fiery furnace. This furnace was so blazing hot, that the men that threw Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego into the furnace burned up themselves! But, the three men had a Firefighter who came to their rescue! Here is their story:

I SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABEDNEGO'S DUTIES

These three young men were good workers, honest, and respectful. They were soon noticed by those in the palace. Even though they were Jews, the Babylonians, and even the king, loved and respected these young men.

II THE KING'S DECREE

A. The king's dream
King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream one night that really bothered him. He called for all of his sorcerers, magicians, and astrologers to interpret the dream for him. But the king knew that many times these men made up lies because they could not really do all the magic they claimed they could do. So the king said that they had to tell him what the dream was AND give him the interpretation of it or they would be killed. The men said that NO ONE could tell him what the dream was, only the interpretation. The king got so mad that he ordered all those who were in positions of "wise men" to be killed. Well, this included one of the Jews, Daniel. He was Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's friend. Daniel went to the king to find out what it was all about and he promised he would be able to help the king. Daniel went back to his three friends and told them to pray hard about this matter. Daniel knew that

these three men were great prayer warriors. Daniel went back to the king and told him what the king's dream was and what the dream meant.

B. The king's mistake

After Daniel told the king about the dream and its meaning, the king decided not to kill all the "wise men" of the land. But the king must have gotten a little proud about the fact that Daniel said that the king represented by the gold head of the image was Nebuchadnezzar, himself. The king made a huge golden statue. This image was 90 feet tall and 9 feet wide. The Bible says that we are not to make any kind of graven image to worship it. (Exodus 20:4) King Nebuchadnezzar did not listen to this commandment from God.

C. The king's orders

The king gave a command that every time the music was played that everyone in the kingdom must bow down and worship this golden image. All who would not bow down would be thrown into a fiery furnace! Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego only worshiped the true and living God. This was going to be a problem!

III SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABEDNEGO'S DETERMINATION

When these three young men heard the decree made by the king, they were sad that the king wanted people to worship this image, but they were not worried because it was not going to change Who they worshiped. They worshiped God and God only and would never bow down to a golden image!

IV THE KING'S DEMAND

Some men who were jealous of the three Hebrew men, went to the king to tell him that these three men who were in charge of some of the king's business would not bow down to the image. The king was furious! He called in the three men and told them that he was going to have the music played and they had to bow down. The men said they would not and even if they were thrown into the furnace, God would deliver them if He chose to, and if not, it did not matter because they still would not bow down to a false god. The king was so angry at them now that he demanded that the furnace be made seven times hotter than normal. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were tied up and thrown into the blazing furnace. It was so hot that the men who threw them in were burned up. The king must have thought, *That will teach someone to not obey my orders!*

V SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABEDNEGO'S DELIVERANCE

- A. The king's surprise
The king sure had a huge surprise waiting for him that day! After Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were thrown into the furnace, the king watched to see them burn up. But to his shock he could see them WALKING AROUND IN THE FIRE! He had NEVER seen such a sight - AND on top of all of that, there were not THREE men in there but FOUR! He could not believe his eyes. He asked, *Didn't we throw in three men all tied up?* They answered the king, *Yes.* The king said, *"Lot, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."* Yes! God had delivered the three Hebrew young men from the fiery flames. They were no longer tied up, but they were walking around in that furnace and with them was the Son of God!
God has promised to be with His children through all troubles and problems that we may have. You may not be able to see Him, but He is there because He promised that He would never leave us!
- B. The Hebrew men's Firefighter Deliverer
When the king saw that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were walking around in the flame. He called to them and had them come out of the furnace. To everyone's amazement. They were unharmed! There was not a single burn mark on them, not a single hair was singed, their clothes did not even smell like smoke! They had been saved from burning in that furnace by the Son of God. When God does something, He does it all the way!

CONCLUSION: It is sometimes so scary to take a stand for Jesus when you know those around you will make fun of you. But Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego took a stand knowing that they could lose their life. Even if God chose to not deliver them, they were still willing to give their lives for God. These men were willing to live AND die for their Saviour. Are you willing to do the same? Will you have the courage to take a stand against wrong when your friends might make fun of you?

Teacher's Tip: Using the fiery furnace as the example, give a clear plan of salvation to your students. Explain that just as Jesus - their Firefighter - protected the young men from the flames of the furnace and rescued them, so Jesus saves us from a terrible place called hell if we will trust Him as our own Saviour. Then, stress to those who are saved the importance of living for the Lord and taking a stand for Him even when it may mean you will stand alone.