

"ANOTHER IN THE FIRE"

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This Week's Symbol is Fire = Hope

(Vs) Psalm 32:7 – "You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance."

(Vs) Psalm 46:1 – "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

(Vs) Psalm 18:35-36 – "You have given me the shield of your salvation, and your right hand supported me, and your gentleness made me great. You gave a wide place for my steps under me, and my feet did not slip."

Recorded in the third chapter of Daniel, the account of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego provides believers today with strong and lasting lessons.

- This story is unique, like many topics within this series, in that this story will resonate differently with people.

"For some, it's literally losing relationships or being ostracized because of their faith. For others, it's not as extreme, but more of a quiet moment where they chose to have their faith shine through in a moment of conviction instead of taking the easy way out." - A.A.

Their response to the king's decree was profound. (Vs) Daniel 3:1-7

- *(Vs) Daniel 3:15-18 – "We will not serve your gods..."* Without question, these are some of the most courageous words ever spoken...
- Even if Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had to suffer a horrible, painful death in a burning oven, they refused to abandon God and worship an idol.
- For their refusal, the penalty for their actions was DEATH.

As believers, we know that God is able to deliver. However, we also know that He does not always do so...

- Romans Ch. 5 tells us that God may allow trials and difficulties in our lives...*(Vs) Romans 5:3-5 - "... Sufferings produce Hope."*

"We may not always understand the purpose of our trials, but God simply asks that we trust Him—even when it is not easy."

Job who endured incredible pain, almost insurmountable agony and suffering, was still able to proclaim...

(Vs) Job 13:15a - "Though He slay me, I will hope in Him; ..."

Then Job adds...

(Vs) Job 13:15b "... yet I will argue my ways to His face."

In the case of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego...

- ... Acknowledgment of God over the world's most powerful king resulted in God's supreme power being revealed to unbelievers.

(Vs) Daniel 3:19-23 - "They were thrown into the fire..."

- We can be astonished by their faith in the one true God, for their response in the moment of trial confirmed three things we can still cling to today:
 1. An unswerving conviction of the God of the Bible.
 2. A confidence in the God who is who He says He is and will do what He says He will do.
 3. A faith that's revealed by a reliance upon the only One who has the power to deliver from evil.

Such faith has been seen innumerable times throughout the centuries by believers who have suffered martyrdom for the Lord.

- Jesus Himself said, *(Vs) Matt. 10:28 - "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell."*

As a result, Nebuchadnezzar was astonished that the fire did not consume them...

- And he was even more amazed when he saw not three, but a fourth person with them... *(Vs) Daniel 3:24-30 - "He was astonished!"*

The Bible Teaches... *(Vs) 2nd Cor. 5:7 - "for we walk by faith, not by sight."*

- The point here is that when we "walk by faith," there may be places we don't want to go.
- But, we can be assured that He is with us even inside the desperation.

(Vs) Matt. 28:20b – “...And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

The Chief Lesson from the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego is that, as Christians, we will never be able to bring the world to Christ by becoming like it.

- Instead, as these three men did...

“We should strive to reveal to the world a higher power, a greater purpose, and a superior morality, than the world in which we live.”

- In this way, if we are put before the fiery furnace, we can reveal the One who can deliver us from it.

“It's like Fight or Flight, but in moments where our faith is tested, it becomes whether we allow our faith to be seen or choose to hide it away, in fear of our physical safety or judgment.” - A.A.

- Let us remember the powerful, yet comforting words, of the apostle Paul...

(Vs) 2nd Cor. 4:16-18 – *“So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.”*

Our greatest hope when experiencing illness, persecution, or pain lies in knowing that this life is not the end—there is life after death.

That is His promise to all those who love and obey Him!

- Knowing that we will have eternal life with God enables us to live above the pain and suffering we endure in this life.