

Deliverance from the Fiery Furnace

Teacher Preparation

1. Study **Lesson 6**, pp. 66–73.
 - Scripture **Daniel 3:1–30**
2. **Visuals** to use in class.
 - Memory Verse Visual 9
 - Teaching Visuals 31–34
3. Have **Focus**, Ls 6 ready to distribute after lesson (1 per student).

Opening Sequence (optional)

Greet teens as they arrive; assistant takes attendance.

Welcome Comments

Prayer Teacher

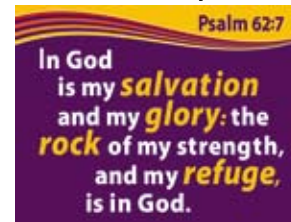
Announcements Notes

Songs *All That I Need* p. 2 #3
Trust and Obey p. 30 #5
God Will Take Care of You p. 16 #7

Prayer (Choose 1 or 2 teens to pray.)

Memory Verse

Class read 3x. Say verse 2x.



Verse Visual 9

Lesson 6

Introduction

As King Nebuchadnezzar thought about his greatness and glory, his heart swelled with pride. Was he not the greatest king on earth? Was he not “the head of gold” in the dream that Daniel interpreted? Consumed with thoughts of his own power and importance, Nebuchadnezzar began to think that he deserved more honor and attention. He wanted the people in his kingdom to know how great a king he really was. He wanted his people to worship him.

So Nebuchadnezzar decided to make a golden image of himself. He brought the most skilled workmen in the kingdom together to fashion the huge statue. As the work progressed, he sent word to all the important dignitaries of his realm to

make preparation to come to the dedication of this spectacular golden image.

Nebuchadnezzar’s image of gold

After many months of work, the great golden image was finally completed. Nebuchadnezzar had the image set up in the plain of Dura, about six miles from Babylon, so it could be seen from a great distance over the surrounding countryside. The tall, golden image sparkled in the blazing sun. It was ninety feet high, about the height of a ten-story building, and nine feet wide; it was, no doubt, the biggest, most impressive statue anyone had ever seen! The king spared no expense in planning an impressive ceremony to dedicate the golden image. Important leaders from many countries traveled great distances to attend the magnificent dedication ceremony.



Card 31

All of the king’s officials were expected to join in the great celebration, including Daniel’s friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Daniel was not present at the great dedication ceremony; maybe he was left in charge of the palace and the great city of Babylon while the king and the other officials attended the dedication ceremony.

It was an exciting occasion for everyone, except those who were true to the true and living God. Guests from near and far arrived in a holiday mood, wearing their finest clothes in honor of the important occasion. Chariots gaily festooned with flowers carried dignitaries down the roads leading to the magnificent statue. As the crowd grew larger and larger, the people eagerly waited for the great ceremony to begin.

King Nebuchadnezzar and his queen took their places on the outdoor throne set up before the statue. All the princes, governors, captains, judges, treasurers, counselors, sheriffs, and rulers of the province waited expectantly. Nebuchadnezzar’s army stood at attention. A great host of musicians prepared their instruments.

The great assembly became quiet when the king's herald appeared: *"To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages,"* he cried, *"that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up. And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."* Perhaps this was the same huge furnace that had been used to melt the gold that overlaid the statue.

If there had been doubt before, the people now knew that their king was commanding them to worship his image.

Suddenly the music of many instruments began to sound across the plain, calling the people to worship the awesome golden statue of Nebuchadnezzar.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refuse to bow

The vast multitude of people fell on their knees and bowed down with their heads to the ground. Only three men remained standing—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These three young Jews who served the true God of heaven and earth could not disobey their God and bow down to an idol made of gold.

With the vast multitude there that day, the king, no doubt, had men assigned to make sure everyone obeyed his command to bow down before his golden image. When they saw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego still standing erect and not bowing down to the image, they immediately rushed to tell the king.

"O king, live for ever," they said breathlessly, *"Thou, O king, has made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, shall fall down and worship the golden image: and whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."* The king nodded in agreement.

"There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and

Abednego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." Nebuchadnezzar became furious when he heard this.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego on trial

He commanded that the three Jewish men be brought before him at once. He could not believe that they had dared to defy him! Suddenly all of the attention was on these three Hebrew men.



Card 32

The king glared in anger as the three approached his throne. *"Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego,"* thundered the king, *"do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?"* Without waiting for their answer, he continued, *"Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?"* The waiting crowd watched in silence; they knew that the king meant what he said.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego stood up straight and spoke respectfully as they answered the king, *"O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful [worried] to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."*

Nebuchadnezzar could not believe his ears! His face contorted with rage. The audacity of these three Jewish men, to defy him like this! He commanded his servants to heat the furnace seven times hotter than it was usually heated. Then he called for his mightiest soldiers and ordered them to bind these Jewish rebels and throw them into the fiery furnace.

The soldiers came forward and bound Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego with ropes. Then, before the eyes of all, the soldiers carried the three men through the midst of the great multitude toward the blazing furnace.

They are thrown into the furnace

As the soldiers slowly approached the furnace and threw the Hebrew men, one by one, into the fire, the flames reached out and burned up the soldiers themselves. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had determined to remain true to God no matter the cost, and it seemed it would cost them their very lives. They turned around and saw the soldiers fall to the ground as the flames burned up their clothes and then their bodies.

God delivers His servants



Card 33

But the three young Jews soon realized that the flames were not burning them at all. In fact, the fire did not singe a hair on their head or a thread in their clothes; only the ropes that bound them were burned. They began to walk around in the fire and to look at one another in

amazement. They could hardly believe it—they were alive and unharmed! Best of all, they were not alone. It seemed that God had sent Someone to be there with them in the furnace. Standing with them in the midst of the fire was a heavenly Person.

Nebuchadnezzar had come down from his throne to see these three disobedient subjects consumed by the fiery flames of the furnace. First he saw the remains of the soldiers lying at the entrance of the furnace, scorched and dead. But as the king looked into the flames, he saw a sight he could hardly believe. Shielding his face from the heat, he exclaimed, *“Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?”*

“True, O king,” his servants answered.

*“Lo, 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.”* As the king said these words, his voice gradually became hushed and filled with awe.

King Nebuchadnezzar had seen correctly. For Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were alive and walking about freely in the midst of the fiery furnace, unbound and unharmed! And there was indeed a fourth Person with them. It was the Son of God Who had come from heaven to be with them in the fiery furnace. Because they had not forsaken their God, He did not forsake them in their time of need. Years before, God had spoken these words through the prophet Isaiah:

“Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.... When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee” (Isa. 43:1–2). God did not let His faithful servants go through the fire alone; He went through the fire with them! Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego found that the safest place in the world for them to be was the place of obedience, because there God was with them. And that is true for any child of God.

The astonished King Nebuchadnezzar came closer to the great furnace. *“Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego,”* he called, *“ye servants of the most high God, come forth.”*

Nebuchadnezzar recognizes the power of the true God

As Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego walked out of that fiery furnace alive, the king and the people gathered around them in great amazement. It was true—their ropes had burned away, but they themselves were not burned at all; not a hair on their head was singed, and their clothing did not even smell of smoke!



Card 34

King Nebuchadnezzar, the most amazed of all, burst out, *“Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who*

hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God."

After seeing God's power in delivering Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fiery furnace, Nebuchadnezzar pronounced: *"I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort."* Everyone knew that this was indeed a miracle of the true God of heaven and earth! Nebuchadnezzar's great golden statue was forgotten as the King and all the dignitaries of the world marveled at the power of the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to deliver His servants from the fiery furnace. When the people went home they were not talking about Nebuchadnezzar's golden image but rather the God of these young Jewish men. The word of this great miracle of the true God traveled all over the known world by these many foreign guests and dignitaries as they returned to their countries, and all the world talked about it for many years.

God received great glory that day because Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were willing to stay true to their God no matter what the consequences might be. The testimony of Daniel and his three friends helped King Nebuchadnezzar take steps toward God. That also happens when you and I are true to God today. People around us begin to see that our God is real, and some may even believe in Him as a result. King Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged the true God, though he was still a long way from personally believing in God as his Savior.

Since the time of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and their miraculous deliverance from the fiery furnace, many of God's servants have been burned at a fiery stake for their testimony for Christ. Their death ushered them into heaven, where a great reward was waiting for them, which is the best deliverance of all. Whether delivered from physical death or not, the Christian who obeys God always wins. The important

thing is for us to be true to our God even as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were. They said, "Our God is able to deliver us from the fiery furnace, but even if He doesn't, we will still be true to Him."

Can you think of ways you can be true to Him?

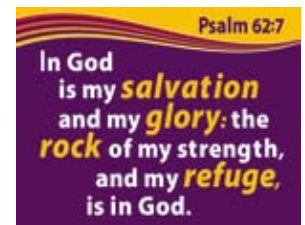
If you are not saved, then you need to tell God that you know you have sinned and ask Him to forgive you; tell Him you believe that Jesus took your punishment when He died at Calvary for the sins of the world, and then ask Him to forgive you and to come into your heart and save you.

Prayer

Review **Psalm 62:7**.

Sing ***Like a River Glorious*** p. 22 #2

Distribute ***Focus 6***.



Verse Visual 9