

Men in the Bible - Men Like You and Me

in a nutshell: The Three Men in the Blazing Furnace

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were, like Daniel, members of a group of highly intelligent young “high potentials” from Israel's elite, who had been brought to Babylon around 600 BC to be trained at the court of King Nebuchadnezzar II – subsequent careers not impossible! This great opportunity of course had its catch, as the food and drink, and especially the customs at the Babylonian court, did not agree with the faith of the Jews. And the enviers only wait for an opportunity of their own to get rid of the unpopular foreigners...

And this is what YOU do:



Read the bible text on page 2. Have a look at page 3 for “Something to Think about”.



Share your inspirations.



Discuss your insights.

- What problem did Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego face?
- Which approach to solve it did they pursue at first?
- What did become of it?
- How do such problems look today?
- Which approaches to solve them would be available today?
- What might become of it?



Prepare your presentation.

Sum up the results of your discussion in a 5-minute-presentation which can be performed as a role play, an interview, a short talk etc. Be creative!

😊 **Have fun!**

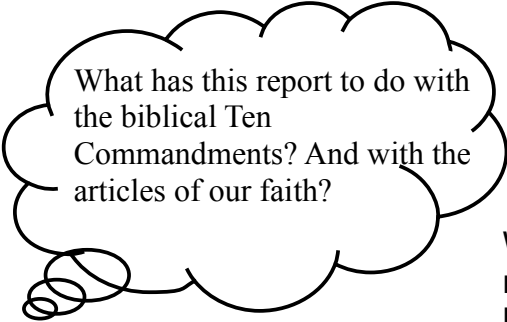
The Three Men in the Blazing Furnace (Daniel 3, 1-30)

1 King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, sixty cubits high and six cubits wide, and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. 2 He then summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, advisors, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the image he had set up. 3 So the satraps, prefects, governors, advisors, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials assembled for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and they stood before it. 4 Then the herald loudly proclaimed, 'Nations and peoples of every language, this is what you are commanded to do: 5 as soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. 6 Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.' 7 Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp and all kinds of music, all the nations and peoples of every language fell down and worshipped the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

8 At this time some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews. 9 They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, 'May the king live for ever! 10 Your Majesty has issued a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music must fall down and worship the image of gold, 11 and that whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace. 12 But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up.' 13 Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king, 14 and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, 'Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? 15 Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?' 16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, 'King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. 17 If the God we serve is able to deliver us, then he will deliver us from the blazing furnace and from Your Majesty's hand. 18 But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.' 19 Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude towards them changed. He ordered the furnace to be heated seven times hotter than usual 20 and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. 21 So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. 22 The king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, 23 and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace.

24 Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisors, 'Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?' They replied, 'Certainly, Your Majesty.' 25 He said, 'Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods.' 26 Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, 'Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!' So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, 27 and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisors crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them. 28 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. 29 Therefore I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way.' 30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

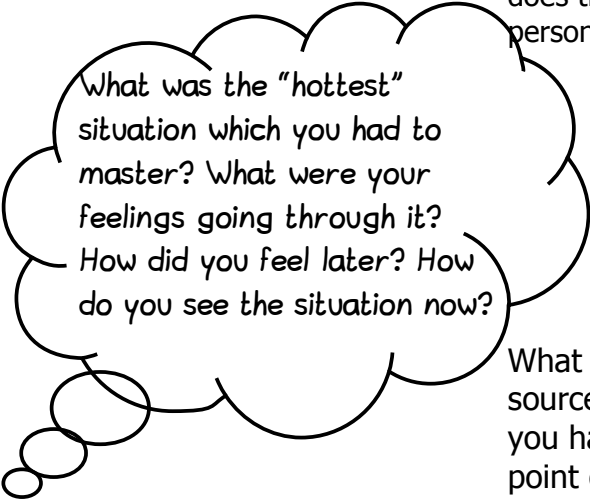
Something to Think About



What has this report to do with the biblical Ten Commandments? And with the articles of our faith?

How does the king learn of Shadrach's, Meshach's and Abednego's violation against his law? Who is probably behind it and why?

Have you ever been a victim of denunciation? Have you ever told on someone? Why?



What was the "hottest" situation which you had to master? What were your feelings going through it? How did you feel later? How do you see the situation now?

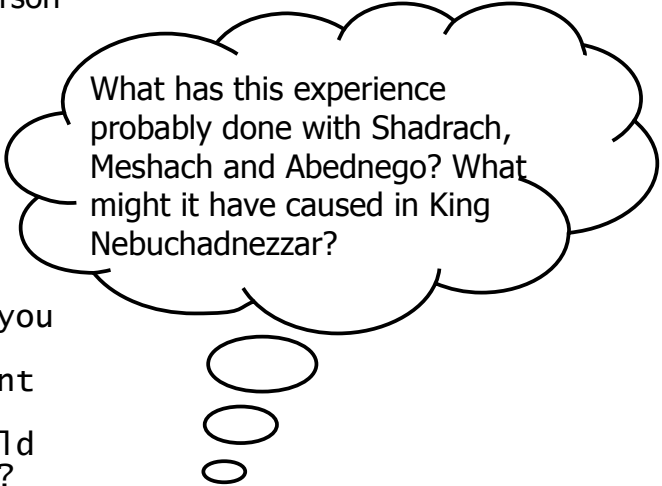
Who might the mysterious fourth person be?

How much would you risk to obey a clear commandment of God? Do you think there could be a compromise?

Is there someone you admire for his uncompromising position for his faith or his views? How does this show with that person?

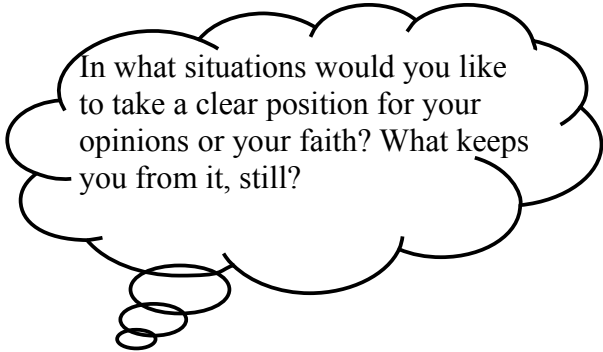
What is your greatest source of strength when you have to defend your point of view?

What is the most cheeky thing the three do? What are they sure of, and what not so much?



What has this experience probably done with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego? What might it have caused in King Nebuchadnezzar?

What do you admire the three most for? What would you need especially at the moment?



In what situations would you like to take a clear position for your opinions or your faith? What keeps you from it, still?

Where do you feel the most heat in your life at the moment? In what kind would you prefer God's assistance?