

The Fiery Furnace

By: Clay Barnes

All of us, at one time or another, have faced a formidable foe or gone up against something that seemed like insurmountable odds. Our story revolves around a golden statue that king Nebuchadnezzar built that was ninety feet tall and 9 feet wide. The King began feeling quite pompous, and ordered people of all nations and languages when they heard the decree in Daniel 3:5, ***“the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes, and other musical instruments, bow to the ground to worship King Nebuchadnezzar's gold statue. 6. Anyone who refuses to obey will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.”*** Ah, intimidation! However, as we see in Daniel 3:12, certain people did not do that. ***“But there are some Jews – Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego – whom you have put in charge of the province of Babylon. They pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They refuse to serve your gods and do not worship the gold statue you have set up.”*** WOW!!!!!! Can you imagine that? What would happen if we stood up to our friends or bosses at work when it was suggested that we cook the books or take a little toke on a joint of marijuana? We would be given a guilt trip, laughed at and snubbed for not doing what we were pressured to do. What happens next in our story is something that took a lot more courage to do than we are faced with. Let's pick up in verse 14. ***Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you refuse to serve my gods or to worship the gold statue I have set up? 15 I***

will give you one more chance to bow down and worship the statue I have made when you hear the sound of the musical instruments. But if you refuse, you will be thrown immediately into the blazing furnace. And then what god will be able to rescue you from my power?" Well Nebuchadnezzar tries to brush it aside, and act like it's a mistake or they didn't understand so in verses 15-17. *I will give you one more chance to bow down and worship the statue I have made when you hear the sound of the musical instruments. But if you refuse, you will be thrown immediately into the blazing furnace. And then what god will be able to rescue you from my power?"* Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied, *"O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you. 17 If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty. 18 But even if he doesn't, we want to make it clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up."* WOW! Talk about living dangerously. Something tells me that their time is up since they have made the King furious, by not respecting his authority, and making him look bad in front of everybody. Or is it? Just when you think this story can't get any better, it does! Check out what happens next! Well by this point the King thinks he's about to get in a good dose of retaliation. He is shocked once more. Look what happens. Look at verses 24-26. *But suddenly, Nebuchadnezzar jumped up in amazement and exclaimed to his advisers, "Didn't we tie up three men and throw them into the furnace?"*

“Yes, Your Majesty, we certainly did,” they replied.

25 “Look!” Nebuchadnezzar shouted. “I see four men, unbound, walking around in the fire unharmed! And the fourth looks like a god!”

26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came as close as he could to the door of the flaming furnace and shouted: “Sharach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!” Well after this the King, I'm sure, knows that someone is mightier than he. He's right! It is our saviour Jesus Christ. He is second to none, and should be first in our lives. *Acts 4:12* says *“There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved.”* In *Mark 3:24* Jesus makes it plain *“A kingdom divided by civil war will collapse.”* We can't be all things to all people. Jesus expects our undivided loyalty if we are to live with him forever. *Please read Luke 16:13.*