

Kids' Chronicle

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BY JOE SARNICOLA

God saves three men in the furnace

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, ordered his engineers and metalsmiths to build an idol of the finest gold available. When finished, it stood more than 90 feet high and was nine feet wide at the base. The only place large enough to build the idol was on the field of Dura, just outside the city.

A huge celebration was planned for the unveiling of the idol. All of the governors, judges and other officials of Babylon were dressed in their finest robes, and every man, woman and child of the kingdom had been commanded to attend — by order of the king.

One of the royal heralds unrolled a scroll and read: "Citizens of Babylon, listen to the words of King Nebuchadnezzar. Whenever you hear the official song played on the trumpet, flute or any other instrument, you must kneel immediately and worship the golden idol. Whoever fails to do so will be thrown into the furnace of fire."

From that day on, whenever the official song was played, everyone knelt to worship the idol.

One day, several governors came before the king and told him, "Your Majesty, there are three other governors who refuse to bow down to your golden idol."

The king was furious. "What are their names?" he demanded.

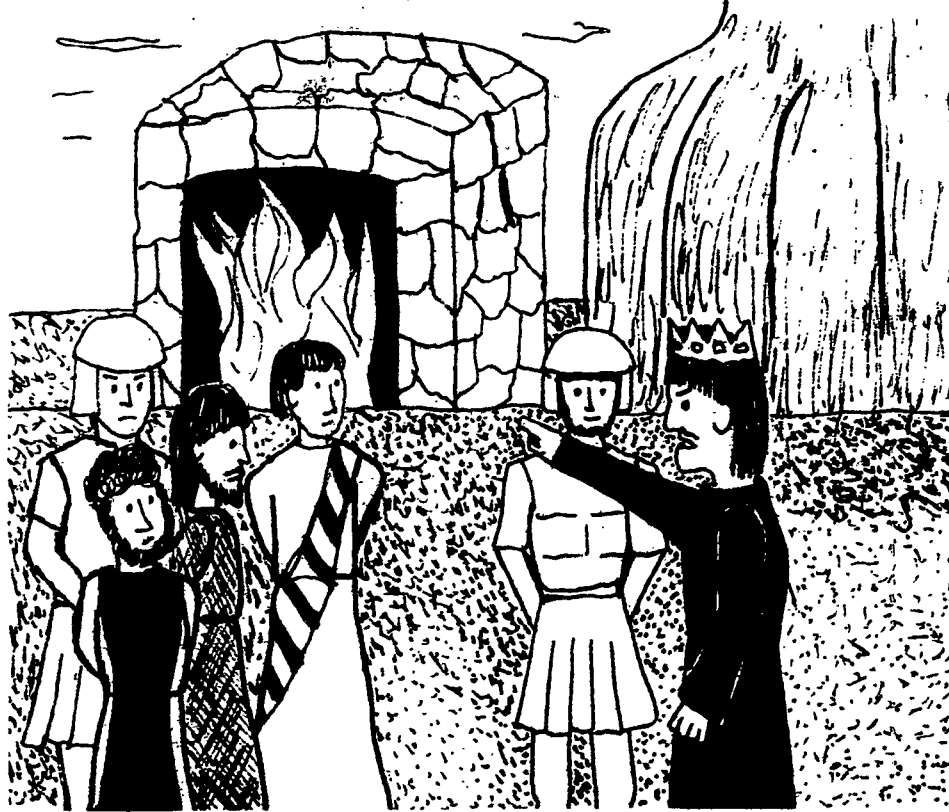
"Shadrach, Mesach and Abednego," one of the governors replied.

"Bring them before me," the king ordered his soldiers.

When the soldiers delivered the three governors to the palace, the king questioned them. "Shadrach, Mesach and Abednego, I have heard that you do not kneel and worship my golden idol."

"That is true, my king," Shadrach answered.

Nebuchadnezzar tried to hold back his anger. "I will give you one more chance," he said. "I will have my musicians play and if you will worship my idol, I will forgive you. But if you do not, I will have no choice but to cast you into the fire."



Illustrations by Kathy Welsh

"King Nebuchadnezzar," Mesach answered, "we do not need to defend our actions. If you throw us into your furnace, the God we serve is able to protect us from the fires and rescue us. But even if he does not, we will never worship the golden idol you have built."

The king became more angry than he had ever been in his life. "Heat the fire seven times hotter," he commanded his servants. "Then tie up these men and throw them in."

The soldiers tied the hands of Shadrach, Mesach and Abednego, but the fire was so intense that the soldiers fell dead from the heat as they threw the three men into the furnace.

King Nebuchadnezzar peered into the flames, then stood in amazement. He turned to one of his advisers and asked, "Were not three men thrown into the fire?"

"Yes, your Majesty," the adviser replied.

"But now I see four men," the king said. "They are walking in the

fire unharmed, and one man looks as if he could be a son of the gods!"

The king approached the furnace and called out: "Servants of the most high God, come out of the fire."

At this, Shadrach, Mesach and Abednego stepped out of the flames. Soldiers and officials circled around them but could not see any burns or smell any smoke on the three men's clothing.

"Praise and honor to the God of these men," declared the king. "They trusted their God and were willing to die rather than to worship any other god. This, indeed, must be the one true God. No other god could perform such a miracle!"

Q & A

Read more about it: Daniel 3.

Questions: 1. Why did the king order Shadrach, Mesach and Abednego to be thrown into the furnace?

2. Have you ever been in a situation in which you had to stand up for your faith?

The Bible Times

BABYLON, 535 B.C. — Despite months of planning and construction, King Nebuchadnezzar last week ordered the destruction of the golden idol, which was unveiled only a short time ago.

The king also decreed that the god worshiped by three of his governors is "the one, true God."

Previously, the king had ordered all citizens to kneel and worship his idol whenever the national anthem was played, or face death in a fiery furnace.

According to one royal adviser, three governors — Shadrach, Mesach and Abednego — had refused to kneel before the idol. The king ordered the three to be thrown into the furnace, the adviser said. Three palace guards died while carrying out the king's order.

Eyewitnesses report that the king changed his mind within minutes, ordering the three governors — and a fourth man whose identity is unknown — to come out of the fire.

Witnesses said the three governors emerged from the flames unharmed. No information was available on how the fourth man came to be in the furnace, or where he went after the incident.

King Solomon's Wisdom



"Wealth is worthless in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death."

Proverbs 11:4

Bible Trivia

Who recommended that Shadrach, Mesach and Abednego be appointed governors of Babylon?

Send answers to *Catholic Courier Bible Trivia*, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624. Please include your name and address with your entry.

All entries must be received by May 13, 1993. The winner will receive a gift.

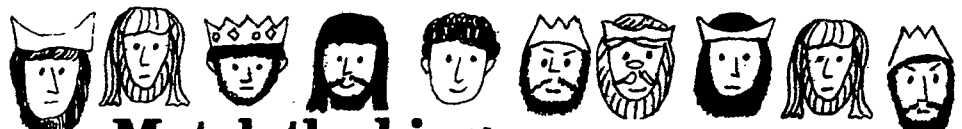
Last month's winner was Katie McNamara, who correctly named Zebedee as the father of brothers James and John.

Talking to God

Dear Lord,
Please stay near me always, so when my faith as a Christian is tested, I will not disappoint you. I want you to be proud of me.

"My servants will sing out of the joy of their hearts ... and I will take delight in my people."

Isaiah 65:14, 19



Match the kings

For each description, draw a line to the correct king. Answers on page 12.

- I was the first king of Israel. (1 Samuel 9)
- I was king when Jesus was born. (Matt. 2)
- I fed Daniel to the lions. (Daniel 6)
- I was known as the wise king. (1 Kings 3)
- I defeated Goliath. (1 Samuel 17)
- I made a giant golden idol. (Daniel 3)
- I was called "king of the Jews." (Matt. 27)

- Jesus
David
Solomon
Darius
Nebuchadnezzar
Saul
Herod

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