

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Daniel 3:14-18.**
- B. This is not a children's story. If we stopped studying about the virtues of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego as children we have overlooked some powerful lessons to be learned.
- C. Let us read the story and draw four important lessons from it.

I. THE STORY OF SHADRACH, MESHACH, & ABED-NEGO.

- A. See Daniel 3:1-7. The king's decree.
- B. See Daniel 3:8-12. The refusal to bow by S,M&A.
- C. See Daniel 3:13-15. Nebuchadnezzar orders S,M&A to bow before the image.
- D. See Daniel 3:16-18. S,M&A give their reply.
- E. See Daniel 3:19-25. The fiery furnace.
- F. See Daniel 3:26-30. Nebuchadnezzar orders all to serve God; S,M&A prosper.

II. THE REPLY TO THE KING (LESSONS FROM THE STORY).

- A. **First, their reputation was enough of an answer** (Dan. 3:16).
Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter."
 - 1. Is our reputation enough? (2Cor. 2:14-16).
But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. **15** For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; **16** to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?
 - 2. Even a bad reputation can be used for good when one changes (1Th. 1:6-8).
You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, **7** so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. **8** For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything.
 - 3. Building a good reputation comes by hard, consistent work.
- B. **Second, God will deliver the faithful out of the hand of calamity** (Dan. 3:17).
"If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king."
 - 1. It is better to be in the fire with God than out of the fire without Him! (1Cor. 10:13).
No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.
 - 2. Job was richer after his trials than he was before them (Job 42:10, 12).
And the LORD restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends, and the LORD increased all that Job had twofold. ...**12** And the LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning, and he had 14,000 sheep, and 6,000 camels, and 1,000 yoke of oxen, and 1,000 female donkeys.
 - 3. God's power is made perfect in weakness (2Cor. 12:9).
And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.
- C. **Third, God will be glorified and His servants will prosper** (Dan. 3:29).
"Therefore, I make a decree that any people, nation or tongue that speaks anything offensive against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego shall be torn limb from limb and their houses reduced to a rubbish heap, inasmuch as there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way."
 - 1. With God all obstacles are moveable (Mt. 6:33).
"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you."
 - 2. We need to see our problems as opportunities for good.

D. The most important lesson of the story:

fourth, **we are to serve God no matter what** (Dan. 3:18).

“But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”

1. Never be a fair-weather friend (saint) of Jesus.

2. Job, Jesus, and Paul all had great problems, but all still served.

3. See Rom. 8:28.

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

4. Remember God’s providence is always working.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

A. Four lessons from this story are:

1. We need to have a reputation that is good.

2. God will deliver the faithful from calamity.

3. God will always be glorified and His servants will prosper.

4. We must have the attitude that we will serve God no matter what.

B. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.