

## Daniel 3

### A raging king and a raging furnace



The “gallery of the faithful” in Hebrews 11:33-34 includes a mention of the “successful” heroes of faith: these three men “*quenched* the power of fire”. But there is more to this story than that single fact.

#### ➤ **The telling of the story**

Note the repeated phrases and lists here. It all feels almost surreal, until we finally realise, only in v12, that we have met the three main characters before.

The main showdown is not the *burning fiery furnace*, but the response of these men to the immense pressure of v15, and Nebuchadnezzar's scornful “who is the god ...?”

#### ➤ **Setting the scene (1)**

Where might the king have got this idea from?

What difference do you notice between this image, and the one he had previously dreamed of (2:31-35)?

Why the changes? What does this suggest about the king?

#### ➤ **The accusation (2-13)**

The king's plans seem to be running smoothly. But why could we perhaps have foreseen some trouble coming? What should the Jewish people in Babylonia have considered (Exodus 20:5)?

So are “the Jews” (8) not just the “certain Jews” later (12) named and accused? Why pick on these three? And why deliberately enrage the king by the choice of words?

#### ➤ **The trial (14-18)**

Nebuchadnezzar could have just pronounced sentence, instead of making enquiry. Why the delay?

What do Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego say about “who is the God ...?” and what do they demonstrate by their firm stand?

Prayer nowadays: are we as comfortable as them with a God who *can*, but might not, intervene? Are we inclined to “believe *for*” a result, instead of believing *in* the God of great grace?

#### ➤ **Surprise!! (19-30)**

What surprises should hit us in this conclusion of the story?