

Daniel 3:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

Analysis

The phrase 'these three men...fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace' represents complete human helplessness and apparent abandonment to destruction. 'Fell down bound' emphasizes their inability to save themselves. 'Midst of the burning fiery furnace' indicates total immersion in deadly circumstances. From human perspective, this is the end—no escape, no human help possible. Yet this is precisely where divine deliverance begins. God allows His servants to experience complete extremity before intervention, demonstrating that salvation comes entirely from Him. Their fall into the fire parallels believers' experiences of overwhelming trials where only divine intervention can deliver.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern furnaces for metalworking or brick-firing consisted of chambers with openings for inserting materials and stoking fires. The furnace's extreme heat (deliberately increased, v. 19) would normally cause instant death. Execution by burning was designed to be public and terrifying, maximizing deterrent effect. The three men's apparent doom seemed assured—bound, thrown into superheated furnace, with the king's most powerful soldiers enforcing the execution. Human resources were exhausted; only God could save.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. Why does God often allow His servants to experience complete extremity before delivering them?
2. How does the three men's total helplessness demonstrate that salvation is entirely God's work rather than human cooperation?

Interlinear Text

וְגִבֹּרֵי אֱלֹהִים	וְגִבֹּרֵי אֱלֹהִים	וְגִבֹּרֵי אֱלֹהִים	וְגִבֹּרֵי אֱלֹהִים	וְגִבֹּרֵי אֱלֹהִים	וְגִבֹּרֵי אֱלֹהִים	וְגִבֹּרֵי אֱלֹהִים
men	And these	three	Shadrach	Meshach	H0	and Abednego
H1400	H479	H8532	H7715	H4336		H5665
נָפַל לְ	לְ	אֶתֹן	נוֹרָא	יְקִדָּתָא	מְכַפְּתִין:	
fell down	into the midst	furnace	fiery	of the burning	bound	
H5308	H1459	H861	H5135	H3345	H3729	

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 38:6 (Parallel theme): Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the son of Hammelech, that was in the court of the prison: and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire.

Psalms 34:19 (Parallel theme): Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.