

Daniel 3:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, 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

אֲלֹהִים	וְיָדָה	מִיְשָׁה	שָׁדָךְ	מֵתָה	וְאֶלְעָגָדָה	וְאֶבֶןָגָדָה
men H1400	And these H479	three H8532	Shadrach H7715	Meshach H4336	and H0	Abednego H5665
לְגֹרָנִים	אַתָּה	אַתָּה	אַתָּה	אַתָּה	אַתָּה	מִכְפְּתִין:
fell down H5308	into the midst H1459	furnace H861	fiery H5135	of the burning H3345	bound 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.