

Daniel 3:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire.

Analysis

Nebuchadnezzar's address—'Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth'—represents stunning transformation. Earlier he challenged 'who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?' (v. 15); now he acknowledges 'the most high God.' Using their Babylonian names shows he still thinks in pagan categories, but calling them 'servants of the most high God' recognizes superior divine authority. The command 'come forth' implies the furnace door is opened and they can exit—previously instruments of execution, now witnessing deliverance. This public acknowledgment before assembled officials becomes powerful testimony to God's supremacy.

Historical Context

The title 'most high God' (Aramaic: elaha illaya) was used in ancient Near East to acknowledge supreme deity while not necessarily embracing monotheism. Nebuchadnezzar could be placing Yahweh at the head of his pantheon rather than recognizing Him as the only God. Yet this public acknowledgment before Babylon's entire bureaucracy gave testimony to Yahweh's power. Ancient Near Eastern religion readily incorporated new powerful deities into existing pantheons—the shock here is that exclusive monotheism won't allow such accommodation.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does God use dramatic deliverances to force acknowledgment of His supremacy even from hostile authorities?
2. What is the difference between acknowledging God as 'most high' versus worshiping Him exclusively as the only true God?

Interlinear Text

נוֹךְ אָתָּה לִתְבָּעַ נְבוּכָדְנָצָר בְּלִבְנָה בְּאָדָם!

Then came near Nebuchadnezzar to the mouth furnace fiery

H116 H7127 H5020 H8651 H861 H5135

תְּגִיְּתָא מִשְׁבָּד מִשְׁמָר שְׁדָךְ לְעֵינָה שְׁדָךְ לְעֵינָה וְאֶתְמָר וְאֶתְמָר

of the burning and spake and said Shadrach Meshach and Abednego

H3345 H6032 H560 H7715 H4336 H0 H5665

בְּאָדָם אֶתְתָּה תְּפִלְךְ אָדָם עָלָיו אָלָה אֱלֹהִים עָבֵד וְהִ

ye servants God of the most high came forth and come Then

H5649 H1768 H426 H5943 H5312 H858 H116

נוֹךְ אָתָּה מִן תְּגִיְּתָא שְׁדָךְ לְעֵינָה שְׁדָךְ לְעֵינָה תְּפִלְךְ אָדָם

came forth Shadrach Meshach and Abednego of the midst fiery

H5312 H7715 H4336 H0 H5665 H4481 H1459 H5135

Additional Cross-References

Daniel 3:17 (References God): If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

Daniel 4:2 (References God): I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me.

Revelation 19:5 (References God): And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.

Isaiah 52:12 (References God): For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rereward.

Acts 16:17 (References God): The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.

Galatians 1:10 (References God): For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

Joshua 4:10 (Parallel theme): For the priests which bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan, until every thing was finished that the LORD commanded Joshua to speak unto the people, according to all that Moses commanded Joshua: and the people hasted and passed over.

Joshua 3:17 (Parallel theme): And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan.

Daniel 2:47 (References God): The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret.