

Daniel 3:17

“The Heat is On”

Baptism of our Lord

January 12, 2020

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

Pastor Hartwig

Grace, mercy, and peace from God, our Heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ –

**[Introduction]**

In the 1980s Beverly Hills Cop was a hit,  
and the movie series produced many musical hits –  
One of which was “The heat is on.”

In Daniel 3, the heat is on.

It is sweltering and sizzling, suffocating and sticky.

It’s a certain scorcher!

The sun is out, the temperature is up, and sweat is rolling down.

Just ask Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Don’t know them?

Well, maybe you know them by their VeggieTales names: Shack, Rack, and Benny.

Some affectionately call them “Your Shack, My Shack, and a Bungalow.”

But in Daniel 3, they’re called by their Babylonian names

—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Daniel 3:17 says:

***“If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us.”***

**[The Heat is On]**

It is the sixth century BC.

These three Hebrews are standing on the plain of Dura in Babylon.

Three in the midst of 300,000.

And these three Hebrews had better blend in, bow down, and sell out.

King Nebuchadnezzar has made a golden statue

that is twelve feet wide, 125 feet high, and he issued this decree:

***“At the sound of music everybody must bow down and worship my statue  
or else, in the same hour, they will know, firsthand, that the heat is on!”***

For Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego the heat was on!

And when the heat is on! Well we are sometimes, all too often, willing to bend.

We know. Oh, we know!

When the heat is on us and we are three in the midst of the 300,000 . . .  
when we are called to be unashamed of the Gospel . . .  
when we are called to resist conforming to this present evil age . . .  
when we are called to confess the Son of Man before men  
with the promise that he will then confess us before the Father in heaven . . .  
all too often we shrink back like cowards  
craving the cool breeze of conformity,  
coveting the comfortable calm of compromise.

There is a part of us that soaks up the “air-conditioned Christian life”  
where there is no sweat, no perspiration, and plenty of Coke Zero to go around!

All too often we say, or at least think:

“It won’t hurt if I do it just this once. Besides, no one will know.”

[*God Delivers*]

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are ready to take the heat:

***“If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us.”***

At this point,

it is as though our heroes are hanging from a crumbling cliff,  
looking below to ravenous sharks,  
with a ticking time bomb strapped to their bodies!

It is that bad because Nebuchadnezzar, filled with rage,  
orders the furnace to be heated seven times hotter.

This death chamber even has a window on the side  
just so spectators can watch the baking, the broiling, and the burning  
when the heat is on!

Refusing to blend in, bow down, or sell out,  
Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are tied up and thrown into  
the blazing heat.

And get this:  
the fire is so hot that it kills the men who take them up to the furnace!

Now, what happens when three stand up against 300,000?

What happens when the baptized take a stand  
and turn neither to the right nor to the left?  
What happens when believers say, “Enough is enough! I will not sell out!”

Let’s allow Nebuchadnezzar to answer that for us, Dan 3:25:

***“Look! I see four men walking around in the fire,  
unbound and unharmed, and the fourth one looks like a Son of God.”***

There is always a fourth man in the furnace. Always!

He is the same Son of God, Son of Man, in Daniel 7:  
coming with the clouds of heaven,  
approaching the Ancient of Days,  
and led into his presence.

He is given authority, glory, and sovereign power;  
all peoples, nations, and languages worship him.

Daniel describes this same Son of God in chapter 12,  
who writes our names in his book,  
who will completely deliver us on the Last Day  
when our bodies awaken from the dust and  
enter into the fullness of everlasting life—the paradise of God!

For we have been baptized into to his death.

***“We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as  
Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in  
newness of life”*** (Romans 6:4)

This is true every time a child of God is baptized at this font!

The result from Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego’s bold stand?

The hair on their head isn’t singed,  
their clothing is unaffected,  
and they don’t even smell like smoke!

The Son of God’s protection is so thorough, so complete, so loving,  
they don’t even smell like smoke!

***[God Delivers for You]***

This same Son of God enters the furnace once again  
—only this time it is one against the world.

And the heat is on.

It is sweltering and sizzling, suffocating and sticky.

It is a certain scorcher for sure.

The Palestinian sun is out,

the temperature is up,

and sweat is rolling down his bleeding body.

It is as hot as hell, literally,

because Jesus Christ is taking the heat for all your sin and mine.

His cracked lips and parched throat cries out: “I thirst!”

Three days later, Jesus came out of the fire alive, forever unbound, to make certain this promise in Isaiah 43: ***“When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze; for I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior”*** (Is 43:2–3).

[***Conclusion***]

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are bold confessors.

They not only say, “If we are thrown into the furnace, God is able to save us,”

but, as true theologians of the cross, they also make this confession in Dan 3:18:

***“But even if God does not save us now, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship your image of gold.”***

Today, God is empowering us to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,

that there is new life in him,

freedom in salvation in Christ crucified.

In the name of Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit,

we refuse to blend in, bow down, or sell out

to any person, ideology, philosophy, movement, or government

that would rob us of this Gospel!

God help us to take our stand when the heat is on. Amen.

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As followers of Christ, “Keep loving one another earnestly

And show hospitality to one another without grumbling.” AMEN! (1 Pt 4:8-9)

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