

The Foundation

by Linville Dunaway, Corinth Christian church

What is the most important thing that you can think of about Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah? Of course Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah are better known as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Most would think of Daniel being in the lion's den, and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego as being in the fiery furnace. But really, was this the most important events in their lives? I think that there was another important event that allowed these, more famous, events to happen. Yes, without it, the lion's den and the furnace wouldn't have taken place. I'm referring to a decision, or foundation, on which these other happenings were built. It took place in Daniel chapter one when these four young Hebrew captives decided that they would not defile themselves with the food and drink of the Babylonians. They wanted to obey God and to keep his laws even in a foreign country. Among the many taken captive by the Babylonians we only read of the four who refused to just "go-along" with everyone else. It is easy to see that God blessed them above the rest because of their faith and trust in him. (Dan.1:9 and 17.)

It would have been easier to conform to the instructions given by their captors than to draw attention to oneself by choosing a different way. Yet, to serve God means to walk his path and not to blindly follow along with the world. Why do we know of Daniel and his three friends, but not the names of the other Hebrews in Babylon? The answer is simple - these four feared God more than they did the Babylonians. It was the laws of God that they chose to follow instead of the commands of the king. Obedience brought about by faith resulted in Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego being given favor by the Babylonians and wisdom from God.

This faith in, and obedience to, God allowed them to face the persecution of the Babylonians without flinching, or doubting. In both instances, the furnace and the lion's den, these servants of God knew the dangers, but faced them in faith. In **Daniel 3: 17-18** Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego said, "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. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." They're saying that God can deliver them, but they don't know if he will chose to, or not. Either way they make it

known that they will stay true to God.

If you chose a destination and know the route then you know the way to go. When you come to an intersection you don't have to stop and figure out the path to go, you already know. The same with believers like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, or any Christian, when faced with a temptation, we know the right way to go. Trusting the Lord lays the foundation that helps us to do the right thing. This won't happen to the lukewarm person who offers a lip-service faith.

The faith of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, caused them to face danger, but that same faith and obedience to God brought them safely out of the trials. When faced with the choice of compromising their faith, or obeying God their choice was already made. To serve God is not just to say the words, but to do what God has said to do. **Luke 6:47-48**, "Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: 48. He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock." If we have a strong foundation of faith in God and are committed to him we will be blessed.

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DID JESUS REALLY CURSE THE FIG TREE ?

IT IS RECORDED THAT JESUS, ON HIS WAY FROM BETHANY TO JERUSALEM, AND BEING HUNGRY, STOPPED TO PICK FRUIT FROM A FIG TREE (MARK 11:12-14). BUT, ALTHOUGH THE TREE WAS IN LEAF, THERE WERE NO FIGS AND JESUS SAID, HEREAFTER, NO MAN WOULD EVER EAT FRUIT FROM THAT TREE!

SOME AUTHORITIES SAY JESUS, FOLLOWING THE ORIENTAL CUSTOM OF HOLY MEN, PUT A CURSE ON THE TREE, FROM DISAPPOINTMENT AT NOT FINDING FRUIT. OTHER AUTHORITIES STATE THAT, BECAUSE THE TREE WAS IN LEAF AND THEREFORE SHOULD HAVE HAD FIGS, JESUS WAS POINTING OUT THAT, WHEN ONE OUTWARDLY SHOWS A GOOD CHARACTER WITHOUT THE FRUITS THEREOF, HE IS A HYPOCRITE, OF NO VALUE TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD, BUT....



...STILL FURTHER AUTHORITIES MAINTAIN THAT, FOR JESUS TO CONDEMN A TREE, FOR NOT GIVING FRUIT, DOES NOT SEEM COMPATIBLE WITH HIS GENTLE LOVING NATURE AND, SINCE JESUS WAS AT JERUSALEM FOR THE PASSOVER, THIS PLACES THE TIME OF YEAR AT EARLY APRIL WHEN THE FIG TREE HAS JUST BEGUN TO LEAF AND GROW FIGS, WHICH THEN MATURE IN LATE JUNE... THUS, ALL JESUS MERELY DID, WAS REMARK THAT, BECAUSE THE TREE HAD ALREADY BEGUN GROWING LEAVES, BUT NO FRUIT, IT WAS BARREN, AND NO ONE WOULD HARVEST FIGS FROM IT WHEN THE FRUIT SEASON ARRIVED!



EACH OF THESE THEORIES SEEM TO HAVE VALID POINTS, SO IT REMAINS FOR THE STUDENT TO MAKE HIS OWN CHOICE - WHICH DO YOU THINK ?

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