# Lesson 5 Daniel 3:24-90 Fiery Furnace

(Faith) This section of Daniel was written in Greek, so it was excluded from the Jerusalem Canon of the Old Testament, but kept in the Alexandrian Canon, the Septuagint, and, of course, the Catholic Canon of Sacred Scripture. It is known as the prayer of Prayer of Azariah. Azariah was his Hebrew name, Abednego was the name given to him by his Babylonian captors. The first section of the prayer offered from within the fiery furnace is a penitential rite, verses 24-37, acknowledging the culpability of the people for their plight in Babylon. The second section of the prayer, verses 38-45, is a sacrificial offering of themselves for the expiation of the sins of Israel and the glory of God. A large portion of the prayer, verses 52-87 takes the form of a litany with the repeated response, “Bless the Lord; praise and exalt him above all forever.” The last section of the prayer, verses 88-90, is praise and thanksgiving to God for their salvation.   
What similarities do you see in this prayer to the Mass and other forms of worship in the Church today?

Daniel 3:28-29

28 You have executed proper judgments in all that you have brought upon us   
 and upon Jerusalem, the holy city of our ancestors.   
 By a proper judgment you have done all this because of our sins;

29 For we have sinned and transgressed by departing from you,

and we have done every kind of evil.

Daniel 3:40-42

40 So let our sacrifice be in your presence today and find favor before you;  
 for those who trust in you cannot be put to shame.

41 And now we follow you with our whole heart,  
we fear you and we seek your face.

Do not put us to shame,

42 but deal with us in your kindness and great mercy.

Daniel 3:88-90

88 For he has delivered us from Sheol [abode of the dead], and saved us from the power of death;   
 He has freed us from the raging flame and delivered us from the fire.

89 Give thanks to the Lord, who is good, whose mercy endures forever.

90 Bless the God of gods, all you who fear the Lord;  
 praise and give thanks, for his mercy endures forever.”

(Hope) Then, the angel of the Lord, or the Lord, Jesus Christ, the Savior, saved them from the fiery flames and preserved them from death. How does this passage reflect the words of the Catechism in describing the universal effect of the sacrifice of Jesus?

Daniel 3:49-50

49 But the angel of the Lord went down into the furnace with Azariah and his companions,  
 drove the fiery flames out of the furnace,

50 and made the inside of the furnace as though a dew-laden breeze were blowing through it.   
 The fire in no way touched them or caused them pain or harm.

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At the end of the parable of the lost sheep Jesus recalled that God's love excludes no one: "So it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish." He affirms that he came "to give his life as a ransom for many"; this last term is not restrictive, but contrasts the whole of humanity with the unique person of the redeemer who hands himself over to save us. The Church, following the apostles, teaches that Christ died for all men without exception: "  
 There is not, never has been, and never will be a single human being for whom Christ did not suffer."

(Love) Why does our Christian love often require you to sacrifice yourself, for example your comfort, your time, and our possessions for the sake of others, particularly their faith?

Daniel 3:17-18

17 If our God, whom we serve, can save us from the white-hot furnace and from your hands, O king,   
 may he save us!

18 But even if he will not, you should know, O king,   
 that we will not serve your god or worship the golden statue which you set up.”

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The Christian is not to "be ashamed of testifying to our Lord" (2 Tim 1:8) in deed and word. Martyrdom is the supreme witness given to the truth of the faith.

2 Maccabees 6:23-25

23 But he made up his mind in a noble manner, worthy of his years, the dignity of his advanced age,   
 the merited distinction of his gray hair, and of the admirable life he had lived from childhood;   
 and so he declared that above all he would be loyal to the holy laws given by God.   
He told them to send him at once to the abode of the dead, explaining:

24 "At our age it would be unbecoming to make such a pretense;   
 many young men would think the ninety-year-old Eleazar had gone over to an alien religion.

25 Should I thus dissimulate for the sake of a brief moment of life,   
 they would be led astray by me, while I would bring shame and dishonor on my old age.

Matthew 18:6; Mark 9:42; Luke 17:2

"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.