[Narrator] Today's story is from the second chapter of the old testament book of Daniel. The story is about three friends, and how God took care of them, even when things were very scary. The three friends are from Jerusalem where they worshiped God in the temple. The temple, and the city of Jerusalem were captured and destroyed by the Babylonians, and our three friends were captured and forced to move to Babylon. It's been very hard for them, but God has taken care of them. Let's meet them and the rest of the people in our story.

First there are the three friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Next there is the king of Babylon whose name is Nebuchadnezzar. The king's royal Harold, a rescuing angel, a very, very, very hot and Fiery furnace, and the royal Babylonian orchestra, that's all of us.

[scene] Three friends are leaving for work. They each have a loaded book bag to carry.

[Shadrach] I guess that if I were being honest I'd say that I really don't always like getting up so early in the morning, but it's a lot better than I expected when the Babylonian soldiers told me to get what I could carry together because I was leaving Jerusalem and going to Babylon.

[Meshach] Yes, that was frightening. I thought I'd be digging a ditch somewhere, assuming that I was still alive that is. After all, we were slaves and the Babylonians don't treat slaves well at all.

[Abednego] I know that we'd all like to be back in Jerusalem, or the Jerusalem that we used to live in but it's been destroyed. You know, when I think about it I have to say that God has taken care of us really well. We work in the government, we even get some respect once in awhile and it could be so much worse. Actually, for three Hebrews' who didn't get here that long ago it is very good.

[Shadrach] Yes, I thank God for the opportunities I've been given and I just hope that I can use what I've been given to help our people.

[Shadrach] I still don't really like getting up this early though.

[Abednego] Remember what Daniel told us about fitting in here in Babylon.

[All three] "you've got to be at least as good as the best, and better than the rest"

[Narrator] Working very hard and trying to fit in had worked well for the three friends. Although many people didn't like them, they felt at least respected by some, including the king Nebuchadnezzar. All of that was going to be tested though as we will see.

[Scene] Harold walks on.

[Harold] Now hear this!!!! Tomorrow morning, at sun rise, everyone must be at the new statue of our great king the illustrious and most powerful Nebuchadnezzar. You will gather, and when the royal orchestra plays you will bow down and worship the kings' statue. Anyone who is not at this event, or who does not bow down will be thrown into a fiery furnace. This is the command of the King. That is all

[Narrator] The three friends were very worried and talked about what they should do as they walked home together late that night.

[Meshach] Do you think that anyone would notice if we didn't show up tomorrow?

[Shadrach] Yes, of course they would. A lot of people don't like us and will be watching for us to do something stupid like not being there, or even worse to worship the statue of the king. We can respect the king, but only worship God and if that means that we get punished, well, God will take care of us.

[Abednego] Let's stay up tonight and pray together and remember how God has taken care of us up until now. I'm sure that God will take care of us again, but that doesn't mean I'm not afraid.

[Narrator] The next day went just like the king had planned. When the royal Babylonian Orchestra played [Everyone makes noise] All of the people bowed down to the huge statue of king Nebuchadnezzar, everyone but Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. The king was not happy.

[Nebuchadnezzar] Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, what's wrong with you. I thought you understood our language, I'll say it once again, when the music plays you bow down and worship the statue of me. Let's do it again.

[Shadrach] Your majesty, we do understand. You have to understand that our God does not want us to worship any god but him. We won't worship any God but God.

[Nebuchadnezzar] So, you think your god will protect you from the furnace. Guards, throw even more fuel on and make the fire as hot as you can.

[Meshach]Your majesty, we don't know if our god will keep us from burning or not, but we do know that God doesn't want anyone to worship any God but God.

[Narrator] So they put on lots more fuel and made the fire so hot that the people putting on fuel were burned up. Then the guards took the three friends and marched them into the furnace. And that's when something amazing happened.

[Nebuchadnezzar] Wait a minute, didn't we just throw three men into the furnace? Well, Why do I see four people in there and the fourth person looks like an angel. They aren't being burned, they look just fine. I guess their God did look out for them.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego come out of there.

[Narrator] So the three friends walked out of the furnace, none the worse for ware. They didn't even smell like smoke though the ropes they had been tied with had all burned away. They were safe, God had looked out for them and the king promoted them and made a new law that nobody could say anything bad about their God because God had protected them.

Now, whenever we feel like we should do something God wouldn't want us to do, we can remember the three friends and know that God will look out for us to.