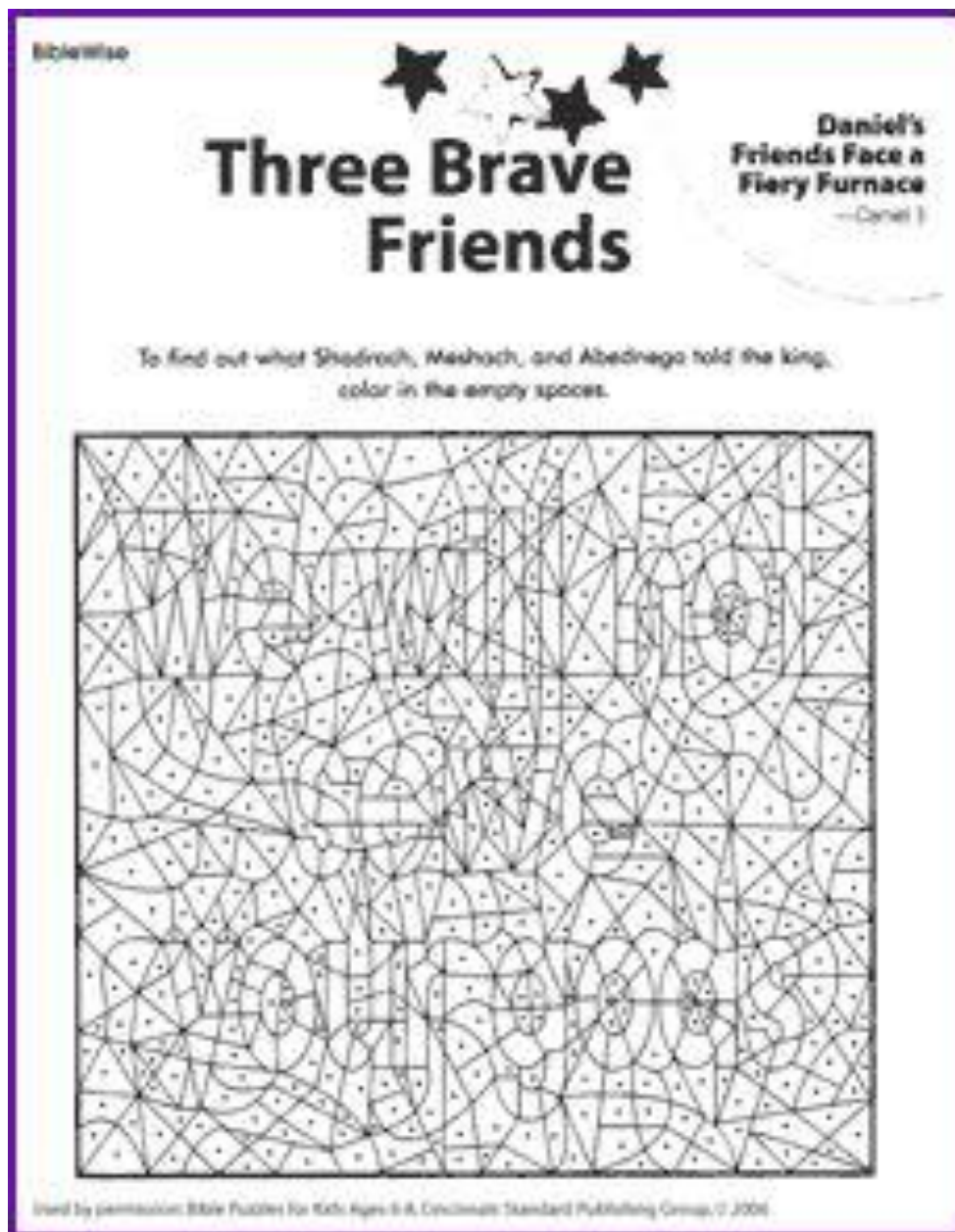


SUNDAY SCHOOL NOTES 22 MAY 2016

JUNIORS: In the fiery furnace (Daniel 3)



SENIORS: A riot in Ephesus (Acts 19)

Ephesus was an important town which had been built with great care to make life comfortable for everyone who lived there. It even had a most amazing library – one of the biggest of its time.

Most people from Ephesus worshipped a goddess called Diana or Artemis. They had built a huge temple for her. In the middle of the temple was a special statue which the people of Ephesus thought had fallen from the sky. Most homes in the town had a silver copy of this statue which they prayed to. And anyone who visited the town definitely bought a silver model to make sure Diana looked after them!

But God sent Paul there to tell these people that Diana wasn't real – the statue was just an idol and had no power! That was quite a mission! When Paul got to Ephesus, there were only 12 half-Christians who at least knew about Jesus. God gave him amazing powers of healing. Soon lots of people came to realise that Jesus was real, not like Diana.

However, the silversmiths who had made the statues and sold them got very angry. They weren't selling enough statues and they were getting poorer. So their leader called everyone together and encouraged them to stick up for Diana. The crowd worked themselves up and they became furious! They began to chant over and over again: "Great is Diana, our goddess!" Then they grabbed a couple of the Christians who were travelling with Paul and pulled them along! Paul wanted to try to calm things down, but the other Christians wouldn't let him go. Even some of the important people sent him messages, telling him not come near the mob. It would just make things worse.

Everything was very confusing. Everyone was shouting and yelling – lots of the people there didn't even know what they were protesting about, but they shouted anyway. A man called Alexander tried to sort matters out, but the mob just chanted their war cry for 2 hours solid!

They only went off home after the town clerk warned them that they would get into trouble because they were rioting. I imagine everyone was exhausted and hoarse and so eventually the meeting broke up. Gaius and Aristarchus seem to have escaped the crowd during the muddle so no-one was actually hurt. Nonetheless, Paul was told by his guide, the Holy Spirit to leave the town and go elsewhere.

It seemed that God hadn't won that battle. But God did. Today there is only one pillar of the famous temple of Diana still there. Yet there are churches all over the world. God definitely used Paul to make his name known.