**Prayer of the Three Holy Children**

[](http://orthodoxwiki.org/File:Agioipaides.jpg)

The Prayer of the [Three Holy Children](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Three_Holy_Children) is a component of the biblical [Book of Daniel](http://orthodoxwiki.org/index.php?title=Book_of_Daniel&action=edit&redlink=1). It is a segment of a larger component called *The Prayer of* [*Azariah*](http://orthodoxwiki.org/index.php?title=Azariah&action=edit&redlink=1) *and the Prayer of the Three Holy Children* which. although part of the [Septuagint](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Septuagint) text, is considered by Protestants as part of the [Apocrypha](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Apocrypha) rather than a fully canonical part of Scripture, and so appears in most English-language bibles as a seperate section. If included within the larger text of Daniel, it would appear in the third chapter of between verses 23 and 24.

In Orthodox Christian worship, the prayer is the basis of the seventh and eighth biblical [canticles](http://orthodoxwiki.org/index.php?title=Canticles&action=edit&redlink=1) sung at [Orthros](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Orthros). Although the text of the canticles are generally not read in contemporary practice, the hymns sung as part of the [canon](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Canon) reference the theme of the Three Holy Children. At [Vespers](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Vespers) of [Holy Saturday](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Holy_Saturday), the text of the prayer is heard as part of one of the fifteen Old Testament readings prescribed for that day. In Byzantine practice, the closing refrains to each verse "bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever" are chanted elaborately.

The song constitutes a hymn of thanksgiving to God for deliverence from the fiery furnace into which the three young men, Ananias, Azarias and Misael (also known as Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego) had been cast by the Persian king Nebuchadnezzar. They were cast into the furnace for refusing to worship a golden idol that Nebuchadnezzar had created. However, an Angel of the Lord entered the furnace and protected the three young men. In liturgical practice, the event is seen to presage the [Resurrection](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Resurrection) of Christ, thus its inclusion in the canon.

The *Abingdon Bible Handbook* ([ISBN 0687001692](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Special:BookSources/0687001692)) suggests that the Prayer was based on an earlier composition and was added to the existing text of Daniel sometime in the second or first century B.C.

**Usage by Other Christians**

The [Roman Catholic Church](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Roman_Catholic_Church) considers this text to be part of the deuterocanonical collection which was defined at the Council of Trent in 1546 as "sacred" and "canonical." The Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England includes the text as the canticle *Benedicite omnia Opera*.

**Text**

Blessed art thou, O Lord God of our fathers: thy name is worthy to be praised and glorified for evermore:

For thou art righteous in all the things that thou hast done to us: yea, true are all thy works, thy ways are right, and all thy judgments truth.

In all the things that thou hast brought upon us, and upon the holy city of our fathers, even Jerusalem, thou hast executed true judgment: for according to truth and judgment didst thou bring all these things upon us because of our sins.

For we have sinned and committed iniquity, departing from thee. In all things have we trespassed, and not obeyed thy commandments, nor kept them, neither done as thou hast commanded us, that it might go well with us.

Wherefore all that thou hast brought upon us, and every thing that thou hast done to us, thou hast done in true judgment.

And thou didst deliver us into the hands of lawless enemies, most hateful forsakers of God, and to an unjust king, and the most wicked in all the world.

And now we cannot open our mouths, we are become a shame and reproach to thy servants; and to them that worship thee.

Yet deliver us not up wholly, for thy name's sake, neither disannul thou thy covenant:

And cause not thy mercy to depart from us, for thy beloved Abraham's sake, for thy servant Issac's sake, and for thy holy Israel's sake;

To whom thou hast spoken and promised, that thou wouldest multiply their seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand that lieth upon the seashore.

For we, O Lord, are become less than any nation, and be kept under this day in all the world because of our sins.

Neither is there at this time prince, or prophet, or leader, or burnt offering, or sacrifice, or oblation, or incense, or place to sacrifice before thee, and to find mercy.

Nevertheless in a contrite heart and an humble spirit let us be accepted.

Like as in the burnt offerings of rams and bullocks, and like as in ten thousands of fat lambs: so let our sacrifice be in thy sight this day, and grant that we may wholly go after thee: for they shall not be confounded that put their trust in thee.

And now we follow thee with all our heart, we fear thee, and seek thy face.

Put us not to shame: but deal with us after thy lovingkindness, and according to the multitude of thy mercies.

Deliver us also according to thy marvellous works, and give glory to thy name, O Lord: and let all them that do thy servants hurt be ashamed;

And let them be confounded in all their power and might, and let their strength be broken;

And let them know that thou art God, the only God, and glorious over the whole world.

And the king's servants, that put them in, ceased not to make the oven hot with rosin, pitch, tow, and small wood;

So that the flame streamed forth above the furnace forty and nine cubits.

And it passed through, and burned those Chaldeans it found about the furnace.

But the angel of the Lord came down into the oven together with Azarias and his fellows, and smote the flame of the fire out of the oven;

And made the midst of the furnace as it had been a moist whistling wind, so that the fire touched them not at all, neither hurt nor troubled them.

Then the three, as out of one mouth, praised, glorified, and blessed, God in the furnace, saying,

Blessed art thou, O Lord God of our fathers: and to be praised and exalted above all for ever.

And blessed is thy glorious and holy name: and to be praised and exalted above all for ever.

Blessed art thou in the temple of thine holy glory: and to be praised and glorified above all for ever.

Blessed art thou that beholdest the depths, and sittest upon the cherubims: and to be praised and exalted above all for ever.

Blessed art thou on the glorious throne of thy kingdom: and to be praised and glorified above all for ever.

Blessed art thou in the firmament of heaven: and above ail to be praised and glorified for ever.

O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever,

O ye heavens, bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever.

O ye angels of the Lord, bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever.

O all ye waters that be above the heaven, bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever.

O all ye powers of the Lord, bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever.

O ye sun and moon, bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever.

O ye stars of heaven, bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever.

O every shower and dew, bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever.

O all ye winds, bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever,

O ye fire and heat, bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever.

O ye winter and summer, bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever.

O ye dews and storms of snow, bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever.

O ye nights and days, bless ye the Lord: bless and exalt him above all for ever.

O ye light and darkness, bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever.

O ye ice and cold, bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever.

O ye frost and snow, bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever.

O ye lightnings and clouds, bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever.

O let the earth bless the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever.

O ye mountains and little hills, bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever.

O all ye things that grow in the earth, bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever.

O ye mountains, bless ye the Lord: Praise and exalt him above all for ever.

O ye seas and rivers, bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever.

O ye whales, and all that move in the waters, bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever.

O all ye fowls of the air, bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever.

O all ye beasts and cattle, bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever.

O ye children of men, bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever.

O Israel, bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever.

O ye priests of the Lord, bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever.

O ye servants of the Lord, bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever.

O ye spirits and souls of the righteous, bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever.

O ye holy and humble men of heart, bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever.

O Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever: far he hath delivered us from hell, and saved us from the hand of death, and delivered us out of the midst of the furnace and burning flame: even out of the midst of the fire hath he delivered us.

O give thanks unto the Lord, because he is gracious: for his mercy endureth for ever.

O all ye that worship the Lord, bless the God of gods, praise him, and give him thanks: for his mercy endureth for ever.