

Daniel Chapter 3

Daniel 3:1 "Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height [was] threescore cubits, [and] the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon."

The statue, which the king arrogantly made, represented himself as an expression of his greatness and glory and reflected the dream where he was the head of gold.

This established the worship of Nebuchadnezzar and the nation under his power, in addition to the other gods.

This image of gold is 90 feet high and 9 feet wide.

This image is the size of a fairly large tree.

If it was made of pure gold, it was extremely heavy.

The gold could have been a covering over some other metal or material.

"Dura" means circle, or dwelling.

This just means that it was within the boundary of Babylon.

Gold is symbolic of God, so he made a false god.

Daniel 3:2 "Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up."

Nebuchadnezzar had recognized the God of Daniel, as being the greatest of all gods in the last chapter.

He built this to a false god in the verses above.

He still believes in the false gods of Babylon, even though he recognized the One True God.

Now that this golden image is erected, he sends for all the dignitaries in the country to come to the dedication of the false god.

He even called for those rulers of the provinces around, as well.

I would like to mention again here, that anything you can see with your physical eyes is not God.

If you can see it with physical eyes, it is a false god.

These leaders are satraps, or leaders over regions; perfects, or military chiefs; governors, or civil arbiters; magistrates, or judges in our sense today; rulers, or other civil leaders.

Daniel 3:3 "Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up."

It seems all of the surrounding world has come to worship this false god.

Man, throughout all ages, seems to be eager to worship some false god that he can see.

These people are no different.

Look, with me, at what Paul had to say about this very thing.

Romans 1:21-23 "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified [him] not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."
"Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools," " And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things."

Daniel 3:4 "Then a herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages,"

This leaves no one out.

It includes all people who are near enough to hear the herald.

Notice, also this is not a request, but a command.

Daniel 3:5 "[That] at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up:"

The children of Israel worshipped the golden calf on the way to the Promised Land.

They danced, and sang and the Bible speaks of revelry going on.

The music seems to accompany worship of false gods, as well as the True God.

Music prepares the heart to receive a message.

We are told over and over to worship God with songs of praise.

There is nothing wrong with music.

There could be something wrong with the type of music we listen to.

To fall down and worship a false god is the height of abomination.

Daniel 3:6 "And whoso falleth not down and worshipeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."

Some ancient kilns were found to have been shaped like a vertical tunnel open only at the top, with a dome supported by columns.

Charcoal normally served as fuel.

We see a very similar Scripture in the following.

Revelation 13:15 "And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed."

The forced worship of this image, here or even the forced religion of any kind is no good at all.

Christianity is not really a religion, but a relationship with Jesus.

God wants men's hearts, not their formality of worship.

Many will fall down before this image to save their lives, not to worship.

Daniel 3:7 "Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of music, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down [and] worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up."

Fear of death caused them to worship this false god.

It bothers me, even today, for a person to worship, even the One True God to simply avoid hell.

True worship consists of loving God with everything that is within you, and Him loving you.

Anything else is far from the truth.

Daniel 3:8 "Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews."

Perhaps, there was some jealousy, because Daniel and his 3 friends had been raised to such a high position in the kingdom.

These Chaldeans were carefully watching to find anything they might accuse them of.

These are most likely the priests of Bel-merodach who were envious of these young Jews, and sought their death.

Daniel 3:9 "They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live for ever."

This is a statement very similar to "long live the king".

They must pay honor to Nebuchadnezzar, before they went on with their real purpose for coming.

In the book of Proverbs, you find this to be addressed numerous times when scripture is speaking of flattery.

Normally done when somebody wants something and not to just make you feel good.

Daniel 3:10 "Thou, O king, hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image:"

The king really did not need them to remind him of his decree.

This possibly, is mentioned to him, to tell him there is no way out of punishing these Jews.

Daniel 3:11 "And whoso falleth not down and worshipeth, [that] he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."

The punishment had been set from the beginning for those who would not worship this false god.

Daniel 3:12 "There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

These accusers were trying to say that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were not honoring Nebuchadnezzar, or his image.

They were pretending to be for Babylon and the king, and they were not loyal to him.

Someone in so high a position should be leading others to carry out the wishes of the king, not rebelling against his commands.

Their jealousy of these Jews is showing.

First, they called them Jews, even though they used their Babylonian names.

This is a slight indication they wanted the king to believe they were faithful to Jerusalem, and not to him.

They, also, point out that the king had put them in their high positions.

It is as if they are saying he should not have placed them above Babylonians.

There also, is a progression of accusations.

First, they did not regard Nebuchadnezzar.

Second, they did not worship his gods.

Third, they did not bow down to the image.

Daniel 3:13 "Then Nebuchadnezzar in [his] rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. Then they brought these men before the king."

The anger of Nebuchadnezzar was so great it was spoken of as rage and fury.

It is interesting to me, they did not accuse Daniel as being part of the refusal to worship witnessed by the Chaldeans.

If Daniel had been present, he surely would have joined these others in faithfulness to God.

Perhaps they were afraid Daniel had already proven himself, and the king might punish them instead.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego are brought to the king.

Daniel 3:14 "Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, [Is it] true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?"

The king was fair in asking them personally, if they were guilty of breaking his commandment.

Daniel 3:15 "Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; [well]: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who [is] that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?"

Nebuchadnezzar is giving them one more chance here, to conform to his command.

He reminds them once more, that to disobey his command meant they would be thrown into the fiery furnace.

The king's challenge would return to embarrass him.

The true God was able to deliver, just as He was able to reveal a dream and its meaning.

Nebuchadnezzar had earlier called him "a God of gods", but having let that fade from his attention, he soon would be shocked and humiliated when God took up his challenge.

He almost mocks God with his statement; "Who is the God that shall deliver you out of my hands.

He is saying, no god is more powerful than he is.

Daniel 3:16 "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we [are] not careful to answer thee in this matter."

This is simply saying, they do not need time to think about this, they have already made up their mind.

They can give him their answer immediately.

The three men meant no disrespect.

They did not have any defense, nor did they need to reconsider their commitment, since they stood fast for their God as the only true and living God.

Their lives were in His hands as they indicated (in verses 17-18).

Daniel 3:17 "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."

They are not afraid of the fiery furnace, or of Nebuchadnezzar.

They know God is their very present help in trouble.

They are not speaking in an arrogant manner to the king.

They are speaking their confidence in their God.

If that is the way it is, they are more willing to face the furnace than to bow to a false god.

This type of faith is what we need, as well.

The world beckons.

It is our choice.

Will we follow our God, even into the fire?

Will we become afraid, and follow false gods of the world?

Daniel 3:18 "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."

This is another way of saying, "We will serve God and no other".

They will not worship things made with human hands.

They have made their decision to follow the One True God and no other.

Joshua 24:15 "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that [were] on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

Each person must make this decision.

We cannot serve God and the world.

We, too, must choose.

Daniel 3:19 "Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego: [therefore] he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated."

"Visage" means face.

This just means that he was so full of fury that his whole face changed.

The normal amount of fire would have burned anyone up who was thrown into it, but his anger caused him to say, "make it seven times hotter than usual".

The king's fury at being defied to his face led him to cry for an intensification of the heat.

He was not literally requiring the fire to be 7 times hotter as a gauge would indicate, or requiring seven times as long to heat, or 7 times the amount of the fuel.

The king in his anger means "intensely" hot.

He did not want anything left of these he thought had betrayed him.

Seven speaks of perfection, so that might have been the idea of the seven times, as well.

Daniel 3:20 "And he commanded the most mighty men that [were] in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, [and] to cast [them] into the burning fiery furnace."

The mightiest men in his army bound them, and put them into the fire.

Nebuchadnezzar, perhaps, thought they might escape, if he used lesser men for the task.

It would also, take a very brave man to get this close to the fire.

Daniel 3:21 "Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their [other] garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace."

This is just saying they were fully clad, even to having on their hats.

They were not naked.

Daniel 3:22 "Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego."

The men who put them into the fire were slain by the fire.

The flame which burned in the furnace lapped out and caught the mighty men of Nebuchadnezzar on fire, and killed them.

They did what they were commanded to do, but it killed them.

In an earlier verse, we saw that some ancient kilns were found to have been shaped like a vertical tunnel open only at the top, with a dome supported by columns.

In the NASE version of this scripture, this scripture states: "the flame of the fire slew those men who carried up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego".

This refers to being taken upward on some kind of a ramp to a spot near enough to the top to be thrown in.

The fire was so hot that it incinerated the king's men. (heat rises)

Daniel 3:23 "And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace."

A fire this hot would ordinarily have burned them beyond recognition in a matter of seconds. Notice, they were in the middle of the fire.

I would remind you here that God saved Noah in the flood, and not from the flood.

God saved Joseph in Egypt, not from Egypt.

God saved Joseph in the famine, not from the famine.

God saved Elijah and the widow in the famine, not from the famine (read about this in 1 Kings chapter 17).

God does not always spare us from our problems, He helps us with those problems.

Daniel 3:24 "Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, [and] spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king."

Something of great magnitude has caught the eye of Nebuchadnezzar.

Some early versions of this Scripture say that they were singing praises in the middle of the fire.

He ran to see, if he was remembering correctly, that there were three men in the fire.

His attendants agreed with him.

Daniel 3:25 "He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

God is ever present with those who trust Him.

This fourth person in the fire is the Son of God.

Look, with me, at the beautiful promise that was fulfilled, here, for these 3 men who pleased God.

Isaiah 43:2 "When thou passest through the waters, I [will be] with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."

God is a consuming fire, so fire is nothing to Him.

They put their faith in the Lord, and He did not fail them.

He was in the fire with them, protecting them from its flames.

This divine presence will be with us in all of our troubles, if we will continue to trust in the Lord.

God promises us supernatural protection in time of trouble, if we trust in Him.

Psalms 91:7 "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; [but] it shall not come nigh thee."

There were several things to be gained from this.

More faith for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego.

There was also, a world looking on, seeing how they would handle this problem.

This was a witness to them.

The king's heart will be changed.

Daniel 3:26 "Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, [and] spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come [hither]. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, came forth of the midst of the fire."

The king recognizes their God.

He, also, recognizes they are in good standing with that God.

Nebuchadnezzar will have great respect for them standing up to him in this.

They are men of great faith.

It is Nebuchadnezzar, himself, who calls them from the fire.

Daniel 3:27 "And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was a hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them."

When God enacts a miracle, He supernaturally controls all details so that His power is unmistakable and there is no other explanation.

This was an eye opener for all of these people.

They see the might of the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego.

This was a great witness to all of them.

They might have been in the fire, but God had been with them and protected them.

No false god could do this.

There must have been conversions that day to the One True God.

They had been protected so well, there was no smell of smoke upon them.

It was as if God had them in a fire-proof capsule.

He did, in a sense.

They were covered with His robe.

The blood of the Lord Jesus Christ covers us, and protects us from the devil.

In verses 28-30, the king was convinced and eager to add the God of these men to his panoply of deities.

Soon he learned that God was not one of many, but the only God.

Daniel 3:28 "[Then] Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed [be] the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God."

Again, Nebuchadnezzar recognizes God as being their help.

You remember, he had mocked God at the beginning, saying their God could not protect them from his judgment.

Now, he realizes their God can protect them.

There is no other god that can save like their God.

Nebuchadnezzar blesses the One True God.

He was right the first time.

It was the Son of God that saved them.

Daniel 3:29 "Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort."

Nebuchadnezzar's recognition of the God of the three men does not mean that he converted to their religion.

It was simply an acknowledgment of their God's power.

The sad thing in all of this is the fact that Nebuchadnezzar does not say this is the Only God.

He does say, no other has the power of God.

He does recognize Him as the most powerful God.

He, also, allows the worship of God by anyone who desires, without persecution for that worship.

The punishment will be great for those who speak against God.

Daniel 3:30 "Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, in the province of Babylon."

We see that they were greatly blessed by standing up for what is right.

The message we can get from this is; we may be going through a tunnel of problems, but God is with us.

The sun is shining at the end of that tunnel of problems.

Stay faithful, and God will reward you in the end.

Daniel Chapter 3 Questions

1. What was the size of the image Nebuchadnezzar made?
2. What was it made of?
3. Dura means _____, or _____.
4. Where was this image located?
5. Who did the king call to help dedicate this image?
6. Anything you can see with your physical eyes is not _____.
7. Who cried aloud, the command of Nebuchadnezzar, concerning this image?
8. What would happen, just before they were to bow down?
9. Music prepares the heart to receive a _____.

10. Christianity is not really a religion, but a _____ with Jesus.
11. Fear of _____ caused them to worship the false god.
12. Who accused the Jews?
13. What would happen to those, who did not fall down and worship the false god?
14. Who were the accused by name?
15. Why had these accusers done this?
16. How did Nebuchadnezzar feel about this?
17. How do we know the king tried to be fair to the three men of God?
18. What does he do in verse 15?
19. How does he almost mock God?
20. How did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego answer the king?
21. Why are they not afraid of the king, or the fire?
22. What does "visage" mean?
23. How much hotter than normal did they make the fire?
24. Who bound them, and threw them in the fire?
25. What happened to them?
26. What happened to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego?
27. What must we remember about Noah, Joseph, and Elijah?
28. Who did Nebuchadnezzar see in the fire?
29. Who was the fourth man?
30. Who is helped, besides Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego?
31. What effect did this have on Nebuchadnezzar?
32. What decree did he make?
33. What is sad about this?
34. What happened to the three men, who had been in the fire?