

Daniel

Chapter Three

Daniel 3:1-3

Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, the height of which was sixty cubits and its width six cubits; he set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent word to assemble the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates and all the rulers of the provinces were assembled for the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

- No chronological markers are given in this chapter
- In chapter 2, God made His wisdom known—in this chapter, He displays His power
- As we consider the great statue—the Sphinx in Egypt was built in 2500 BC—It is 240 feet long, 66 feet high
- Tower—to reach to heaven—built previously in Babylon
- After the dream is interpreted—Nebuchadnezzar has it fashioned into an idol—making his dream visible to all (instead of being humbled—he is filled with excessive pride)
- A cubit is 18 inches—so 60 cubits=90 feet high—about the size of a 9 story building (this could include a multistory foundation)
- Dura—refers to a walled place—so statue could be by a city wall
- There is a site—16 miles south of Babylon—known as the Tells of Dura—where a large 'base' was discovered
- 7 classes of officials are named: Satraps (realm protector), prefects (appointed), counselors (counsel giver), treasurers (bearer of), judges (law bearers), magistrates (overchiefs), governors (administrative)----5 of these titles are of Iranian origin
- Loyalty of all these officials is tested with the command to worship the statue
- Kingdom of darkness—persistently wearing down the saints and their capacity to resist

Daniel 3:4-7

Then the herald loudly proclaimed: "To you the command is given, O peoples, nations and men of every language, that at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe, and all kinds of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up. But whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire." Therefore at that time, when all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe, and all kinds of music, all the

peoples, nations and men of every language fell down and worshiped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

- Herald—common to use a herald in Babylon—to proclaim/publish the will of the king
- Command is given to 'nations'—Nebuchadnezzar incorporated the conquered in the employ of his kingdom
- These ancient furnaces could reach temperatures up to 1,000 centigrade—about 1,800 Fahrenheit
- True worship is an expression of the heart and cannot be forced
- Massive statue—entirely of gold—symbolic of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom—but not his dream
- Though king had been given power, strength and glory in Daniel 2:37—he misused it—spending it on his own ego
- Worship was man-centered—not God honoring (Rom 1:25)

Daniel 3:8-12

For this reason at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and brought charges against the Jews. They responded and said to Nebuchadnezzar the king: "O king, live forever! You yourself, O king, have made a decree that every man who hears the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, and bagpipe, and all kinds of music, is to fall down and worship the golden image. But whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire. There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the administration of the province of Babylon, namely Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. These men, O king, have disregarded you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up.

- Chaldeans—astrologers—probably a bit jealous of level of favor the exiles possessed in Babylon
- Brought charges against—denounced/verbally deride
- King is reminded that he had given authority to these exiles (charged now with treason)
- Astrologers begin by reminding Nebuchadnezzar of his command
- Motive for accusations—appears to be jealousy and selfish ambition

Daniel 3:13-15

Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego; then these men were brought before the king. Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that you

do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up? Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, and bagpipe, and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, very well. But if you will not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?"

- In rage—fury; extreme anger
- Is it true—he asks them to give a defense—then gives second opportunity to submit
- Nebuchadnezzar refuses to acknowledge anyone greater than himself(the dream indicated that he would be replaced by a 'lesser' empire)

Daniel 3:16-18

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

- The three—did not need to present a defense
- Made no apology for their stand/position—not a proud reply—but a firm one
- They believed their God was able to deliver—but understood that God does not always miraculously intervene (sovereignty/ability)
- He doesn't always deliver us FROM—He delivers us THROUGH
- Matthew 10:28
- Exodus 20:3-6
- Job 13:15
- How are faithful people called to act in a faithless world?

Daniel 3:19-22

Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with wrath, and his facial expression was altered toward Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. He answered by giving orders to heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. And he commanded certain valiant warriors who were in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, in order to cast them into the furnace of blazing fire. Then these men

were tied up in their trousers, their coats, their caps and their other clothes, and were cast into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire. For this reason, because the king's command was urgent and the furnace had been made extremely hot, the flame of the fire slew those men who carried up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego.

- Facial expression—countenance becomes harsh—flushed with anger
- Furnace is heated to maximum intensity—7 times hotter—not necessary, but reveals the condition of Nebuchadnezzar's heart
- Valiant=men of great strength—to guard from outside intervention
- Soldiers forced to carry out command so hurriedly—unable to protect themselves from the flames
- Cast into midst=language implies they were thrown through an opening in the top
- Isaiah 44:12-20
- Resistance of idolatry to the point of death

Daniel 3:23-26

But these three men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, fell into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire still tied up. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up in haste; he responded and said to his high officials, "Was it not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "Certainly, O king." He answered and said, "Look! I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!" Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the furnace of blazing fire; he responded and said, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, come out, you servants of the Most High God, and come here!" Then Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego came out of the midst of the fire.

- Nebuchadnezzar is not prepared for what he observes in the fire
- He is so astounded—he checks his perception with the high officials
- Calls all to witness a miracle
- The 3 have been joined by a 4th—one like 'a son of the gods' (deity is ascribed to the 4th—Nebuchadnezzar is polytheistic)
- Second person of the Godhead—Theophany in the OT
- Isaiah 43:2
- Though Nebuchadnezzar is polytheistic—he acknowledges Hebrew God as Most High
- Fire had no power over them
- Fiery furnace—a prophetic picture of the great tribulation
- Nebuchadnezzar represents the Great Beast that arises out of the sea—as the last great world ruler—antichrist
- Image of gold—represents abomination of desolation
- 3 Hebrew children represent the remnant who are miraculously preserved during great tribulation

Daniel 3:27-30

And the satraps, the prefects, the governors and the king's high officials gathered around and saw in regard to these men that the fire had no effect on the bodies of these men nor was the hair of their head singed, nor had the smell of fire even come upon them. Nebuchadnezzar responded and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, who has sent His angel and delivered His servants who put their trust in Him, violating the king's command, and yielded up their bodies so as not to serve or worship any god except their own God. Therefore, I made a decree that any people, nation or tongue that speaks anything offensive against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego shall be torn limb from limb and their houses reduced to a rubbish heap, inasmuch as there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way." Then the king caused Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego to prosper in the province of Babylon.

- Nebuchadnezzar praises the Hebrew God for such a display of great power
- He was impressed that the 3 had acted with such trust
- When the king makes decree about speaking against the Lord—probably hoping that the Lord would not retaliate
- The 3 are honored/receive rewards (material wealth, respect among the people, job promotion)
- Judah's exile—not due to the weakness of their God
- Hebrews 11:34—by faith they quenched the power of fire
- In both chapters 2-3: there is promotion following a trial

Daniel Chapter Three-----Workbook

Project:

Go online to: Persecution.com (Voice of the Martyrs). Read one article. Sign up for newsletter.

Harmonize:

Read I Peter 4

Dig:

- 1) When King Nebuchadnezzar heard the interpretation for his dream—did he make any response that was right? Did it influence any wrong choices that he made?
- 2) What was the purpose for building this statue?
- 3) How did the statue differ from Nebuchadnezzar's dream? How was it similar?
- 4) Who was invited to the dedication of the statue? Why is this significant?
- 5) What accompanied this call to worship?
- 6) What did Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego know for sure?

7) What didn't they know?

8) How did they make their decision in view of the threat?

9) List every supernatural element that takes place in chapter three?

10) What name of God is used in chapter three?

Discuss:

1) Where is the universal church suffering the consequences of her obedience in the world today?

2) How/where is the church facing the demands of allegiance to worldly thinking in the world today?

3) Have you endured a fiery trial—that the Lord delivered you through—rather than—from? Share.

Point of Prayer:

Who do you know that is currently suffering a fiery trial? Spend time praying for them and sending a note of encouragement.

Integrate:

What other scriptures come to mind as you read this chapter?

Application:

- 1) When have you suffered for obeying God/or/doing what is right?
- 2) What are some of the idols in our culture that demand worship?
- 3) Have you experienced freedom/deliverance in the midst of a fiery trial?
- 4) Do you struggle to take a stand for Christ in your circle of influence?
- 5) Have you been tempted in your suffering to distrust God? Doubt His goodness?
- 6) How has the Lord strengthened or comforted you in the midst of a trial?
- 7) Do you have other believers who would be willing to walk with you for the duration of a fiery trial?