

Lesson 3 – Daniel 3

NOTES:

Daniel 1:

The Introduction

Chapter 1 introduces the historical context of Daniel's deportation to Babylon following Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem in 605 BC. Daniel was among the royal Jewish captives first extradited to Babylon.

Upon Daniel's arrival, he and three companions were confronted with a difficult choice between defiling themselves with the king's appointed ration of choice food and wine or risking their lives by abstaining from the food for the sake of remaining undefiled in the sight of God. God rewards Daniel's righteous decision to abstain by granting him favor and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials. God also endows Daniel and his three companions with exceptional knowledge, wisdom, and intelligence that results in the honor of entering into the king's personal service.

Daniel 2:

Daniel's Interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's First Dream

Chapter 2 explains God's supernatural equipping of Daniel to reveal Nebuchadnezzar's first dream and its interpretation, demonstrating God's covenant attentiveness to His exiles. The dream reveals four successive Gentile dominions preceding the establishment of God's messianic kingdom that will never be destroyed. After Daniel reveals Nebuchadnezzar's dream and its interpretation, Daniel is promoted as ruler over Babylon and chief prefect over all its wise men.

Daniel 3:

Nebuchadnezzar's Command and the Courageous Response of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego

Nebuchadnezzar erects a great image of gold, commanding peoples, nations and men of every language to fall down and worship the golden image when hearing musical instruments. The king's decree includes the penalty of being immediately cast into a furnace of blazing fire for anyone refusing to worship the image.

After the Chaldeans report the refusal of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego to worship the image, Nebuchadnezzar gives urgent orders for them to be cast into a furnace of blazing fire. The three men are tied up and cast into the furnace. When Nebuchadnezzar and his high officials look into the furnace, they are astounded to see four men walking unharmed in the midst of the fire. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego exit the fire unsinged. Nebuchadnezzar then issues a decree forbidding an offensive word to be spoken against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, whom the king causes to prosper.

BIBLE TEXT: DANIEL 3 (NASB)

Dan. 3:1 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. ² 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 to come to the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. ³ Then 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. ⁴ Then the herald loudly proclaimed: "To you the command is given, O peoples, nations and *men of every* language, ⁵ 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. ⁶ "But whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire." ⁷ 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.

Dan. 3:8 For this reason at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and brought charges against the Jews. ⁹ They responded and said to Nebuchadnezzar the king: "O king, live forever! ¹⁰ "You, 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. ¹¹ "But whoever does not fall down and

*(A)=Application (C)=Context (D)=Difficult (DOC)=Doctrine (O)=Opinion (PER)=Personal (PR)=Principle (P)=Prophecy

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worship shall be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire. ¹² “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.”

Dan. 3:13 Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego; then these men were brought before the king. ¹⁴ 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? ¹⁵ “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 do 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?”

Dan. 3:16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. ¹⁷ “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. ¹⁸ “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.”

Dan. 3:19 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. ²⁰ 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. ²¹ 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. ²² 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. ²³ But these three men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, fell into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire *still* tied up.

Dan. 3:24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up in haste; he said to his high officials, “Was it not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire?” They replied to the king, “Certainly, O king.” ²⁵ He 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!” ²⁶ 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. ²⁷ 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 were their trousers damaged, nor had the smell of fire *even* come upon them.

Dan. 3:28 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. ²⁹ “Therefore I make 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.” ³⁰ Then the king caused Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego to prosper in the province of Babylon.

STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. Describe the image of gold that Nebuchadnezzar makes. (3:1)
(C) Who does Daniel identify as the head of gold in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of the great statue (2:36-38)?
2. Why does Nebuchadnezzar assemble the satraps, prefects, governors, counselors, treasurers, judges, magistrates, and all the rulers of the provinces? How do they respond? (3:2-3)
3. What are the peoples, nations, and men of every language commanded to do at the moment they hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe, and all kinds of music? (3:4-7)

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4. Why do certain Chaldeans come forward? What reasons do the Chaldeans give for the disobedience of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego? (3:8-12)
5. (A) For what reasons might civil disobedience be required of Christians today? Give examples.
6. Describe Nebuchadnezzar's response to the Chaldean's report concerning Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. What alternatives does Nebuchadnezzar give them? What rhetorical question does Nebuchadnezzar pose after explaining what will happen to them if they refuse to worship? (3:13-15)
7. (A) Place yourself in the position of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. Honestly evaluate how you would likely respond if presented with a similar challenge today.
8. Why do Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego say that they have no need to give Nebuchadnezzar an answer concerning this matter? From what do they say God will deliver them? What do they make known to Nebuchadnezzar? (3:16-18)
9. How does Nebuchadnezzar respond to the refusal of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego to worship the image? How hot was the furnace heated? Who does Nebuchadnezzar command to cast Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego into the furnace of blazing fire? (3:19-20)
10. (O) Why do you think Nebuchadnezzar became so angry over their refusal to worship the golden image? (A) What are people pressured to overvalue in society today?
11. Describe how Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego are tied up. Where are they cast? (3:21)
12. What happens to the men who carry up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego? What happens to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego? (3:22-23)
13. Why is Nebuchadnezzar astounded? What does he see in the midst of the fire? Describe the appearance of the fourth. (3:24-25) (O) Who do you think the fourth person is? Why?
14. With what name does Nebuchadnezzar call Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego? (3:26) (O) Do you think that Nebuchadnezzar experienced genuine faith in the Most High God? Why?
15. Describe what the satraps, prefects, governors, and king's high officials see in regard to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. (3:27)
16. With what words does Nebuchadnezzar bless the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego? List two results of the deliverance of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. (3:28-30)
17. What do you learn about God from Daniel 3?
18. How could you apply what you have learned about God this week?

Write a prayer response to Daniel 3.