



Daniel 3

(Material for this chapter provided by Steve Patton)

This event must be viewed not only as Nebuchadnezzar would, but also how the captive Jews would see this event. This day will humble a king and comfort slaves. There will be no doubt who is God of gods and who rules over the affairs of kings and nations

Nebuchadnezzar's Image (vs. 1)

1Nebuchadnezzar 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.

- Was it an image of Nebuchadnezzar or of a god? There is a lot of debate about this. The image is prepared so all the foreign government officials can bow before publicly. Are they being asked to show submission to Nebuchadnezzar or to Babylon's god? There are good arguments both ways. I tend to think it is a god. One thing I think about is an image doesn't have to be built for the officials to show submission to Nebuchadnezzar. He is right there. They do that in person. He may be requiring these foreign officials to show they are going to honor Babylon's god, also. This would have been the problem for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. They acknowledged Nebuchadnezzar as the great ruler as had Daniel (2:37,38). But they would never acknowledge any of Babylon's gods as their god.

The Great Assembly Before The Image (vss. 2-7)

2Then 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.

3Then 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.

4Then the herald loudly proclaimed: "To you the command is given, O peoples, nations and men of every language,

5that 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.”

7Therefore 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.

- This assembly appears to be every foreign official from throughout the empire. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego are in Babylon but they are foreigners on the level of these other officials. This may be why they are included. King Nebuchadnezzar is wanting all these men to publicly acknowledge their submission to Babylon and its God.
- Where is Daniel? Why isn't he included? I don't know.

Accusations Against Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego (vss. 8-12)

8For this reason at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and brought charges against the Jews.

9They 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 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.”

- The Babylonian officials are obviously jealous of conquered foreigners holding important positions in the king's court. It is reminiscent of what the Persian officials will do against Daniel when we get to chapter 6. But God will take care of his children. He has a purpose to accomplish and He will do it in a spectacular way.

A Last Chance, Then Judgment Pronounced (vss. 13-23)

13Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego; then these men were brought before the king.

14Nebuchadnezzar 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 wor-

ship 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?"

16Shadrach, 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."

19Then 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.

20He 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.

21Then 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.

22For 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.

23But these three men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, fell into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire still tied up.

- The king actually gives them a second chance which they refuse. There is no hesitation on their part. They openly defy the king's command. His fury leads to heating the furnace seven times hotter than usual. There would be no doubt about the judgment of the king against any who would question his edict. His heightened reaction also calls even greater attention to this occasion. It was not just another execution.

Yahweh's Miraculous Intervention (vss. 24-27)

24Then 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."

25He 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!"

26Then 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.

27The 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.

- Not only are they spared, they are not even singed by the fire. Nebuchadnezzar personally calls them out of the furnace, acknowledging them as servants of the Most High God.
- Who is the fourth person? I speculate it is an angel. It fits their role (Hebrews 1:14). Angels appear several times in this book.

A Humbled Nebuchadnezzar (vss. 28-30)

28Nebuchadnezzar 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."

30Then the king caused Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego to prosper in the province of Babylon.

- Yahweh's supremacy is unquestioned. The God of the Jews is more powerful than any God. Not only does Nebuchadnezzar call for all to honor Yahweh but to also honor Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. The king may not be monotheistic but he does not doubt the respect that must be given to the God of the Jews.

Takeaways:

1. The Value of conviction - 3:12,18
2. Trusting God will take care of you - 3:18
3. Keeping faith under pressure - 3:16
4. God honors faithfulness - 3:30
5. The value of faithful close friends.