

Dan. 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.

Pride is a sin I believe we all have to fight constantly. I believe Nebuchadnezzar's dream planted an idea in his head that he just couldn't resist. Maybe the image was meant to represent his god, but more than likely he was thinking of his dream and liked the idea of having his whole being represented in gold and not just his head. Whatever—the king was acknowledged as the god's representative to the people even if the image was meant to represent his god.

We aren't told how much time elapsed between the events of chapters 2 and 3; scholars say 15-23 years.

Neb gets the idea to make a huge image of gold and position it in the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. The height is 10 times that of the width of the image. A cubit is the distance between the elbow and the wrist or tip of the fingers; and is estimated at 18-21 inches.

At some point I made a note identifying Monty Mills as the source (maybe from listening to Joe Focht): If 90' tall, with a 9' x 9' base and a 6' x 6' head, and made of pure gold, it would weigh 3000 tons and be worth \$22 billion or more today.

Dan. 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.

Dan. 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.

The king gathers together all the men of leadership from all the regions/provinces under his authority for the dedication of this statue. The obvious question to emerge—Where is Daniel? Evidently, somewhere far away because we know he would never have bowed down to the image.

Dan. 3:4 Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages,

Dan. 3:5 *That* at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up:

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

The command goes out that at the sound of the orchestra everyone present at the dedication is to fall down and worship the golden image. Anyone who does not fall down in worship will be thrown into a burning fiery furnace.

This brings to mind an event yet future—the time when Antichrist has an image set up in the temple and the command is given that everyone is to worship that image; non-compliance will carry the death penalty.

Revelation 13:14-15 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. 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.

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

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

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

Dan. 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 musick, shall fall down and worship the golden image:

Dan. 3:11 And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, *that* he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

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

V8 “accused” - denotes hatred and bitter language

It would seem that everyone present obeyed the command except for “certain Jews” in leadership positions—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Their quick rise to high positions in the government had evidently caused a bit of jealousy among the nationals. Some of the native born leaders couldn’t wait to go and tell the king that these three Jews had refused to bow down in worship of the golden image—an insult to the king and his gods.

Research note: These three men are mentioned by name as having prominent government positions on a cylinder of cuneiform found in Iraq.

The enemy truly knows how to utilize our weaknesses. One of the biggest fears of man is that of dying. Only those who have true faith in God will be able to reject the command of Antichrist as did the three Jews in Babylon. They understood that their God was the God and that their future was secure with

Him even after death. They were determined to honor God according to scripture.

Exodus 20:3–5 “Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them:”

This truth was reiterated in the New Testament.

Acts 5:29 “...We ought to obey God rather than men.”

Dan. 3:13 Then Nebuchadnezzar in *his* rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king.

Dan. 3:14 Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, *Is it true*, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?

Dan. 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 musick, 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?

The king is enraged when he hears this report and has the three Jewish men brought to him. First, he gives the men a chance to deny the allegations. In fact, he offers to give them a second chance to prove that the allegations are wrong. The king just didn't understand that there is a God that can deliver out of his hands—a God who is greater than all.

Dan. 3:16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we *are* not careful to answer thee in this matter.

Dan. 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.

Dan. 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.

The three men are ready with their answer and basically tell the king that they are not afraid of him. Their God is able to deliver them from the fiery furnace if He so chooses; if He does not choose to do so, that doesn't matter to them. They are not going to worship the gods of the king or worship the golden image. Job expressed a similar mindset:

Job 13:15 Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him....

The first time through I missed the phrase “and he will deliver us out of thine hand.” They knew that even if God allowed them to die, they would be delivered from the king's judgment. I believe that they, like Job, expected to see God face to face.

Job 19:25-26 For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

I liked David Guzik's comment on the response of the Hebrew men: "The statement of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego is also remarkable for what it does *not* have - any hint of an excuse. In a time of testing like this it is easy to think of a thousand excuses that seem to justify compromise."

Garland also makes a good point: To serve God means "consistently confessing His truth and living according to His principles."

Dan. 3:19 Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: *therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated.*

Dan. 3:20 And he commanded the most mighty men that *were* in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, *and to cast them* into the burning fiery furnace.

Dan. 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.

Dan. 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 Abednego.

At this point, the king is furious. I get a picture of his facing turning red, his eyes bulging and then shouting at the top of his lungs (cf "the form of his visage). He commands that the furnace be heated *seven times hotter* than normal. (This is probably a figure of speech for as hot as possible.) He commands the strongest of his military men to bind the Jews and throw them into the fiery furnace fully clothed. (I guess to make sure that they caught fire quickly.) The furnace was so hot that the men who threw the Jews into the furnace were killed.

Dan. 3:23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

Dan. 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.*

Dan. 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.

Evidently, the furnace was constructed as to allow the king to be able to see what was happening inside. The king immediately got up in amazement at what he saw; he couldn't believe his eyes. He verified with his counselors that only three men had been thrown into the furnace. The king then declared that he saw four men walking around in the fire and that the fourth man looked like the Son of

God. I believe that is exactly who he saw—the preincarnate Jesus. Verse 28 makes it clear that Nebuchadnezzar was just expressing the idea of a person that fit his idea of how a god would look or act.

Dan. 3:26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come *hither*. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire.

Dan. 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 an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.

It would seem that the heat of the furnace had decreased to a great degree if the king was able to come near to the opening of the furnace. His tone had changed a great deal. You can almost hear the respect and awe with which he is calling out the names of the three Jewish men and referencing their God, “the most high God.” He calls for them to come out of the furnace. When the men came out, it was obvious to all that the fire had not affected them the tiniest bit; not a hair of their head had been singed, nor did their clothes have even the faintest smell of fire.

I can't help but think of some verses in Isaiah 43.

Isaiah 43:1-3 But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. 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.** For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour....

Dan. 3:28 Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, 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.

All of a sudden, worship of the golden image is forgotten, and the king expresses great respect for the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. He acknowledges the fourth person in the furnace as the angel sent by their God to deliver them because of their trust/faith in Him alone—faith that was more precious to them than life itself.

“changed the king's word” – Their example of faith and obedience to God has caused the king to change his command to worship the golden image since the God of the Jews has proven to be more powerful.

This is a wonderful example of the impact that a life of faith and commitment to God can have in the lives of others. As others watch our lives as believers, it

becomes obvious to them whether or not we are truly committed to God as the Lord of our life. They may not know the scripture, but they all have an idea of how a Christian should live and whether or not we measure up to that standard. Often, their expected standard is higher than that we set for ourselves. I think that is why Paul gives us these verses in Corinthians.

1Corinthians 8:7-13 Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

1Corinthians 9:19-22 For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

Dan. 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 Abednego, 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.

Dan. 3:30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon.

The king makes a decree that all the people of his kingdom are to show great respect for the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Anyone that even speaks a word against their God will be destroyed. The king acknowledges that no other God can deliver with that kind of power. I believe that the Jewish men were promoted as a tribute to their God.

Lord, make my life such an example of faith and obedience to You that others will want to get to know You and follow You because of that example.

I want to include one other great excerpt from Guzik's commentary (my modification in italics):

This whole account illustrates - perhaps serving as a type - of the future of Israel during the Great Tribulation.

- Nebuchadnezzar is like the Antichrist, who forces the whole world into one religion of idolatry.
- Nebuchadnezzar's image is like the image described in Revelation 13, that the whole world will be commanded to worship.
- The fiery furnace is like the Great Tribulation, which will be great affliction for the Jews.
- The three Hebrew men are like *the believing remnant of Israel*, who will be preserved through the tribulation.
- The executioners who perished are like those in league with the Antichrist, who Jesus will slay at His return.
- The mysteriously absent Daniel is like the church, not even present for this time of great tribulation.