

# Daniel 3

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## Nebuchadnezzar's Golden Image

[1] King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its breadth six cubits. He set it up on the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. [2] Then King Nebuchadnezzar sent to gather the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. [3] Then the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. And they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. [4] And the herald proclaimed aloud, "You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, [5] that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. [6] And whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace." [7] Therefore, as soon as all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, all the peoples, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

## **The Fiery Furnace**

[8] Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and maliciously accused the Jews. [9] They declared to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever! [10] You, O king, have made a decree, that every man who hears the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image. [11] And whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into a burning fiery furnace. [12] There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These men, O king, pay no attention to you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

[13] Then Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought. So they brought these men before the king. [14] Nebuchadnezzar answered and said to them, "Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up? [15] Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, well and good. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands?"

[16] Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. [17] If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. [18] But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

[19] Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was usually heated. [20] And he ordered some of the mighty men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. [21] Then these men were bound in their cloaks, their tunics, their hats, and their other garments, and they were thrown into the burning fiery furnace. [22] Because the king's order was urgent and the furnace overheated, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. [23] And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell bound into the burning fiery furnace.

[24] Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He declared to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king." [25] He answered and said, "But I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods."

[26] Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the burning fiery furnace; he declared, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here!" Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire. [27] And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king's counselors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men. The hair of their heads was not singed, their cloaks were not harmed, and no smell of fire had come upon them. [28] Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God. [29] Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way." [30] Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon. (ESV)

## NASB

### **The King's Golden Image**

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.

### **Worship of the Image Refused**

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 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."

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?"

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."

## **Daniel's Friends Protected**

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.

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.

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.

## NIV

### **The Image of Gold and the Blazing Furnace**

1 King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, sixty cubits high and six cubits wide, and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. 2 He then summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the image he had set up. 3 So the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials assembled for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and they stood before it.

4 Then the herald loudly proclaimed, “Nations and peoples of every language, this is what you are commanded to do: 5 As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. 6 Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.”

7 Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp and all kinds of music, all the nations and peoples of every language fell down and worshiped the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

8 At this time some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews. 9 They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “May the king live forever! 10 Your Majesty has issued a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music must fall down and worship the image of gold, 11 and that whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace. 12 But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up.”

13 Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king, 14 and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? 15 Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?”

16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, “King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. 17 If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty’s hand. 18 But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”

19 Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual 20 and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into

the blazing furnace. 21 So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. 22 The king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, 23 and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace.

24 Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?"

They replied, "Certainly, Your Majesty."

25 He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods."

26 Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!"

So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, 27 and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.

28 Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. 29 Therefore I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way."

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



## NKJV

### **The Image of Gold**

1 Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its width six cubits. He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. 2 And King Nebuchadnezzar sent word to gather together the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. 3 So the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered together for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. 4 Then a herald cried aloud: "To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, 5 that at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up; 6 and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."

7 So at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the horn, flute, harp, and lyre, in symphony with all kinds of music, all the people, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the gold image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

### **Daniel's Friends Disobey the King**

8 Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and accused the Jews. 9 They spoke and said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever! 10 You, O king, have made a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the gold image; 11 and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. 12 There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up."

13 Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. So they brought these men before the king. 14 Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up? 15 Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, good! But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?"

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. 17 If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. 18 But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."

## **Saved in Fiery Trial**

19 Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. He spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. 20 And he commanded certain mighty men of valor who were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, and cast them into the burning fiery furnace. 21 Then these men were bound in their coats, their trousers, their turbans, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. 22 Therefore, because the king's command was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. 23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

24 Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?"

They answered and said to the king, "True, O king."

25 "Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

## **Nebuchadnezzar Praises God**

26 Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace and spoke, saying, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here." Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire. 27 And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king's counselors gathered together, and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them.

28 Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God! 29 Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this."

30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the province of Babylon.

## NLT

### **Nebuchadnezzar's Gold Statue**

1 King Nebuchadnezzar made a gold statue ninety feet tall and nine feet wide and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. 2 Then he sent messages to the high officers, officials, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates, and all the provincial officials to come to the dedication of the statue he had set up. 3 So all these officials came and stood before the statue King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

4 Then a herald shouted out, "People of all races and nations and languages, listen to the king's command! 5 When you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes, and other musical instruments, bow to the ground to worship King Nebuchadnezzar's gold statue. 6 Anyone who refuses to obey will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace."

7 So at the sound of the musical instruments, all the people, whatever their race or nation or language, bowed to the ground and worshiped the gold statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

8 But some of the astrologers went to the king and informed on the Jews. 9 They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "Long live the king! 10 You issued a decree requiring all the people to bow down and worship the gold statue when they hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes, and other musical instruments. 11 That decree also states that those who refuse to obey must be thrown into a blazing furnace. 12 But there are some Jews—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—whom you have put in charge of the province of Babylon. They pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They refuse to serve your gods and do not worship the gold statue you have set up."

13 Then Nebuchadnezzar flew into a rage and ordered that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought before him. When they were brought in, 14 Nebuchadnezzar said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you refuse to serve my gods or to worship the gold statue I have set up? 15 I will give you one more chance to bow down and worship the statue I have made when you hear the sound of the musical instruments. But if you refuse, you will be thrown immediately into the blazing furnace. And then what god will be able to rescue you from my power?"

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you. 17 If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty. 18 But even if he doesn't, we want to make it clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up."

### **The Blazing Furnace**

19 Nebuchadnezzar was so furious with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that his face became distorted with rage. He commanded that the furnace be heated seven times hotter than usual. 20 Then he ordered some of the strongest men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. 21 So they tied them up and threw them into the furnace, fully dressed in their pants, turbans, robes, and other garments. 22 And because the king, in his anger, had demanded

such a hot fire in the furnace, the flames killed the soldiers as they threw the three men in. 23 So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, securely tied, fell into the roaring flames.

24 But suddenly, Nebuchadnezzar jumped up in amazement and exclaimed to his advisers, "Didn't we tie up three men and throw them into the furnace?"

"Yes, Your Majesty, we certainly did," they replied.

25 "Look!" Nebuchadnezzar shouted. "I see four men, unbound, walking around in the fire unharmed! And the fourth looks like a god!"

26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came as close as he could to the door of the flaming furnace and shouted: "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!"

So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego stepped out of the fire. 27 Then the high officers, officials, governors, and advisers crowded around them and saw that the fire had not touched them. Not a hair on their heads was singed, and their clothing was not scorched. They didn't even smell of smoke!

28 Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise to the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! He sent his angel to rescue his servants who trusted in him. They defied the king's command and were willing to die rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. 29 Therefore, I make this decree: If any people, whatever their race or nation or language, speak a word against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, they will be torn limb from limb, and their houses will be turned into heaps of rubble. There is no other god who can rescue like this!"

30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to even higher positions in the province of Babylon.

## NET

[1] {1} King Nebuchadnezzar had a golden{2} statue made.{3} It was ninety feet{4} tall and nine feet{5} wide. He erected it on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. [2] Then King Nebuchadnezzar sent out a summons to assemble the satraps, prefects, governors, counselors, treasurers, judges, magistrates,{6} and all the other authorities of the province to attend the dedication of the statue that he{7} had erected. [3] So the satraps, prefects, governors, counselors, treasurers, judges, magistrates, and all the other provincial authorities assembled for the dedication of the statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had erected. They were standing in front of the statue that Nebuchadnezzar had erected.{8}

[4] Then the herald{9} made a loud{10} proclamation: "To you, O peoples, nations, and language groups, the following command is given:{11} [5] When you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither,{12} trigon, harp, pipes, and all kinds of music, you must{13} bow down and pay homage to the golden statue that King Nebuchadnezzar has erected. [6] Whoever does not bow down and pay homage will immediately{14} be thrown into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire!" [7] Therefore when they all{15} heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, trigon, harp, pipes,{16} and all kinds of music, all the peoples, nations, and language groups began bowing down and paying homage to the golden statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had erected.

[8] Now{17} at that time certain{18} Chaldeans came forward and brought malicious accusations against{19} the Jews. [9] They said{20} to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever!{21} [10] You have issued an edict, O king, that everyone must bow down and pay homage to the golden statue when they hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, trigon, harp, pipes, and all kinds of music. [11] And whoever does not bow down and pay homage must be thrown into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire. [12] But there are Jewish men whom you appointed over the administration of the province of Babylon - Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego - and these men{22} have not shown proper respect to you, O king. They don't serve your gods and they don't pay homage to the golden statue that you have erected."

[13] Then Nebuchadnezzar in a fit of rage{23} demanded that they bring{24} Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego before him. So they brought them{25} before the king. [14] Nebuchadnezzar said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you don't serve my gods and that you don't pay homage to the golden statue that I erected? [15] Now if you are ready, when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, trigon, harp, pipes, and all kinds of music, you must bow down and pay homage to the statue that I had made. If you don't pay homage to it, you will immediately be thrown into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire. Now, who is that god who can rescue you from my power?"{26} [16] Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied to King Nebuchadnezzar,{27} "We do not need to give you a reply{28} concerning this. [17] If{29} our God whom we are serving exists,{30} he is able to rescue us from the furnace of blazing fire, and he will rescue us, O king, from your power as well. [18] But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we don't serve your gods, and we will not pay homage to the golden statue that you have erected."

[19] Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with rage, and his disposition changed<sup>{31}</sup> toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He gave orders<sup>{32}</sup> to heat the furnace seven times hotter than it was normally heated. [20] He ordered strong<sup>{33}</sup> soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and to throw them into the furnace of blazing fire. [21] So those men were tied up while still wearing their cloaks, trousers, turbans, and other clothes,<sup>{34}</sup> and were thrown into the furnace<sup>{35}</sup> of blazing fire. [22] But since the king's command was so urgent, and the furnace was so excessively hot, the men who escorted<sup>{36}</sup> Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were killed<sup>{37}</sup> by the leaping flames.<sup>{38}</sup> [23] But those three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell into the furnace<sup>{39}</sup> of blazing fire while still securely bound.<sup>{40}</sup>

### **GOD DELIVERS HIS SERVANTS**

[24] Then King Nebuchadnezzar was startled and quickly got up. He said to his ministers, "Wasn't it three men that we tied up and threw<sup>{41}</sup> into<sup>{42}</sup> the fire?" They replied to the king, "For sure, O king." [25] He answered, "But I see four men, untied and walking around in the midst of the fire! No harm has come to them! And the appearance of the fourth is like that of a god!"<sup>{43}</sup> [26] Then Nebuchadnezzar approached the door of the furnace of blazing fire. He called out,<sup>{44}</sup> "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the most high God, come out! Come here!"

Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego emerged from the fire.<sup>{45}</sup> [27] Once the satraps, prefects, governors, and ministers of the king had gathered around, they saw that those men were physically<sup>{46}</sup> unharmed by the fire.<sup>{47}</sup> The hair of their heads was not singed, nor were their trousers damaged. Not even the smell of fire was to be found on them!

[28] Nebuchadnezzar exclaimed,<sup>{48}</sup> "Praised be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent forth his angel<sup>{49}</sup> and has rescued his servants who trusted in him, ignoring<sup>{50}</sup> the edict of the king and giving up their bodies rather than<sup>{51}</sup> serve or pay homage to any god other than their God! [29] I hereby decree<sup>{52}</sup> that any people, nation, or language group that blasphemes<sup>{53}</sup> the god of Shadrach, Meshach, or Abednego will be dismembered and his home reduced to rubble! For there exists no other god who can deliver in this way." [30] Then Nebuchadnezzar<sup>{54}</sup> promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

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{1} 3:1 sn The LXX introduces this chapter with the following chronological note: "in the eighteenth year of." Such a date would place these events at about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. (cf. 2 Kgs 25:8). However, there seems to be no real basis for associating the events of Daniel 3 with this date.

{2} 3:1 sn There is no need to think of Nebuchadnezzar's image as being solid gold. No doubt the sense is that it was overlaid with gold (cf. Isa 40:19; Jer 10:3-4), with the result that it presented a dazzling self-compliment to the greatness of Nebuchadnezzar's achievements.

{3} 3:1 sn According to a number of patristic authors, the image represented a deification of Nebuchadnezzar himself. This is not clear from the biblical text, however.

{4} 3:1 tn Aram “sixty cubits.” Assuming a length of 18 inches for the standard cubit, the image would be 90 feet (27.4 m) high.

{5} 3:1 tn Aram “six cubits.” Assuming a length of 18 inches for the standard cubit, the image would be 9 feet (2.74 m) wide. sn The dimensions of the image (ninety feet high and nine feet wide) imply that it did not possess normal human proportions, unless a base for the image is included in the height dimension. The ancient world knew of other tall statues. For example, the Colossus of Rhodes - the huge statue of Helios which stood (ca. 280-224 B.C.) at the entrance to the harbor at Rhodes and was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world - was said to be seventy cubits (105 ft or 32 m) in height, which would make it even taller than Nebuchadnezzar’s image.

{6} 3:2 sn The specific duties of the seven types of officials listed here (cf. vv. 3, 27) are unclear. The Aramaic words that are used are transliterations of Akkadian or Persian technical terms whose exact meanings are uncertain. The translations given here follow suggestions set forth in BDB.

{7} 3:2 tn Aram “Nebuchadnezzar the king.” The proper name and title have been replaced by the relative pronoun (“he”) in the translation for stylistic reasons.

{8} 3:3 tc The LXX and Theodotion lack the words “that Nebuchadnezzar had erected.”

{9} 3:4 tn According to BDB 1097 s.v. כָּרוֹז the Aramaic word used here is a Greek loanword, but other scholars have argued instead for a Persian derivation (HALOT 1902 s.v. \*כָּרוֹז).

{10} 3:4 tn Aram “in strength.”

{11} 3:4 tn Aram “they are saying.”

{12} 3:5 sn The word zither (Aramaic קִיטָרוֹס [qitaros]), and the words for harp (Aramaic פְּסַנְתֵּרִין [pésanterin]) and pipes (Aramaic סוּמְפִנְיָה [sumponéyah]), are of Greek derivation. Though much has been made of this in terms of suggesting a date in the Hellenistic period for the writing of the book, it is not surprising that a few Greek cultural terms, all of them the names of musical instruments, should appear in this book. As a number of scholars have pointed out, the bigger surprise (if, in fact, the book is to be dated to the Hellenistic period) may be that there are so few Greek loanwords in Daniel.

{13} 3:5 tn The imperfect Aramaic verbs have here an injunctive nuance.

{14} 3:6 tn Aram “in that hour.”

{15} 3:7 tn Aram “all the peoples.”

{16} 3:7 tc Though not in the Aramaic text of BHS, this word appears in many medieval Hebrew MSS, some LXX MSS, and Vulgate. Cf. vv. 5, 10, 15.

{17} 3:8 tc This expression is absent in Theodotion.

{18} 3:8 tn Aram “men.”

{19} 3:8 tn Aram “ate the pieces of.” This is a rather vivid idiom for slander.

{20} 3:9 tn Aram “answered and said,” a common Aramaic idiom that occurs repeatedly in this chapter.

{21} 3:9 sn O king, live forever! is a comment of typical court courtesy that is not necessarily indicative of the real sentiments of the speaker. Ancient oriental court protocol could sometimes require a certain amount of hypocrisy.

{22} 3:12 sn Daniel’s absence from this scene has sparked the imagination of commentators, some of whom have suggested that perhaps he was unable to attend the dedication due to sickness or due to being away on business. Hippolytus supposed that Daniel may have been watching from a distance.

{23} 3:13 tn Aram “in anger and wrath”; NASB “in rage and anger.” The expression is a hendiadys.

{24} 3:13 tn The Aramaic infinitive is active.

{25} 3:13 tn Aram “these men.” The pronoun is used in the translation to avoid undue repetition.

{26} 3:15 tn Aram “hand.” So also in v. 17.

{27} 3:16 tc In the MT this word is understood to begin the following address (“answered and said to the king, ‘O Nebuchadnezzar’”). However, it seems unlikely that Nebuchadnezzar’s subordinates would address the king in such a familiar way, particularly in light of the danger that they now found themselves in. The present translation implies moving the atnach from “king” to “Nebuchadnezzar.”

{28} 3:16 tn Aram “to return a word to you.”

{29} 3:17 tc The ancient versions typically avoid the conditional element of v. 17.

{30} 3:17 tn The Aramaic expression used here is very difficult to interpret. The question concerns the meaning and syntax of אִי־תֵי (’itay, “is” or “exist”). There are several possibilities. (1) Some interpreters take this word closely with the participle later in the verse יִכְחֵל (yakhil, “able”), understanding the two words to form a periphrastic construction (“if our God is...able”; cf. H. Bauer and P. Leander, *Grammatik des Biblisch-Aramäischen*, 365, §111b). But the separation of the two elements from one another is not an argument in favor of this understanding. (2) Other interpreters take the first part of v. 17 to mean “If it is so, then our God will deliver us” (cf. KJV, ASV, RSV, NASB). However, the normal sense of ’itay is existence; on this point see F. Rosenthal, *Grammar*, 45, §95. The present translation maintains the sense of existence for the verb (“If our God...exists”), even though the statement is admittedly difficult to understand in this light. The statement may be an implicit reference back to Nebuchadnezzar’s comment in v. 15, which denies the existence of a god capable of delivering from the king’s power.

{31} 3:19 tn Aram “the appearance of his face was altered”; cf. NLT “his face became distorted with rage”; NAB “[his] face became livid with utter rage.”



{32} 3:19 tn Aram “he answered and said.”

{33} 3:20 tn This is sometimes taken as a comparative: “[some of the] strongest.”

{34} 3:21 sn There is a great deal of uncertainty with regard to the specific nature of these items of clothing.

{35} 3:21 tn Aram “into the midst of the furnace.” For stylistic reasons the words “the midst of” have been left untranslated.

{36} 3:22 tn Aram “caused to go up.”

{37} 3:22 tn The Aramaic verb is active.

{38} 3:22 tn Aram “the flame of the fire” (so KJV, ASV, NASB); NRSV “the raging flames.”

{39} 3:23 tn Aram “into the midst of the furnace.” For stylistic reasons the words “the midst of” have been left untranslated.

{40} 3:23 sn The deuterocanonical writings known as The Prayer of Azariah and The Song of the Three present at this point a confession and petition for God’s forgiveness and a celebration of God’s grace for the three Jewish youths in the fiery furnace. Though not found in the Hebrew/Aramaic text of Daniel, these compositions do appear in the ancient Greek versions.

{41} 3:24 tn Aram “we threw...bound.”

{42} 3:24 tn Aram “into the midst of.”

{43} 3:25 sn The phrase like that of a god is in Aramaic “like that of a son of the gods.” Many patristic writers understood this phrase in a christological sense (i.e., “the Son of God”). But it should be remembered that these are words spoken by a pagan who is seeking to explain things from his own polytheistic frame of reference; for him the phrase “like a son of the gods” is equivalent to “like a divine being.”

{44} 3:26 tn Aram “answered and said.”

{45} 3:26 tn Aram “from the midst of the fire.” For stylistic reasons the words “the midst of” have been left untranslated.

{46} 3:27 tn Aram “in their bodies.”

{47} 3:27 tn Aram “the fire did not have power.”

{48} 3:28 tn Aram “answered and said.”

{49} 3:28 sn The king identifies the “son of the gods” (v. 25) as an angel. Comparable Hebrew expressions are used elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible for the members of God’s angelic assembly (see

Gen 6:2, 4; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7; Pss 29:1; 89:6). An angel later comes to rescue Daniel from the lions (Dan 6:22).

{50} 3:28 tn Aram “they changed” or “violated.”

{51} 3:28 tn Aram “so that they might not.”

{52} 3:29 tn Aram “from me is placed an edict.”

{53} 3:29 tn Aram “speaks negligence.”

{54} 3:30 tn Aram “and the king.” The proper name has been supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons.

## Questions

1. V1 – What did Nebuchadnezzar have built and how does it relate to the image from the dream in Ch 2?
2. V1 - What do you think his motivation was for doing this? How was this inconsistent with what Nebuchadnezzar learned from his dream?
3. V2 – This verse lists a whole set of people that were summoned. Who are these people and where did they come from?
4. V5 – What are the people commanded to do?
5. V7 – And what happened when the music was played? How many people did this?
6. Why would Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego not bow down to the image?

7. V8 -12 – “certain Chaldeans” came to the King and “accused” (Aramaic is “ ‘akal qerats”) “certain Jews” of disobedience. How did these Chaldeans actually feel toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? What was their true motivation? (hint: what does this Aramaic phrase mean? Remember what happened in Ch 1 regarding these Chaldeans and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego). From a spiritual warfare perspective, what was happening here?
  
8. V13-15 – How does Nebuchadnezzar respond to this? What is his view of God?
  
9. V16-18 – Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego respond. What defense or explanation do they give? Why?
  
10. V16-18 – What was their actual response?
  
11. V19-23 – We are given many details regarding the preparation of their (attempted) execution in the furnace. What are they?

12. V24-25, V27 – What actually happened? How does this relate to the details in V19-23? Who gets the glory here?

13. V25 – Who is this *fourth person* in the furnace described as having an appearance “like a son of the gods” (ESV)? Does something like this happen elsewhere in the Book of Daniel?

14. V26 – After this rescue, Nebuchadnezzar calls God the “Most High God”. What is he proclaiming here? Has he really changed?

15. V29-30 – Nebuchadnezzar takes two actions (new decree, promotion) following this event. In what way is this filled with irony given the Chaldean’s actions that initiated it?

16. What do we learn about leading a life of obedience from this event?

17. Faced with the same or similar circumstances, would you do the same?

18. With respect to the furnace and the three young men, God could have prevented them from being placed into the furnace, but He didn't. What do we learn from this? How is that applicable to your life today?

19. At the dedication ceremony, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego found themselves surrounded by people doing what the world asked of them. Yet, they did otherwise. We've all found ourselves in this situation to one degree or another at least once, if not many times. How did you choose to act at those times? Hebrews 4:12 says "the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart". What was going on in your heart then? How is this a challenge to you today?