

Daniel Book Study

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 (NKJV) with Notes:

3 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.

- Some suggest the king constructed this image based upon the same image he saw in his dream, described in the second chapter. However, the majority of scholars believe the event recorded here happened between fifteen and thirty years after Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The Aramaic word for image here is *tselem*, which corresponds in meaning to a shade, a shadow, or an image. This image was some form of an idol constructed to be worshipped. For centuries, there has been a strong debate about the dimensions of this image. Sixty cubits would be about 125 feet high, and the width of six cubits would be twelve and a half feet wide--very disproportionate in terms of height to width. Based on the fact that the height was ten times larger than the width, some scholars suggest this was a large, gold-covered column.

One theory suggests that the meeting described in this passage was an economic summit, as by this time Nebuchadnezzar had expanded his empire to include other countries and provinces and could have been introducing his new economic policies to the highest-ranking members of his empire. This theory does hold some merit, since Nebuchadnezzar had initiated an economic policy of using gold as the financial standard for his empire and for world trade. The idea of an economic summit would make sense considering the large registry of attendees described. - *Perry Stone Hebraic Prophetic Study Bible, p. 1330*

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."

- For some reason Daniel did not attend this dedication service; however, his three companions were present (v. 12). This situation would become a major test for these men, who under the threat of death, and while standing among thousands of leaders of authority, refused to bow to the image when the music began playing (v. 4-7, 12). Declining to worship any idol or fabricated image, they chose instead to be obedient to the Law of Moses. They knew idolatry had been Judah's downfall and had led to their captivity. It is easy when You are away from home; your church, and people familiar with your testimony to compromise when no one is waiting in order to make a few friends. Knowing that God was watching, these men refused to compromise. - *Perry Stone Hebraic Prophetic Study Bible, p. 1330*

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."

- Nebuchadnezzar knew these three men, as they were governors and leaders in his kingdom. He gave them a second opportunity to bow, but they refused. Note that these three men's names had been changed from Hebrew names to Babylonian idols' names, not by their own choice, but by cultural tradition. They determined not to worship any false god in Babylon and believed God could deliver them from the fiery furnace. - *Perry Stone Hebraic Prophetic Study Bible, p. 1331*

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.

- The word for furnace here is *attun*, meaning "to smoke," and can refer to various types of furnaces. The image was made of or covered with gold, and to construct such a large golden image, it had been necessary to smelt gold ore in a very hot furnace. It is very possible that the huge furnace into which these three men were thrown was the furnace used to melt the gold that had formed the image. The melting point of gold is 1,947.9741 degrees Fahrenheit. According to those who deal with house fires, the temperature of an average house fire is 1,100 degrees Fahrenheit and continues at this temperature for twenty-seven minutes. Thus, for gold to melt, the heat must be increased by more than 800 degrees. Gold's melting point is at about 1,948 degrees Fahrenheit (1,064 °C). A fire is made hotter not by how much more fire is added, but by the combustible substances placed in a burning fire. For example, coal increases the heat of a fire because it contains a dense collection of carbon. Babylon, which was located in present-day Iraq, was a land noted for black pitch-like and oil-like substances that were used for lighting lamps and building fires. In this narrative, certain unnamed substances could have been thrown into the furnace, heating the fire to such an intense and dangerous level that it consumed the men who threw in the three Jews. The fiery furnace could melt gold, but the same furnace had no power to burn the flesh of three godly men. - *Perry Stone Hebraic Prophetic Study Bible, p. 1331*

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.

- The king threw in three men but saw four men walking in the fire loose and unharmed; only the rope that had bound them had burned. The fourth man was recognized as an angel sent to rescue these men. The angel was the Lord Himself in a pre-incarnate appearance of the Messiah (see v. 25). No one saw the "Son of God" leave after the three men came out of the furnace, and the old-time preachers used to preach, "Three men went into the furnace and three came out! The fourth man is still in the furnace!" Their point: When God's people are thrown into the furnace of affliction, the adversary may attempt to burn their faith and trust in God; but the Son of God, Christ Himself, will meet them in the fire. He will preserve His children from the fumes and bring them out. They will not even smell like smoke. - *Perry Stone Hebraic Prophetic Study Bible, p. 1331-32*

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.

- God's miracle of deliverance so impressed the king that he issued a national decree to honor the true God. He also promoted the men. It is important to stand true to God's Word and covenant; God blesses those who place His Kingdom first (see Matt. 6:33). - *Perry Stone Hebraic Prophetic Study Bible, p. 1332*

THE AMAZING PROPHETIC PARALLELS BETWEEN THE FIERY FURNACE
AND THE GREAT TRIBULATION (Chapter 3)
Perry Stone Hebraic Prophetic Study Bible, p. 1332

The fiery furnace described in Daniel and the Great Tribulation of Revelation have amazing similarities. One such parallel is Nebuchadnezzar's demand for the Jewish men to worship his idol and the demand of the future Antichrist and False Prophet to worship of the image of the Beast:

<u>Imagery and Events in Daniel 3</u>	<u>Parallel Events in Revelation</u>
There is an image with men worshipping it (3:1)	There is an image of the Beast (13:14-15)
The image is sixty cubits by six cubits (3:1)	The Beast's number is 666 (13:18)
Those not worshipping the image are to be killed (3:4-6)	Those not worshipping the image are killed (13:15)
The furnace is heated seven times hotter (3:19)	The Tribulation is seven years (Rev. 11:2; 13:5)
Three men survive the fire and live (3:23-25)	A remnant survives during the Tribulation (Rev. 7)
The enemies are thrown into the fire (3:20-22)	The Beast and False Prophet are cast into fire (Rev. 19:20)