

## Daniel Chapter 3

### Pastor Mike Wells Study Notes

#### Overview of Daniel 3:

Chapter 3 of Daniel is all about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and the crisis God used to test them and bless them. Daniel is not mentioned in Chapter 3. Many theologians believe he may have been out of the country on business. Wherever he was, he obviously wasn't present when the incident took place.

***Daniel 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.***

- This is more than twenty years since the last record of Daniel and associates in Babylon.
- Nebuchadnezzar attempted to implement a '**one-world**' religion in the Babylonian empire.
- Some theologians believe that the image described was of Nebuchadnezzar himself and was an attempt by him to make himself deity.
- The image was made of gold (or at least was gold plated).
- Remember how in the dream of chapter 2 that Babylon (Nebuchadnezzar) was the head of gold (See Daniel 2:38)
- The image (statue) was sixty cubits (about ninety feet) tall.
- The width of six cubits (about nine feet) was most likely the thickness from its back to its chest.
- The statue (image) of gold was set up in the plain of Dura.
- Dura was a considerable distance from the city of Babylon.
- Daniel most likely remained in Babylon to tend to the business of state while Nebuchadnezzar traveled to this site.
- This may explain why Daniel was not present in this episode.
- Dura is still mentioned as being in the province of Babylon even though it was believed to be some distance away.

***Daniel 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.***

- It appears that virtually all other governmental officials of the empire were ordered there for the dedication of the great golden image set up by Nebuchadnezzar except for Daniel.
- Though Daniel was described as being the chief of the governors of the wise men of Babylon and ruler of the province of Babylon, he wasn't present.

***Daniel 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 army of governmental officials of the Babylonian Empire assembled before the golden image set up by Nebuchadnezzar standing in front of the statue.

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

- As the ceremony began, an official herald of the king issued an edict to the assembled officials from the various nations and languages represented in the Babylonian Empire.

**Daniel 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.***

- A band (orchestra) was ready to play and exalt the golden image.
- When the band played, the officials of the Empire were to fall down and worship the golden image set up by Nebuchadnezzar.
- All assembled were under orders to bow down and worship it.

**Daniel 3 : 6 - *And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.***

- Anyone who refused to fall down and worship the golden image would die that same hour by being cast into a super-heated furnace.
- It may have been the same furnace used to prepare the gold for the statue.
- Nebuchadnezzar was attempting to not only impose emperor worship on his empire, but to unify the religions.
- The Babylonian Empire was comprised of many conquered nations, including Judah.
- They all had their own forms of religious practices.
- Nebuchadnezzar intended to impose a national religion on his kingdom.
- And refusal to worship the image would bring immediate death.

**Daniel 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.***

- At the appointed hour, the band played to the golden image and the assembled officials from throughout the Babylonian Empire fell down and worshiped it.
- All but three that is.

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

- Remember, that the Chaldeans were the native Babylonians.
- Only three Jews are named— Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.
- There may have been others present, but only three are named.
- Again, Daniel was not present.
- It may be that Daniel was so powerful that jealous Chaldeans dared not challenge him.
- Since Daniel was not present, they decided to go after other Jews, notably Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.
- They were the three most prominent Jews in the Empire under Daniel.

**Daniel 3 : 9-11** – *9 They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live forever. 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. 11 And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.*

- The Chaldeans approached the king with flattery.
- They then reminded the king of the orders that all were to fall down and worship the golden image when the music played.
- And anyone who refused to was to be executed on the spot.

**Daniel 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.*

- The jealous Chaldeans told the king on the Jews lack of worship of his statue.
- Notice that they first named Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego as *Jews*
- Jews who had been placed over the affairs of the province of Babylon.
- The accusers informed the king that these named Jews ignored the king's order.
- They never served Nebuchadnezzar's gods and they refused to worship the golden image set up on that day.

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

- Upon learning of the disobedience of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Nebuchadnezzar was angry and ordered them brought before him.

**Daniel 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?*

- He directly asked them if it was true that they didn't serve the gods of Babylon or worshipped the golden image he had set up.

**Daniel 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?*

- Without giving Shadrach, Meshach, or Abednego an opportunity to answer, Nebuchadnezzar offered them one more chance to fall down and worship his image.
- He would have the band play its fanfare again.
- However, if they refused to worship the golden image, the king again warned they would be cast into the furnace.

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

- The text literally reads, 'O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer thee in this matter.'
- They basically were saying, Nebuchadnezzar you have made your mind and so have we.

- There is no reason to even answer your questions

**Daniel 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.***

- They informed the king that if it came to being thrown into the furnace, their God—whom they served—was able to deliver them.
- In fact, they were confident that God *would* deliver them from the king.
- They certainly had courage and conviction.
- **Isaiah 43:2 - *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.***
- They *believed* the promise of God.
- They knew the furnace lay ahead for them.
- But they also knew the promise of God.
- By faith, they had obeyed God’s Word regarding bowing down to other gods.
- So they were convinced that God would deliver them as He had promised.
- That is faith!

**Daniel 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.***

- On the other hand, if God chose not to deliver them, they still would not serve the pagan gods of Babylon nor worship the golden image Nebuchadnezzar had set up.
- End of discussion!

**Daniel 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.***

- Nebuchadnezzar was used to having his way.
- Rarely if ever had anyone ever openly defied him to his face.
- When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego informed him they would not obey his order, Nebuchadnezzar was enraged to the point his face was distorted.
- He was infuriated
- He then ordered for the furnace to be heated seven times more than it had ever been heated.
- The furnace in question likely was same furnace that had been used to melt the gold and other metals for the casting of the molten image.

**Daniel 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.***

- Nebuchadnezzar also ordered the mightiest warriors in the Babylonian army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and the cast them into the superheated furnace.

**Daniel 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.***

- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were bound with all their clothes on, including undergarments as well as coats.
- The intent was that the burning of their clothing would prolong their agony and increase their pain.
- But God used it to demonstrate even more clearly the miracle He was about to perform.
- Fully clothed and bound, they were thrown into the roaring furnace.

**Daniel 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.***

- When the king's best warriors threw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the furnace; the intense heat of the furnace took their lives.

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

- At the mouth of the furnace with their executioners already dead, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, all bound, fell down into the midst of the roaring furnace.

**Daniel 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.***

- Just when Nebuchadnezzar thought he would be vindicated he was amazed and astonished as he looked into the furnace.
- He asked his advisors if they had bound and cast three men into the fire.
- They assured him that they had.

**Daniel 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.***

- Nebuchadnezzar now saw four men in the furnace.
- They were no longer bound, they were walking around, and they didn't appear to be even bothered by the burning fire in the furnace in anyway..
- And then king proclaimed that the fourth one "*is like the Son of God.*"
- What Nebuchadnezzar saw was a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ.
- Nebuchadnezzar may not have understood what he saw or uttered, but God placed His words in his mouth.
- God had promised in **Jeremiah 42:11**, "*Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom ye are afraid; be not afraid of him, saith the LORD: for I am with you to save you, and to deliver you from his hand.*"
- God in the person of Pre-incarnate Christ came to comfort and deliver His servants.

**Daniel 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.***

- Astounded, Nebuchadnezzar got as close to the mouth of the furnace as he could and called for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to come out.
- Notice also how he voluntarily described them as “*servants of the most high God.*”
- Nebuchadnezzar did not need a sermon on the omnipotence (power) of God and how He delivers His people.
- He had just witnessed first-hand how God delivered three Jews who were willing to lay down their lives to be faithful and obedient to their Lord and Saviour.
- After being commanded to come out of the furnace they did as ordered.

**Daniel 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.***

- Not only was Nebuchadnezzar astonished by what he had witnessed, but all his advisors marveled how the intense fire had no power over them.
- Their hair was not even singed, their coats were not burned, nor was there even the smell of smoke on them.
- Anyone who has ever been around any kind of fire knows the smell of smoke is inevitable upon clothing and hair.
- God had performed a major miracle of deliverance for His three faithful and obedient servants.
- Everyone that witnessed the event was astonished.

**Daniel 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.***

- The ruler of the Babylonian Empire had just had another encounter with the God of Israel and he could not deny it.
- His power and deliverance were apparent for all to see.
- So, Nebuchadnezzar cried out in praise to Jehovah God and praised His name.
- He here refers to the Son of God as His angel.
- God indeed sent His Son with the appearance of an angel and delivered His servants.
- They had trusted God for their salvation and accordingly defied and altered the king’s commandment.
- Even Nebuchadnezzar knew that God had honored and delivered them in turn.

**Daniel 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.***

- Nebuchadnezzar decreed that if anyone in his realm in any way spoke bad of the name of Jehovah God, the God of the Jews; that they would be butchered and their houses made a dunghill—a pile for sewage and manure.
- Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged the power and deliverance of the Almighty.

- The decree also may have prevented other weak-kneed yellow bellied Jews from drifting back into idolatry.

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

- Not only were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego restored to their former positions, they actually were promoted to even higher rank in the province of Babylon.
- **Psalm 58:11** - *So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.*
- Indeed, there is a reward for the righteous.