

1. Introduction:

Daniel 3:1 *Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits [60 cubits is about ninety feet], and the breadth thereof six cubits [6 cubits is about nine feet]: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. ...*

- a. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had conquered Judah & Syria and taken their people to be his slaves.
- b. This King trained some of the smartest captives in the language and ways of the Babylonians. He needed managers for the captives that spoke their language and could explain to the slaves what needed to be done in their own language.
- c. He also wanted to learn the wisdom and technology of these other cultures to strengthen the Babylonian kingdom
- d. He wanted all the slaves and citizens to have one loyalty, so he insisted that they all worship his gods. He built a golden image 90 feet tall on a plain so everyone could see it. He commanded that everyone gather at the same time to worship this image. All Jews were forbidden to worship ANY image, see Exodus 20:4 - 6

2. King's Demand

Daniel 3:4-6 *Then an herald [a man with a loud voice] cried aloud, "To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up: And whoso falleth not down [And whoever doesn't fall face-down] and worshipping shall the same hour [shall immediately] be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."*

An Inclusive Expectation: Nebuchadnezzar didn't object to any of the gods from the captured nations, as long as they worshipped the god of Babylon as well.

- a. King Nebuchadnezzar wanted total worship of his gods
- b. He commanded all in his kingdom of Babylon to worship his image, which was supposed to represent all the gods that Babylon knew about
- c. Jews only nation in ancient world who worshipped the One True God. This God would not allow His glory to be reduced to an image, see John 4:23 - 24

3. Jewish Disobedience

Daniel 3:8-9, 12 *Wherefore at that time [after 3 Jews refused to worship the image] certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews. They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever [an ancient version of today's "long live the king"]." ... 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 [have disobeyed your clear decree]: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."*

- a. Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego previously elevated to positions in government.
- b. The Chaldeans were considered the wisest people in Babylonian society. Some Chaldeans singled out & accused these three Jews of disrespecting the king because they refused to worship the image
- c. About 10,000 Jewish captives living in Babylon, but only 3 didn't bow down when the music started.
- d. They were easy to identify as the only ones not bowing down in the entire Plain of Dura

4. The King's Defiance

Daniel 3:13-15 *Then Nebuchadnezzar **in his rage and fury** commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king. 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**? 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 music, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well [all will be forgiven]: 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?**"*

- a. Personal matter
 - i. King became furiously angry
 - ii. Nebuchadnezzar became enraged that anyone would defy him, especially some of his own officials
 - iii. Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego brought before the king and given a second chance to save their lives by bowing down to the image
- b. Prideful Matter
 - i. : "...*which I have set up?*" Nebuchadnezzar had set up this image at great expense and expected all people to be respectful of his wishes.
 - ii. He never considered their loyalty to their own god, nor the conscience or sincerity of the worshipper. He wanted his way and threatened death for the whole family if one member disobeyed.

c. Problematic Matter

- i. They were questioned about who they worshipped
- ii. “*who...shall deliver you out of my hands?*” Nebuchadnezzar made this issue a showdown between himself and the God of the Jews.
- iii. King questions “Who is that god that shall deliver you ...?”
- iv. Who is THAT God?: This was a mocking question and a disrespectful term for any god. Nebuchadnezzar had never seen any of the gods of any of the other nations do anything for the people who worshipped them. He did not have any respect for the God of the Jews, either.

5. Jewish Declaration

Daniel 3:16-18 *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, **we are not careful to answer thee in this matter** [we will answer you plainly]. *If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us [our God may choose to save us] from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand [and even if we perish we will be safely in His keeping], O king. 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.*”*

a. Declaration of Faith

- i. Three declare their faith in Almighty God
- ii. “...*we are not careful to answer thee in this matter...*” The Hebrew men didn’t need time to prepare their appeal for their lives before the king. They were saying to the king, “You don’t know our God.”

b. Declaration of Fortitude

- i. God is able to deliver their lives out of furnace or the king’s hand
- ii. And if not, they will still continue to refuse to worship king’s image
- iii. “...*our God whom we serve is able to deliver us...*” They said they would rather die than betray their God, Who had done so many other miracles for their people. But they were willing to display their courage in saying to the king that their God was more powerful than he was, and that he was able to deliver them from the harm he intended to do to them.

c. King is absolute monarch & no one before has ever told him “no”

6. God's Deliverance

a. King's actions

Daniel 3:19, 21-22 *Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed [his anger was seen in his face] against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace seven times more than it was wont to be heated [seven times hotter than it had ever been heated]. ... Then **these men were bound** in their coats, their hosen [shoes and socks], and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. 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.*

- i. King became excessively angry
- ii. He commanded for the furnace to be super-heated
- iii. Attendants threw the three into the furnace, but the heat was so hot that the attendants died from the heat

b. God delivered their freedom

Daniel 3:24-25 *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." 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.**"*

- i. King questions his own eyesight & asks his advisors about how many men were thrown into furnace
- ii. They all agree that there were three men thrown into the furnace
- iii. But the King says that he sees four people walking around inside the furnace & the 4th person "like the Son of God"

c. God delivered them fellowship:

- i. God was with them in their trial/test, and protected them from any harm.
- ii. The only thing burnt in the fire was the ropes on their hands and feet.

d. Nebuchadnezzar delivered them favor

Daniel 3:26-27 *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** [come out of the furnace and stand before me].” Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire. 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 [scorched], nor the smell of fire had passed on them [and they didn't even smell like smoke].*

- i. King asks the three to walk out of the furnace
- ii. All present saw that Shadrach, Meshach & Abegnego had no hurt & no smell of smoke on them.
- iii. Only thing burned up were the ropes that tied them up!

7. King's Decree

Daniel 3:28-29 *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 [defied] the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God. Therefore I make a decree [a verbal order effective immediately], That every people, nation, and language, which speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill [a trash dump]: **because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort** [no other God could have saved anyone in this way].”*

- a. The God of the Jews frustrated king's command
- b. Their God delivered them from the king's furnace
- c. King admits that their God had power to deliver His people
- d. They would never have to worship any other gods
- e. King states that no other God can deliver His worshippers after this manner.
- f. The God of the Jews is too powerful to tangle with

Nebuchadnezzar delivers promotion for their God: *“Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego... because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.”* The king decrees that no one can speak against the God of the Jews on fear of a horrible death. The God of the Jews is set above any other god.

8. Conclusion

- a. King exempted Jewish nation to only worship their God
- b. No one allowed to speak anything against the God of the Jews

Psalm 34:7 *The angel of the LORD encampeth round about [surrounds and protects] them that fear him, and delivereth them*