



# Daniel 3

Even in the Fire

“The Devil tempts us to destroy our faith, but God tests us to develop our faith, because a faith that can’t be tested can’t be trusted. False faith withers in times of trial, but true faith takes deeper root, grows, and brings glory to God.”

–Warren W. Wiersbe

# Daniel 3

- ◆ Many scholars speculate that the events in Chapter 3 happened 20 years or so after the events of chapter 2
- ◆ this would put Daniel and his friends somewhere around early 40's

# Daniel 3:1

- ◆ 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
  - ◆ 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.
    - ◆ is was ALL gold — he planned on no successors
    - ◆ 60 cubits x 6 cubits
      - ◆ 6 = number of man; ALWAYS falls short of God's perfect number
      - ◆ man will NEVER be greater than God
      - ◆ 666

# Daniel 3:2-3

- ◆ 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.

- ◆ formal invitation — for everyone, obligatory, required
- ◆ Daniel's rivals set this up with the intent to overthrow these Jewish men
  - ◆ why?
    - ◆ jealousy because of what was given to them in chapter 2
    - ◆ this whole thing was a set up by possibly the same men that Daniel saved in Ch. 2

- ◆ this was for the “nations”
  - ◆ not just Babylon proper, but all of the surrounding nations — other areas of the Babylonian empire
  - ◆ up to 300,000 people that would attend

- ◆ Nebuchadnezzar made this decree
  - ◆ if you didn't fall down and worship, you would be burned to death in the same hour
  - ◆ he had his own hell
    - ◆ he thought he was God; he was known as the king of kings



- ◆ this was not a political meeting
  - ◆ it was a religious service
    - ◆ complete with music
    - ◆ it involved “worshippers” — “worship” is used at least 11 times in the passage
    - ◆ music stirs the emotions and makes it easy to manipulate and win submission and obedience
    - ◆ music strengthens nationalism, motivates conquest and inspires people to act
    - ◆ music grips human’s thoughts and emotions
    - ◆ is the music we listen to healthy or does it drive us away from God?

## Daniel 3:4-7

- ◆ 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.

- ◆ the only person who could remain standing was Nebuchadnezzar
- ◆ however, there were three others that would remain standing, as well
  - ◆ this takes extreme courage
  - ◆ when you need courage to stand for what's right just think of Shadrac, Mechach and Abednego

- ◆ this was the king's men that did this
  - ◆ they were trying to destroy them
- ◆ the herald didn't give a choice
  - ◆ he said it was either bow down or die
  - ◆ the superstitious people didn't think twice about it, they just did it

- ◆ we all have faith (Rom. 12:3)
- ◆ difference between the true believer and the unbeliever isn't the presence of faith; but the object of that faith
  - ◆ the crowd believed the herald, and therefore obeyed
  - ◆ the three Hebrew men believed the commandment of God, so they disobeyed
  - ◆ the crowd had a credulous, believe anything type of faith
  - ◆ the three Hebrews had a confident faith

- ◆ there were thousands of Jewish exiles in Babylon, and they were represented by Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego
  - ◆ if these three men bowed down to the idol, all the Jews were involved
- ◆ it's easy to say that "everyone is doing it" and there are certain things you have to do to live
  - ◆ these men were not about to argue themselves out of obedience to God
  - ◆ they remembered one word — Exodus 20:4-5 — 4 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. 5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God

## Daniel 3:8-12

- ◆ 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.”

- ◆ this is a set up — they knew the only way to get rid of them was to get them to bow down to an image — they put this idea in the king's head
- ◆ the accusation:
  - ◆ they give no heed to your decree
  - ◆ they do not worship your image
  - ◆ they give no service to your gods
- ◆ this was an attack on Nebuchadnezzar's pride
  - ◆ so, he gets mad



- ◆ these three men stood tall during this time of “worship” of Nebuchadnezzar
- ◆ they remembered 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.

# Warren W. Wiersbe

- ◆ True faith obeys the Lord and trusts Him to work out the consequences. These three Jewish men knew the law of God...Once the Lord has spoken on a matter, the matter is settled and there's no room for discussion or need for compromise. To bow before the image even once, no matter what excuse they might give, would have destroyed their witness and broken their fellowship with God...Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would not bow down to the golden image even once because it would lead to serving Nebuchadnezzar's false gods for the rest of their lives.

## Daniel 3:13-18

- ◆ 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?"

## Daniel 3:13-18

- ◆ 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.”

- ◆ Nebuchadnezzar gave them a second chance — he had some kind of favor with them
- ◆ however, Nebuchadnezzar challenges their God by asking what their God could do for them if they didn't bow down
  - ◆ they replied calmly
    - ◆ Jesus said that when we're before kings and governors and don't know what to say His Holy Spirit will give us the words
    - ◆ He gave them the words here!

- ◆ notice what Nebuchadnezzar asks them in 3:15 —  
And then what god will be able to rescue you from my power?”
- ◆ he had obviously forgotten what he himself said in 2:47 — “Truly, your God is the greatest of gods, the Lord over kings, a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this secret.”

- ◆ v. 16 — “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you.
- ◆ “We don’t need to defend ourselves or our God, for our God will defend both Himself and us”
- ◆ they weren’t worried
- ◆ our job is to obey and trust Him and He will do the rest
- ◆ Isaiah 12:2 — Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.

- ◆ they spoke with faith
  - ◆ they didn't affirm that God would deliver them; that would have been presumption
  - ◆ they weren't sure of God's will for them at the time
  - ◆ instead, they stated that their God was able to deliver them, but even if He didn't, they still wouldn't bow down before the king's golden image
- ◆ we don't make promises to God to "persuade" Him to do something for us
  - ◆ that's not believing God, that's bargaining with God
  - ◆ true faith confesses the Lord and obeys Him regardless of the consequences
- ◆ Daniel and his three friends decided from the very beginning they would be different in this foreign land



- ◆ these were men of tremendous faith
- ◆ they spoke three of the most incredible words in the OT... “but if not...”
- ◆ to say these three words requires incredible faith
- ◆ they were going to do what was right — no matter the outcome
- ◆ our faith in God is not dependent on Him doing anything for us; we simply trust Him and obey Him

- ◆ God delivered these men from the flames but there have been many other times with God hasn't delivered His people from the flames
- ◆ Why?

◆ Hebrews 11 — Hall of Faith

- ◆ Heb 11:33-34 — Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions.<sup>34</sup> Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens

◆ But in Hebrews 11:36 — And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; 38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. 39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

◆ as it reads, God didn't answer for these as He did for the those in the first 35 verses

◆ these three Hebrew men believed that God could deliver them, but they would trust Him even if He didn't

◆ this is how faith is supposed to work in our lives

- ◆ In Hebrews 11:34, some escaped the edge of the sword and in 11:36 some were killed by the edge of the sword
  - ◆ we have to have both kinds of faith — faith to live for Him and faith to die for Him
  - ◆ which faith is greater?
    - ◆ there are moments when God tells us to have faith to be delivered, and there are other times when He wants us to trust Him to deliver us by a different way
- ◆ the Bible says of those that died by the edge of the sword that the world wasn't worthy of them
- ◆ Job said (13:15), "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him"
  - ◆ these three said that God was able, and whether He does or does not save them they will continue to trust in Him and not bow down to anyone else

- ◆ Habakkuk 1:1 — How long, O Lord, must I call for help?  
But you do not listen!
- ◆ Habakkuk 3:17-19 — 17 Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: 18 Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. 19 The Lord God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.

## Daniel 3:19-22

- ◆ 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.

## Daniel 3:23-25

- ◆ 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!"



- ◆ Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and in losing his temper heated up the furnace 7 times more
  - ◆ if he really wanted to torture them he would have cooled it down
- ◆ he lost some of his best soldiers
  - ◆ their ropes burned off
  - ◆ nothing else burned
  - ◆ no scorched hair
  - ◆ no smell of smoke
    - ◆ remember what Isaiah said, “when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee”

- ◆ Nebuchadnezzar saw four men walking around in the furnace
  - ◆ “son of the gods”
  - ◆ may have been an angel; may have been Christ (much debate here)
- ◆ Joshua 5 — we know that a man appeared before Joshua before he took Jericho and Joshua challenged him
- ◆ the man told him to take his shoes off and He allows Himself to be worshipped — quite possibly Christ in the OT (theophany)

## Daniel 3:26-27

- ◆ 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!

## Daniel 3:28-29

- ◆ 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!"

# Daniel 3:30

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

- ◆ this story is in the Bible to encourage God's people in their battles against the world, the flesh and the devil
- ◆ these three men sent a strong message to their people in Babylon: Jehovah God is still on the throne, He hasn't forsaken us and He will one day fulfill His promises to His people
- ◆ as we move toward the end of the age, the furnace of opposition will be heated much hotter and the pressure to conform will be stronger. The book of Daniel is a great source of encouragement, because it reminds us that God cares for His people and honors them when they are true to Him (1 Sam 2:30)

This is the image of a man



The number 6 is always the  
number of man

1. Babylonians
2. Medes/Persians
3. Greece
4. Rome
5. Islam
6. Islam/Christianity



## 6 is man's number 7 is God's number

Daniel 2:34-35 — 34 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.

35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.



Daniel 2:44 — **44** And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.



The three main religions of the world  
can be traced back to Abraham:

Judaism

Christianity

Islam

- How long is a generation in the Bible?
  - From the time the covenant was given to Abraham to Christ is 2160 years.
  - Matthew reveals there are 42 generations from Abraham to Christ
    - $2160/42 = 51.4285714$  years
    - Daniel 3:1 — size of statue is  $60 \times 6$  cubits = 360
    - $360/7 = 51.4285714$  — confirmation!!!