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| **Daniel Chapter 3** | |
| Based on the American Standard Version of 1901 | ***Concise PRESENTATION NOTES***  **by Charles Dailey**  (Black underlined words match words in the Bible text.) |
|  | **This chapter reports an incident about Daniel's three buddies. Daniel himself is absent from the scene - perhaps gone on official business. This absence may even account for the event being planned and staged. Daniel wasn't present to deflect the plan.** |
| **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.** | **– While Neb accepted the message from the One God of Heaven in chapter 2, he was still a worshiper of many gods (polytheist) in daily practice.  - This image of gold was 90' high and 9' wide. It was probably overlaid with gold and located southeast of Babylon.** |
| **2) Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the satraps, the deputies, and the governors, 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.** | **– All of the public officials were required to come for the dedication of this monstrosity. This guaranteed a large and enthusiastic attendance from political types whose jobs - and their heads - were at stake. It would also have a strong bonding and unifying effect on the entire empire.** |
| **3) Then the satraps, the deputies, and the governors, 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.** | **– As easily predicted, all of the leaders throughout the realm came. The inns of Babylon were full. It was time for the party to begin.  - The word satraps (kingdom-guardian) is of later Persian origin. Some find evidence here that Daniel did not write the book, but that it was written by a pseudo-Daniel at a later time. It should be noted that Daniel lived until the Persian Empire and was an official in it. He may have been a satrap in that government and merely updated his own Daniel manuscript to reflect the words currently in use at the time the manuscript was released. This is nearly identical to editorial work found in Genesis 14 where the editor (Moses) brought the place-names up to date before finalizing the book. In the Genesis case, the editor left the original terms and added the current ones. In the case of Daniel, he could change them at will because he had written the original.** |
| **4) Then the herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages,** | **– Worship of this image was required by everyone present. It was not the plan here to negate anyone's religion. Rather, the plan was for everyone to join in the worship of a national shrine.** |
| **5) 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;** |  |
| **6) and whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.** | **– The penalty was clearly stated: quick transportation to a burning furnace. Since no one had come for the purpose of cremation, everyone did as required and worshiped the image.  - The furnace was probably a brick kiln. Much construction of the time was of brick.** |
| **7) Therefore at that time, when all the peoples heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of music, all the peoples, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.** |  |
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|  | **Seven levels of provincial administrators were summoned to the dedicatory ceremony. In a society accustomed to a multiplicity of gods and varied cult ceremonies, the only people who would have taken offense at bowing to an idol would have been the Jews.** |
| **8) Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and brought accusation against the Jews.** | **– The Chaldean advisors to the king had been offended by the rapid advancement of the young Jewish men. Here was their chance to eliminate them.** |
| **9) They answered and said to Nebuchadnezzar the king, O king, live for ever.** |  |
| **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 music, shall fall down and worship the golden image;** | **– The cunning Chaldeans repeated the exact words of the herald (verse 4). In case Nebuchadnezzar was thinking about something else or was slightly inebriated, the evidence did not rely on his memory, but his ears.  – The young Jewish governors (2:49) would not bow down because the God of Heaven does not allow this. The first commandment says clearly: "You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth." Exodus 20:3-4** |
| **11) and whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.** |  |
| **12) There are certain Jews whom thou hast appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.** | **– The Chaldeans thought, "Strike while the furnace is hot." They have the perfect test case. Will Neb keep his word? If he doesn't, his ability to rule will be in question.  - These ingrates were not recognizing that it was Daniel who had saved their hides at a point in the past. Chapter 2:24. - The complaint was that the Jews did not have a proper ecumenical spirit.** |
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| **13) Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. Then they brought these men before the king.** | **– The king was enraged by this challenge to his supreme authority. The monarch that ruled the world could not rule his own rage.  - The Chaldeans were busy acting as police to be sure their counterparts did not escape.** |
| **14) Nebuchadnezzar answered and said unto them, Is it of purpose, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, that ye serve not my god, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?** | **– In fairness, Neb questioned the three Jewish compatriots to be certain that there was not a misunderstanding.** |
| **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 music, 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?** | **– He did not want to lose valuable administrators, so he even gave them a second chance.  - "and, because he knew they buoyed themselves up in their refusal with a confidence in their God, he insolently set him a defiance: ‘And who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands? Let him, if he can.'" -- Matthew Henry  - It was now turn or burn.** |
| **16) Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer thee in this matter.** | **– The three did not seek to dissuade the king. Rational answers are useless against overwrought emotions.** |
| **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 thy hand, O king.** | **– They believed that God would deliver them but if he chose not to, they still would not worship Neb's idol. They did not commit God to a certain course of action.  - In verse 14, Neb has spoken of my god. In their response, these men spoke of our God.** |
| **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.** |  |
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| **19) Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace seven times more than it was wont to be heated.** | **– Such a challenge to the greatest man on earth would not go unpunished.  - Get the furnace hotter than usual. Neb would cremate these government employees to show who was in charge.** |
| **20) And he commanded certain mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.** | **– After ordering a hotter furnace, he had the most prominent of his military men throw them in.** |
| **21) Then these men were bound in their hosen, their tunics, and their mantles, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.** | **– They were thrown in fully clothed to make the first few moments of pain even worse.** |
| **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 Abed-nego.** | **– The furnace was hot, but the king was hotter.  - The prominent military men died just getting the three Hebrews into the kiln.  - The approach to the furnace was from above.  - Note that they fell down.** |
| **23) And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.** |  |
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| **24) Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste: he 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.** | **– Neb was watching to make sure his orders were carried out. After all, his orders to worship his idol had been refused by these three Jewish rebels.** |
| **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 aspect of the fourth is like a son of the gods.** | **– He saw something frightening. The three were not down or bound, but walking around in the furnace and were not hurt. And there is a fourth in there who looks like a deity. Neb called him an angel in verse 28.  - God had not delivered the Hebrews FROM the furnace, but IN the furnace.** |
| **26) Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace: he spake and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the Most High God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego came forth out of the midst of the fire.** | **– Neb approached the furnace on the upwind side.  - The king called them out, quickly acknowledging the Most High God. It had been demonstrated that Neb was not the top authority on earth.  - This time, they obeyed the king and emerged from the furnace.** |
| **27) And the satraps, the deputies, and the governors, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, that the fire had no power upon their bodies, nor was the hair of their head singed, neither were their hosen changed, nor had the smell of fire passed on them.** | **– Beyond Nebuchadnezzar, the officials of the land saw the miracle and experienced its evidence.  - Paul Butler writes: "Daniel wants to be understood by his future readers that a large body of reliable witnesses satisfied themselves as to the perfect deliverance from certain death experience by these three Hebrew men. Deliverance was so complete and supernatural that their clothing did not even smell of fire or smoke, Under natural circumstances one who has been anywhere near a fire will bear the odor of smoke on his person or clothing."** |
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| **28) Nebuchadnezzar spake and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and have yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God.** | **– The great polytheist now acknowledges God and admits a miracle.  - Further, he blessed God - presumably he spoke highly of him.  - It is important to note that Neb ascribed their deliverance to their trust (faith). He is catching on.  - Further, he knows why the miracle occurred. The young men had refused to violate the first commandment.** |
| **29) Therefore I make a decree, that every people, nation, and language, which speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill; because there is no other god that is able to deliver after this sort.** | **– A new law is put in place throughout his empire. It is illegal to say anything against the God of the three Hebrews.  - no other god shows that Neb is still a polytheist** |
| **30) Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego in the province of Babylon.** | **– The three Jewish young men actually got a promotion for their courage.  - God has been magnified publicly in Babylon, a great king has been humbled before his subjects, and decrees have been handed down that the God of the captive Jewish population is of greater honor than any of Babylon's mighty deities.** |
| [**The Next Chapter**](http://www.ncbible.org/Resources/Danielcomm04.html) | |