

## Daniel 3

### Outline

#### Daniel's Friends and the Fiery Furnace

- I. The King's Demand to Worship the Statue (Daniel 3:1-7).
  - a. The project (Daniel 3:1). Nebuchadnezzar builds a gold statue that is 90 feet tall and 9 feet wide. Wow!
  - b. *The politicians* (3:2–3): The king summons all his political leaders to attend the statue's dedication.
  - c. *The proclamation* (3:4–5): When the band plays, all those present are to bow down and worship the gold statue.
  - d. *The penalty* (3:6–7): All those who refuse to bow down will be cast into a blazing furnace.<sup>1</sup>
- II. The young men refuse (Daniel 3:8-23).
  - a. The threat and the astrologer's report (Daniel 3:8-15).
  - b. The king learns that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego have refused to bow (Daniel 3:8-12).<sup>2</sup>
  - c. The king's reasoning (3:13–15): He offers the three men a second chance.
  - d. *The testimony* (3:16–23)
  - e. The three men's answer (3:16–18): "We will burn, if need be, before we will serve anything other than God."
  - f. The king's anger (3:19–23): He orders the young men thrown into the furnace, which has been heated seven times hotter than usual.<sup>3</sup>
- III. The Fourth Man in the Furnace (Daniel 3:24-30).
  - a. *The discovery* (3:24–25): Looking into the fire, an amazed Nebuchadnezzar sees two incredible things:
  - b. The three men are still alive (3:24–25a).
  - c. Another man has joined them, and he looks like a divine being (3:25b).
  - d. *The deliverance* (3:26–28): At the king's urging, the three men walk out of the fire, not even smelling of smoke.
  - e. *The decree* (3:29–30): Nebuchadnezzar imposes the death sentence upon anyone who speaks against God, and the three men are promoted to higher positions.<sup>4</sup>

#### Verse by verse analysis:

- I. The King's Demand to Worship the Statue (Daniel 3:1-7).

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<sup>1</sup> H. L. Willmington, [\*The Outline Bible\*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), Da 3:2–7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Da 3:8–12.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Da 3:8–23.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Da 3:24–30.

- a. The project (Daniel 3:1). Nebuchadnezzar builds a gold statue that is 90 feet tall and 9 feet wide. Wow!
- b. Daniel 3:1 (NASB95)

*Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, the height of which was sixty cubits and its width six cubits; he set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon.*

- c. We see here that Nebuchadnezzar isn't the most humble man.
- d. Though, see the IVP BBC OT: it doesn't say the statue is of him...
- e. CSB: *The events of Dn 3 probably took place shortly after Daniel explained the king's dream (cp. Dn 2), although some estimate that it could have been ten or even twenty years later. Babylonian records indicate that there was a revolt against Nebuchadnezzar during the tenth year of his reign, so this may have led to the king's desire for the loyalty test described here.*<sup>5</sup>
- f. Moody: Nebuchadnezzar **made an image of gold**, much like a colossus [statue much bigger than life size], not of solid gold but more **probably overlaid with it**. **[interesting idea]** Most likely, this statue reflects the king's desire to have an **actual replica of the image he saw in his dream** (cf. 2:31–33). In that image only the head representing Babylon was made of gold. Therefore, the king had a statue built covered entirely in gold so as to negate the earlier message of a temporary Babylonian Empire. Since a size of 90 feet high and nine feet wide (the equivalent dimensions of a **height of sixty cubits and a width of six cubits**) would make a grotesque distortion of a human body, **it is more likely this was an image placed on a large pedestal.**
- g. The location of the statue was **on the plain of Dura**, a site that has not been conclusively identified. It was not in the city of Babylon but on a plain somewhere in the province. Perhaps Daniel was not involved in the events here since he remained in the capital city "at the king's court" (2:49) while other officials, including his three friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, were called to Dura to show their loyalty. No doubt, had Daniel been there, he too would have refused to bow to the image.<sup>6</sup>
- h. NET: *The LXX introduces this chapter with the following chronological note: "in the eighteenth year of." Such a date would place these events at about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. (cf. 2 Kgs 25:8). However, there seems to be no real basis for associating the events of Daniel 3 with this date.*<sup>7</sup>

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cp. compare

<sup>5</sup> Michael Rydelnik, "[Daniel](#)," in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1329.

cf. compare or consult

<sup>6</sup> Michael A. Rydelnik, "[Daniel](#)," in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, ed. Michael A. Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 1288–1289.

LXX Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament, translated between 250–100 BC)

<sup>7</sup> Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Da 3:1.

- i. *The ancient world knew of other tall statues. For example, the Colossus of Rhodes—the huge statue of Helios which stood (ca. 280–224 B.C.) at the entrance to the harbor at Rhodes and was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world—was said to be seventy cubits (105 ft or 32 m) in height, which would make it even taller than Nebuchadnezzar’s image.*<sup>8</sup>
- j. *ESV SB: Extra-biblical reference: A Babylonian document from the time of Nebuchadnezzar (605–562 B.C.) warns not to harm the statue that had been set up: “Beside my statue as king ... I wrote an inscription mentioning my name, ... I erected for posterity. May future kings respect the monument, remember the praise of the gods.... He who respects ... my royal name, who does not abrogate my statutes and not change my decrees, his throne shall be secure, his life last long, his dynasty shall continue.”*<sup>9</sup>
- k. **Its location on a plain in Babylon recalls the location of the Tower of Babel (also on a plain, Gen. 11:2), as does its purpose to provide a unifying center for all the peoples of the earth.**<sup>10</sup>

Extra info-

Keil and Delitzsch:

*This would be altogether in accordance with the Babylonian art, which delighted in grotesque, gigantic forms; cf. Hgstb. Beitr. i. p. 96f. The measure, in height threescore cubits, in breadth six cubits, is easily explained, since in the human figure the length is to be breadth in the proportion of about six to one. In the height of threescore cubits the pedestal of the image may be regarded as included, so that the whole image according to its principal component part (a potiori) was designated as  $\text{𐤁𐤏𐤃}$ ; although the passage Judg. 18:30, 31, adduced by Kran., where mention is made of the image alone which was erected by Micah, without any notice being taken of the pedestal belonging to it (cf. vv. 17 and 18), furnishes no properly authentic proof that  $\text{𐤁𐤏𐤃}$  in vv. 30 and 31 denotes the image with the pedestal.*<sup>11</sup>

Further:

There is a difference of opinion as to the signification of this image. According to the common view (cf. e.g., Hgstb. Beitr. i. p. 97), Nebuchadnezzar wished to erect a statue as an expression of his thanks to his god Bel for his great victories, and on that account also to consecrate it with religious ceremonies. **On the other hand, Hofm. (Weiss. u. Erf. i. p. 277) remarks, that the statue was not the image of a god, because a distinction is made between falling down to it and the service to his god which Nebuchadnezzar required (vv. 12, 14, 18) from his officers of state. This distinction, however, is not well supported; for in these verses praying to the gods of Nebuchadnezzar is placed on an equality with falling down before the image. But on the**

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ca. approximately (from Latin circa)

<sup>8</sup> Biblical Studies Press, *The NET Bible First Edition Notes* (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Da 3:1.

<sup>9</sup> Crossway Bibles, *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1591.

<sup>10</sup> Crossway Bibles, *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1591.

<sup>11</sup> Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 9 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 566.

other hand, the statue is not designated as the image of a god, or the image of Belus; therefore we agree with Klief. in his opinion, that the statue was a symbol of the world-power established by Nebuchadnezzar, so that falling down before it was a manifestation of reverence not only to the world-power, but also to its gods; and that therefore the Israelites could not fall down before the image, because in doing so they would have rendered homage at the same time also to the god or gods of Nebuchadnezzar, in the image of the world-power. But the idea of representing the world-power founded by him as a  $\text{צֶלֶם דֵּי־דָהַב}$  was probably suggested to Nebuchadnezzar by the  $\text{צֶלֶם}$  seen (Dan. 2) by him in a dream, whose head of gold his world-kingdom was described to him as being. We may not, however, with Klief., seek any sanction for the idea that the significance of the image is in its size, 6, 10, and six multiplied by ten cubits, because the symbolical significance of the number 6 as the signature of human activity, to which the divine completion (7) is wanting, is not a Babylonian idea. Still less can we, with Zündel (p. 13), explain the absence of Daniel on this occasion as arising from the political import of the statue, because the supposition of Daniel's not having been called to be present is a mere conjecture, and a very improbable conjecture; and the supposition that Daniel, as being chief of the Magi, would not be numbered among the secular officers of state, is decidedly erroneous.<sup>12</sup>

IVP Bible Backgrounds Commentary of the Old Testament:

**image of what.** *The image is never positively identified as the image of a deity, though verse 28 could easily suggest it. If the image were a divine image, it would be odd for the name of the deity not to be given and even more unusual for it to be set up in an open area rather than associated with a temple. Part of the care of the gods was to house and feed them, and such maintenance could not easily be kept up in an open location. If it is not the image of a god, it becomes more difficult to understand the three friends' refusal to participate (for an understanding of the thrust of the second commandment see comment on Ex 20:4). The other main alternative is to see it as an image of the king. But there was no prohibition against bowing down before kings as an act of respect. Additionally, images of kings during the Assyrian and Babylonian periods were usually made to be put in temples to stand before the deity requesting the well-being of the king. Typically, then, they represented the king to the god, not to the people.*

*Perhaps the best alternative is to understand the event in the context of the Assyrian practice of erecting stelae or statues (often in inaccessible places) that commemorated their rulers. While these were intended to exalt the king, the reliefs on the Balawat gates demonstrate that offerings were made before these representations. In the scene portrayed on the gates the king himself is present, but the offerings are made to the stele. In this way the king is given the honors that are generally given to the gods, but by personally distancing himself he avoids making himself equal to the gods. Such rituals were used as occasions for provincial territories to take a loyalty oath. This would make sense here in light of the suggestion in the dream of Daniel 2 that the Babylonian kingdom would have a limited time of rule. In Assyrian practice the weapon of Ashur (perhaps even a battle standard) was set up for ceremonies in which vassal kings entered into loyalty oaths.*

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<sup>12</sup> Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, [Commentary on the Old Testament](#), vol. 9 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 567–568.

*Failure to participate would suggest insubordination, whereas participation would signify the acceptance of the deity's (and king's) sovereignty. The three friends are not being asked to worship a deity, but they are being asked to participate in rituals that honor the king in ways similar to how the gods were treated, even though the king is not being viewed as a deity. Daniel's absence could be explained easily by the occasion's setting in only a single province.*<sup>13</sup>

Further: Good extra- biblical reference:

*Herodotus describes two large statues in Marduk's temple in Babylon, both of solid gold. One is Bel seated on a golden throne. The image and the golden table next to it were reported to have used twenty-two tons of gold. The second is described as the statue of a man. Herodotus says it is fifteen feet high, though other accounts put it at eighteen feet. The Persian king, Xerxes, melted it down in 482 B.C., and the resulting bullion weighed eight hundred pounds. The Colossus at Rhodes was reported to be just over one hundred feet tall, so a ninety-foot-tall statue is not out of the realm of possibility, though it is also possible that the ninety feet includes a pedestal. The unusual thing is that the width is only ten percent of the height. The width of a properly proportioned human figure would normally be about twenty-five percent of the height. If this statue is human shaped and nine feet wide, we would expect the statue to be thirty-five or forty feet tall. This would then require a pedestal of fifty-plus feet. Even so, imagine the instability of something ten stories tall and only nine feet wide.*<sup>14</sup>

- l. *The politicians (3:2–3):* The king summons all his political leaders to attend the statue's dedication.

Daniel 3:2–3 (NASB95)

- 2 *Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent word to assemble the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates and all the rulers of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.*
  - 3 *Then the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates and all the rulers of the provinces were assembled for the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.*
- m. Concerning the 7 positions in verse 2, we don't know the exact meaning of all of these positions:
  - n. *The specific duties of the seven types of officials listed here (cf. vv. 3, 27) are unclear. The Aramaic words that are used are transliterations of Akkadian or*

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<sup>13</sup> Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, [\*The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament\*](#), electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Da 3:1.

<sup>14</sup> Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, [\*The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament\*](#), electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Da 3:1.

- Persian technical terms whose exact meanings are uncertain. The translations given here follow suggestions set forth in BDB.<sup>15</sup>*
- o. Moody: *The use of the Persian loanword for **satraps** does not necessarily imply an anachronism since Persian inscriptions have been discovered from the neo-Babylonian era. Moreover, by the time Daniel completed this book, the Persian period had already begun so it would not be surprising for him to use Persian words.*<sup>16</sup>
  - p. It is likely that this is a **loyalty oath- see below**
  - q. **...it is likely that the occasion for this gathering was the taking of a loyalty oath.** *A century earlier it is known that Assyrian king Ashurbanipal gathered his chief officials together in Babylon to take a loyalty oath. A letter has been preserved from one of the officials who was out of town and therefore made arrangements to take the oath in the presence of the palace overseer. The letter specifically mentions that when he took the oath he was surrounded by the images of the gods.*<sup>17</sup>
  - r. *The proclamation (3:4–5): When the band plays, all those present are to bow down and worship the gold statue.*

Daniel 3:4–5 (NASB95)

- 4 *Then the herald loudly proclaimed: "To you the command is given, O peoples, nations and men of every language,*
- 5 *that at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe and all kinds of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up.*
- s. Verses 4-5 are a command to worship this image...
- t. This may make more sense if the image is an image of a god...
- u. About verse 5- ESV SB: *The Aramaic names for the **lyre, harp, and bagpipe** may well be words loaned from Greek. Some conclude that the story must therefore have come from the time of Greek cultural dominance, namely, after Alexander the Great (d. 323 B.C.). But since there was Greek cultural influence in the Near East long before Alexander, this is not evidence of a late date for the book.*<sup>18</sup>
- v. Moody:
- w. *Although some conjecture that the image was of Nebuchadnezzar himself, this is unlikely because the Babylonians did not believe their king was divine. **More likely, the image was of a Babylonian god, perhaps Nebuchadnezzar's patron***

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BDB *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon.*

<sup>15</sup> Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Da 3:2.

<sup>16</sup> Michael A. Rydelnik, "[Daniel](#)," in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, ed. Michael A. Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 1289.

<sup>17</sup> Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament](#), electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Da 3:2.

d. died

<sup>18</sup> Crossway Bibles, [The ESV Study Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1591.

**Nabu or the chief Babylonian god Marduk.** Despite ancient paganism tending to tolerate a panoply of gods, here Nebuchadnezzar made this demand for worship of his god as a form of a loyalty oath to him personally.<sup>19</sup>

- x. *The penalty (3:6–7): All those who refuse to bow down will be cast into a blazing furnace.*<sup>20</sup>

Daniel 3:6–7 (NASB95)

6 *“But whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire.”*

7 *Therefore at that time, when all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe and all kinds of music, all the peoples, nations and men of every language fell down and worshiped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.*

- y. Verse 6 shows a severe penalty for not bowing down... Moody: *a punishment that Nebuchadnezzar had also used on two Judean false prophets, Zedekiah and Ahab (Jr 29:22). This was a normal Babylonian penalty as seen in the Code of Hammurabi, Sections 25, 110 and 157. Perhaps this furnace was built to smelt the gold for the image Nebuchadnezzar had made. The king’s threat was sufficient to make all the officials present there, except the three Jewish young men, worship **the golden image.***<sup>21</sup>

- z. What would the fiery furnace be like?

- aa. *Furnaces were used for baking pottery or bricks for construction projects, as well as for metalwork (forging, smelting and casting). There is not a lot of information about furnaces in the ancient Near East, but many early furnaces were enclosed and domed with side doors for ventilation. They were built of clay or brick, though the inside chamber was often lined with specially selected types of stone. It is logical to assume that the furnace was in this location serving a purpose (perhaps in the manufacture of the image) rather than having been set up to use as an instrument of punishment. There is little in the ancient literature to suggest that furnaces were specifically used for punishment. One possible exception is from around 1800 B.C., when Rim-Sin ruled that someone who had pushed a slave into a kiln should have one of his slaves thrown into a furnace. In general, however, burning was used as a form of execution as early as the Hammurabi Code. In fifth-century Persia (during the reign of Darius II, son of Artaxerxes), and in the second century (2 Macc 13:4–8), there are examples of execution by pushing into a bin of ashes.*<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Michael A. Rydelnik, [“Daniel,”](#) in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, ed. Michael A. Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 1289.

<sup>20</sup> H. L. Willmington, [The Outline Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), Da 3:2–7.

<sup>21</sup> Michael A. Rydelnik, [“Daniel,”](#) in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, ed. Michael A. Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 1289.

<sup>22</sup> Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament](#), electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Da 3:6.

- II. The young men refuse (Daniel 3:8-23).
  - a. The threat and the astrologer's report (Daniel 3:8-15).
  - b. The king learns that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego have refused to bow (Daniel 3:8-12).<sup>23</sup>

Daniel 3:8–12 (NASB95)

- 8 *For this reason at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and brought charges against the Jews.*
- 9 *They responded and said to Nebuchadnezzar the king: "O king, live forever!*
- 10 *"You, O king, have made a decree that every man who hears the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, and bagpipe and all kinds of music, is to fall down and worship the golden image.*
- 11 *"But whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire.*
- 12 *"There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the administration of the province of Babylon, namely Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. These men, O king, have disregarded you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up."*
  - c. There is a thought by Dr. Rydelnik that this may have happened with a big crowd and others did not notice that they didn't bow down.
  - d. So, the text says, "at a certain time..." This means that this was an incident.
  - e. So charges are made against them.
  - f. *The word **Chaldeans** is both a general ethnic term for the Babylonian people and a specific term for priests who served as astrologers, soothsayers, and wise men in the king's government. It is used in the secondary sense here, referring to the king's astrologers and wise men. Likely these were the governmental officials who had been summoned to the plain of Dura.*<sup>24</sup>
  - g. In verse 9, we can see the reverence for the king [by the Chaldeans].
  - h. In verses 10-12, we see the accusations.
  - i. Notice in verse 12, they say that these men do not serve Nebuchadnezzar's gods, or worship the image. Moody- *By saying that these Jewish men did **not serve your gods or worship the golden image**, the wise men were accusing them of disloyalty, another anti-Jewish slur, which persists to this day.*<sup>25</sup>
  - j. What is unsaid is that they serve the Lord.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., Da 3:8–12.

<sup>24</sup> Michael A. Rydelnik, "[Daniel](#)," in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, ed. Michael A. Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 1289.

<sup>25</sup> Michael A. Rydelnik, "[Daniel](#)," in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, ed. Michael A. Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 1289.

- k. *Daniel's absence from this scene has sparked the imagination of commentators, some of whom have suggested that perhaps he was unable to attend the dedication due to sickness or due to being away on business. Hippolytus supposed that Daniel may have been watching from a distance.*<sup>26</sup>
- l. The king's reasoning (3:13–15): He offers the three men a second chance.

Daniel 3:13–15 (NASB95)

- 13** *Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego; then these men were brought before the king.*
- 14** *Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up?*
- 15** *"Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery and bagpipe and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, very well. But if you do not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?"*
- m. I find it interesting that Nebuchadnezzar is in a rage.
- n. In my opinion, rage should not happen so quickly.
- o. On a sermon, Swindoll shared the following about anger related to Moses striking the Rock in Numbers 20:11-
- p. I share this because it related to us with anger:
- q. He shared that psychologists break down levels of anger
  - i. Anger behind with mild irritation
  - ii. Indignation
  - iii. Wrath: psychologists say it never goes unexpressed.
  - iv. Fury.
  - v. Rage: most intense and dangerous
- r. Swindoll does not think Moses was guilty of rage.
- s. Leaders must:
  - i. Serve others patiently
  - ii. Obeying God completely
  - iii. Accept God's plan willingly
  - iv. Die to self submissively
- t. Nebuchadnezzar needed Celebrate Recovery.
- u. Whenever I hear rage, I think the person needs help.
- v. The 3 men are brought before the king.
- w. In verse 14, he asks if this is true...

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<sup>26</sup> Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Da 3:10–12.

- x. In verse 15, he gives them a second chance and restates the consequence.
- y. *The testimony* (3:16–23)
- z. The three men’s answer (3:16–18): “We will burn, if need be, before we will serve anything other than God.”

Daniel 3:16–18 (NASB95)

**16** *Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter.*

**17** *“If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king.*

**18** *“But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”*

aa. They are convinced of what they have decided... They do not need to give an answer.

bb. God can save them, but even if He doesn’t.

cc. I love that...

dd. Do we follow the Lord no matter what?

ee. In Acts 12, Peter is rescued while James is not.

ff. In verse 17, they say God is able-

gg. Moody: *The Aramaic imperfect verb yesezib (“He can deliver, rescue”) in this context indicates possibility and not certainty. They were saying that God may deliver them or He may choose not to rescue. It was His choice. Their faith was not limited to belief in a miracle but also included trust in God’s sovereignty. They asserted that if God chose not to deliver them from this punishment but would allow them to become martyrs for Him, they would still refuse to serve the king’s **gods or worship the golden image**. This is one of the strongest statements of faith in the entire Bible. They trusted the Lord to decide their destiny while still being faithful to Him.*<sup>27</sup>

hh. The king’s anger (3:19–23): He orders the young men thrown into the furnace, which has been heated seven times hotter than usual.<sup>28</sup>

Daniel 3:19–23 (NASB95)

### *Daniel’s Friends Protected*

**19** *Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with wrath, and his facial expression was altered toward Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. He answered by giving orders to heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated.*

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<sup>27</sup> Michael A. Rydelnik, [“Daniel,”](#) in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, ed. Michael A. Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 1289.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, Da 3:8–23.

- 20 *He commanded certain valiant warriors who were in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego in order to cast them into the furnace of blazing fire.*
- 21 *Then these men were tied up in their trousers, their coats, their caps and their other clothes, and were cast into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire.*
- 22 *For this reason, because the king's command was urgent and the furnace had been made extremely hot, the flame of the fire slew those men who carried up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego.*
- 23 *But these three men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, fell into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire still tied up.*

- ii. Nebuchadnezzar had already had rage; now he had wrath. I think wrath is more like a verb, not an adjective. Wrath means there will be action, in my opinion.
- jj. Heat the furnace seven times hotter...
- kk. ESV SB: *probably a figurative expression meaning "as hot as possible" (seven is a number signifying completion or perfection, cf. Prov. 24:16; 26:16).*<sup>29</sup>
- ll. IVP BBC OT: *Depending on what the furnace was being used for, the temperature would be maintained at between nine hundred and eleven hundred degrees centigrade. With their technology they were not able to exceed fifteen hundred degrees centigrade.*<sup>30</sup>
- mm. Verses 20-21: notice the modifiers- valiant warriors were commanded to tie up, and they were cast into the furnace with their clothes on.
- nn. Verses 22-23 show that the men who walked them into the furnace died.
- oo. ESV SB concerning verse 23: After this verse the various Greek OT versions add *The Song of the Three Young Men*, which is an effort to elaborate the men's experience of deliverance in the furnace. (This addition to Daniel is also included in the Apocrypha: see article on The Apocrypha.)<sup>31</sup>
- pp. Moody:
- qq. *The ancient furnace was shaped like an old-fashioned milk bottle and built on a small hill or mound with openings at the top and side. The ore to be smelted would be dropped in a large opening at the top and wood or charcoal would be inserted in a smaller hole on the side, at ground level, to heat the furnace. There would have been two other small holes at ground level in which to insert pipes connected to a large bellows to raise the temperature of the fire. (Archer, "Daniel," 56). Some have estimated that this furnace could reach a temperature*

<sup>29</sup> Crossway Bibles, [The ESV Study Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1592.

<sup>30</sup> Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament](#), electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Da 3:19.

<sup>31</sup> Crossway Bibles, [The ESV Study Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1592.

of 1,800 degrees fahrenheit (Miller, Daniel, 115, 122). Most likely this furnace was used to smelt the gold ore and bricks for Nebuchadnezzar's statue. Thus, the three men **fell into the midst of the furnace** (3:23) from the top and the king was able to see into the furnace (3:24–25) from its side opening.<sup>32</sup>

III. The Fourth Man in the Furnace (Daniel 3:24-30).

- a. *The discovery* (3:24–25): Looking into the fire, an amazed Nebuchadnezzar sees two incredible things:

Daniel 3:24–25 (NASB95)

- 24** *Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up in haste; he said to his high officials, "Was it not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire?" They replied to the king, "Certainly, O king."*
- 25** *He said, "Look! I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!"*
- b. The three men are still alive (3:24–25a).
- c. Another man has joined them, and he looks like a divine being (3:25b).
- d. Notice they are walking around...
- e. I believe this is an appearance of the pre-incarnate Christ.
- f. Jesus is protecting them.
- g. Moody: *When the king looked into the furnace, he **was astounded** to see **four men ... walking about** in the furnace, and the **fourth** looked **like a son of the gods**. This may have been an angel or even more likely, the Angel of the Lord, meaning a pre-incarnate appearance of the Messiah. Nevertheless, it is doubtful that a pagan king would have understood this. Rather, his statement is indicative of the glorious appearance of the deliverer whom he saw. The faithful reader is to understand who was in the furnace even though the pagan king did not.*<sup>33</sup>
- h. *The deliverance* (3:26–28): At the king's urging, the three men walk out of the fire, not even smelling of smoke.

Daniel 3:26–28 (NASB95)

- 26** *Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the furnace of blazing fire; he responded and said, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, come out, you servants of the Most High God, and come here!" Then Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego came out of the midst of the fire.*
- 27** *The satraps, the prefects, the governors and the king's high officials gathered around and saw in regard to these men that the fire had no effect on the bodies of these men*

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<sup>32</sup> Michael A. Rydelnik, "[Daniel](#)," in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, ed. Michael A. Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 1290.

<sup>33</sup> Michael A. Rydelnik, "[Daniel](#)," in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, ed. Michael A. Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 1290.

*nor was the hair of their head singed, nor were their trousers damaged, nor had the smell of fire even come upon them.*

- 28** *Nebuchadnezzar responded and said, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, who has sent His angel and delivered His servants who put their trust in Him, violating the king’s command, and yielded up their bodies so as not to serve or worship any god except their own God.*
- i. Wow! Notice what Nebuchadnezzar says- “servants of the Most High God”!
  - j. Their hair was ok, their clothes were ok.
  - k. In verse 28, Nebuchadnezzar praises their God.
  - l. He is probably still speaking from his pagan worldview.
  - m. Moody:
  - n. *King Nebuchadnezzar continued on his odyssey of faith, begun in Dn 2. There he learned that the Lord is a true God, powerful enough to reveal secret dreams and to control the destinies of nations. In a sense, he recognized the God of Israel as a part of the panoply of gods. However, in Dn 3, Nebuchadnezzar learned that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were “servants of the Most High God” (3:26), indicating that he saw the God of Israel as the one who is greater than all other gods. Even so, he remained a polytheist, believing in many gods. Despite Nebuchadnezzar’s praise of **the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego for His deliverance and the king’s prohibition against saying anything offensive against the God of Israel (3:28–29), he still had not come to a full knowledge of the one and only true God.**<sup>34</sup>*
  - o. *The decree (3:29–30): Nebuchadnezzar imposes the death sentence upon anyone who speaks against God, and the three men are promoted to higher positions.*<sup>35</sup>

Daniel 3:29–30 (NASB95)

- 29 *“Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation or tongue that speaks anything offensive against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego shall be torn limb from limb and their houses reduced to a rubbish heap, inasmuch as there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way.”*
- 30 *Then the king caused Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego to prosper in the province of Babylon.*
- p. *ESV SB: The resurrection-like deliverance from death results in the spread of the message about the true God. The message prefigures the message of the gospel announcing the resurrection of Christ.*<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Michael A. Rydelnik, *“Daniel,”* in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, ed. Michael A. Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 1290.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, Da 3:24–30.

<sup>36</sup> Crossway Bibles, *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1592.

