

# The Book of Daniel

## Week 3

King Nebuchadnezzar is going to give his entire kingdom of leaders a test of their loyalty to the new administration. Anyone who will not submit to him as the sovereign king, and do whatever he wishes, will be burned alive. Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego will have their faith and trust in God put to the test.

1. Golden Image
  - a. 90 ft high x 9 ft wide
  - b. Don't know what the image was of
  - c. Spirit of Babylon, King himself, traditional deity (Marduk) or even something simply like obelisk or totem pole.
2. Dedication of the Golden Image
  - a. Seven classes of state official invited to dedication
  - b. Ceremony included loyalty test/oath to Nebuchadnezzar as king.
  - c. Not obeying rule would be an Act of Treason, Insubordination and the disloyalty would be deserving of death by being burned alive.
  - d. Oven would have had an opening on top and a door on the side that people could see through. Babylonians practiced much human sacrifice, including children, and the oven would have functioned much like a Jewish altar for sacrifice.
  - e. Burning the fire would have been seen as being consumed by the gods for various reasons.

Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego do not bow, and the king is furious. Verse 15 is a pivotal verse that suggests Nebuchadnezzar assumes he possesses absolute authority/sovereignty. The temptation to be like is as old as Eden and he is now putting God Himself to the test.

3. Response of Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego
  - a. Firm Reply that trust in the character of God over and above their circumstances
  - b. Human circumstances do not change God's character, but God's character changes/illuminates how we view our circumstances.
  - c. ALL LOVING/ALL KNOWING/ALWAYS THERE
  - d. Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego give example of gritty, firm faith and trust!

The three men are not rescued from the fire, but God was with them in the midst of the fire. In the same way God does not promise to fix every earthly circumstance that we will enter but God does promise that He will be with you in the midst of every circumstance of life. Even if they were to be burned alive these men trusted in the character of God and in His power. He is the Sovereign God and if He wants to save, He will save and if He does not than He won't, but regardless they will not bow and worship.

4. God's Blessings
  - a. Deliverance from the fire
  - b. Jewish faith is made legitimate
  - c. Promotion of the 3 men within the ranks