



## DANIEL 3:1-30

By Louis Powel

### FIRST FACTS

The connection between chapter 2 and chapter 3 suggests that the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream is represented in the golden image he built in chapter 3. History records that there was a revolt in Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom about 596 B.C., which was 9 years after he became king. He put down the revolt, but this could have created a desire to have all his officials and governors reaffirm and swear their support to king Nebuchadnezzar. Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, was ordered to come to Babylon about the same time (Jer 51:59). Chapter 3 events happen about 10-20 years after chapter 2. The connection between chapter 2 and chapter 3 is the golden image not two sequential events.

### VERSES 1-3

King Nebuchadnezzar's golden image was 60 cubits high and 6 cubits wide, or 90 feet by 9 feet. A cubit is about 18 inches, from elbow to fingertip. We do not know if the tower included a pedestal. There are records of other idols to Bel which give the dimensions and how much gold was used. With that information, if solid gold, this golden image, would be worth about 5.2 billion dollars today. If wooden and overlaid with gold, it would be worth about 50 million dollars today.

Archaeologists believe the plain of Dura is about 6 miles SE of Babylon, which is a large, flat open area. According to Eusebius Pamphilus, a Christian historian (300 AD), and Flavius Josephus, a Jewish

historian (37 AD), this happened in a plain of the land of Shinar (Gen11:2). The king had all his rulers, judges, governors, ect. come here to dedicate his golden image.

### VERSES 4-7

These people are not just from the city of Babylon but from different nations, with different languages. Nebuchadnezzar was a visionary. He used people who he conquered to rule the conquered nation. This allowed rulers to understand the people they ruled over better. These all came to the dedication of his golden image. The golden image could have been of Nebuchadnezzar as the head of gold from chapter 2, but without successors.

The king used the golden image to unify his government and to unify his kingdom by creating a new religion. He used music to boost everyone's emotional pull to bow and worship his golden image. Nebuchadnezzar considered himself above all gods. The Antichrist will place himself above all gods and those who do not worship the image will be put to death (Rev 13:15).

### VERSES 8-13

The Chaldeans accused the Jews. Chaldeans can describe people in the geographical region or the occult advisors of the king. They recite to the king what he said would happen to anyone who did not bow and worship his golden image. They knew it well and were probably the ones who convinced Nebuchadnezzar to say it. They might have



drafted these words for him. This was a plot of revenge against the Jews who ruled over these “advisors.”

Remember these Chaldeans were up staged by Daniel and his friends in chapter 2. The Chaldeans could not tell the king his dream and so, the king was having them killed. God gave Daniel the dream and he told the king the dream and the interpretation.

Daniel saved the Chaldeans lives. How did they react? Were they grateful? No. They became vengeful toward Daniel and Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Human nature says, “Plan your revenge and even the score with anyone making you look bad.”

The Bible teaches, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord” (Rom 12:19). We are to allow God to fight our battles for us. We must forgive those who sin against us so the Father will forgive us of our sins (Mat 6:14-15).

#### VERSES 14-18

King Nebuchadnezzar was angry when he found out that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego did not bow down and worship his golden image. They were brought before the king, and he gives them a second chance to bow down and worship his golden image. They are not careful or cautious to answer him. They will not bow down and worship. The God of Israel will deliver them from the burning fiery furnace. “God will deliver us out of your hand, O king.”

But even if God doesn’t deliver them, they will not serve false gods or worship the

golden image. What a beautiful display of pure faith in God. These men are about to be thrown into a fiery furnace, but they do not waiver in their faith in God. “A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.” (Jam 1:8).

#### VERSES 19-23

The men refused to bow and Nebuchadnezzar changed to a hotter rage toward Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. He was set against them now. He had the fiery furnace heated 7 times hotter.

He used his best mighty men, his generals, to bind the three men. This was a big mistake. He lost his best mighty men. The flame killed the mighty men but not Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

#### VERSES 24-27

The king is astonished because he sees not 3 men in the fiery furnace, but 4 men and they are loose and walking around. The fourth man looks like the Son of God. Who is the fourth man in the furnace? This is Jesus Christ appearing in the Old Testament to mankind. This is a “theophany.” The phrase used here is “Bar Elahin” (Aramaic) not “Elohim” (Hebrew Gen 1:1). The meaning is actually “son of the gods.” Some think this is an angel (vs 28) and not Jesus. It is supernatural in either case. Jesus also appeared to Joshua as the Captain of the host (Jos 5:13-15).

Nebuchadnezzar called the 3 men to come out of the furnace. It is not recorded in the text, but don’t you think he asked them,



“Where is the fourth man? Where did he go?” The king calls them the “servants of the Most High God.” All of the people called to come bow and worship the golden image by Nebuchadnezzar witnessed this miracle. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were saved during and inside their tribulation. This represents what will happen during the Great Tribulation with the Antichrist.

#### VERSES 28-30

The table is turned on the king by the King of kings. Everyone should see that the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego is the Most High God! The king declared if anyone speaks against the God of these Jewish men they will be cut to pieces and their houses turned to dunghill or ashes. The king states, “There is no other God that can deliver after this sort.”

Nebuchadnezzar’s golden image is a “type” which represents what will happen to Christians during the Great Tribulation. Nebuchadnezzar said anyone who does not bow down and worship his golden image will be thrown into the fiery furnace. The Antichrist will “cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed” (Rev 13:15).

And these three Jewish men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, were promoted by Nebuchadnezzar. The Chaldeans wanted to get rid of the Jews but God delivered them and they were promoted by the king. Praise God!

#### LAST FACTS

Sometimes recognizing what is missing is just as important as seeing the obvious. What is missing from this story? Where is Daniel? Since the king’s prime minister was probably away on kingdom business, this gave the Chaldeans the opportunity they needed to construct the trap against Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

If the fiery furnace represents the Great Tribulation and the golden image represents the Antichrist’s image being worshipped, then Daniel being out of the picture represents the Rapture of the Church.

God will save His Church by snatching us out before the Great Tribulation begins. He will save those believers who live during the Great Tribulation as He did Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego by protecting them while they live in the terrible times ruled by the Antichrist. When Christ returns and defeats Satan and destroys all the rebellious nations, all peoples and languages on Earth will know He is the Most High God.

(Ref.: Adam Clarke, Karl Keil, Warren Wiersbe, J. Vernon McGee, Chuck Missler, Finis Dake, David Stern, Ancient Christian Commentary)