

“FAITH UNDER PRESSURE”
STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL
Daniel 3:1-30
“It Takes Fiery Faith to Endure a Fiery Trial”

Introduction: The greatest commandment is to love God with all your heart mind soul and strength. God is God, He always was God, and He always will be God irrespective of popular opinion. Nebuchadnezzar was the most powerful human leader at the time, and he was about to learn who is the Boss.

SECTION I: BOW OR BURN, THE CHOICE IS YOURS (Daniel 3:1-7).

- A. It is not a coincidence that the dream indicating Nebuchadnezzar is the head of gold influenced his decision to create a massive gold image (Daniel 2). The image is 90 feet tall and 9 feet wide. Nebuchadnezzar had political motivations behind his cult because he ordered all of his political appointees to attend the dedication ceremony. Nebuchadnezzar physically conquered nations through military force, now he is trying to conquer their hearts and minds through a controlled personality cult.
- B. Another example of political and spiritual wickedness is King Jeroboam. Jeroboam made a false religion and led the people into idolatry because he was afraid of losing his position as king (1 Kings 12:25-33). When the world presents an idol how do you respond (Psalm 115:4-8)?
- C. Refusal to obey Nebuchadnezzar would result in immediate punishment. God is patient with us (Romans 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9; Ezekiel 33:11; John 3:16). Nebuchadnezzar's behavior is a preview of the anti-Christ (Revelation 13:14-15). Sadly, the government leaders, out of fear, ignorance, deception, and/or rebellion bowed down to Nebuchadnezzar's idol (Jeremiah 2:11-13).

SECTION II: YOU CAN TAKE THE HEAT WHEN YOU ARE IN THE KITCHEN WITH THE KING (Daniel 3:8-25)

- A. Some Chaldeans reported that three Hebrew men of God refused to worship the idol. Nebuchadnezzar chose to give them one last chance to worship the idol. They provide a simple steadfast confession of faith. They were assertive, bold, and direct. Nebuchadnezzar's pride and arrogance could not stand to be challenged or defied. The command to heat the furnace seven times hotter means maximum heat capacity.
- B. The Hebrews reasoned that the furnace fire is temporary, but hell fire is eternal (Matthew 10:28; Matthew 16:24-27). There is a place called the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41). The Hebrews probably knew this as Isaiah wrote about hell at least 100 years before the events of Daniel (Isaiah 66:24). Contrary to popular belief Satan will not reign in hell, it is a place of eternal torment and suffering, darkness, worms, unquenchable flames, weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 13:41-42; Mark 9:48; Revelation 20:10; Revelation 20:15).
- C. Nebuchadnezzar noticed there was a Divine Person in the furnace. This is an Old Testament appearance of God the Son, the 2nd Person of the Trinity. He is most identified as the Angel of the Lord/ Angel of God in the Old Testament. The Angel of the Lord is described as Protector and Deliverer (**Psalm 34:7**; Isaiah 63:9; Zechariah 12:8). Two names of God, EL-ROI (God Who Sees Me) and JEHOVAH-JIREH (The Lord will

provide), are attributed to the Angel of the Lord (Genesis 16:7-14; Genesis 22:12-18). The Angel of God identifies Himself as God to Jacob, Moses, and the people of Israel (Genesis 31:11-13; Exodus 3:2-6; Judges 2:1-6). The Angel of God is directly involved in the Exodus event (Numbers 20:16; Exodus 14:19; Exodus 23:20-23). And He is directly involved in delivering the Hebrews from the fiery furnace (**Isaiah 43:1-4**). Jesus of Nazareth is God the Son, the 2nd Person of the Trinity, and the Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament.

SECTION III: A SNAPSHOT OF THE BELIEVERS SUFFERING AND GLORY (Daniel 3:26-30).

- A. Nebuchadnezzar called the 3 Hebrews men out of the furnace. In the presence of multiple pagan eyewitnesses. They were not affected by the fire at all. They didn't even smell like smoke. Do you know that no matter what you go through when you go through with God you can come out and people can't tell you just went through a crisis.
- B. God has no problem doing public miracles. There were over 500 eyewitnesses to the resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:6). Some miracles had several thousand eyewitnesses. God is not hiding who He is. Ask God to open your eyes so you can be aware of who He is.
- C. This incident is a preview of the journey of the believer. The 3 Hebrew men endured a testing of their faith and trial by fire. But on the other side of the furnace was a blessing. The world is going to become increasingly more hostile towards the saints of God. Prepare your heart to remain steadfast in the faith (Acts 14:21-22; 1 Peter 5:6-11; Romans 8:16-18).

GOD DEMONSTRATED HIS MIGHTY POWER AND INTERVENED DURING A CRITICAL TIME IN WORLD HISTORY. THE PAGANS LEARNED THE REALITY OF THE ONLY TRUE AND LIVING GOD AS OPPOSED TO THE IMPOTENCE OF FALSE gods. GOD COMMANDS ALL PEOPLE TO REPENT FROM IDOLATRY AND TRUST IN CHRIST JESUS FOR THE FORGIVNESS OF SIN.

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