

## Daniel 3:1-30 (NASB) Notes

⇒ “The Devil tempts us to destroy our faith, but God tests us to develop our faith, because a faith that can’t be tested can’t be trusted.” ~ Warren Wiersbe, *Be Resolute*, p. 47

⇒ The apostle Peter must have been well acquainted with Daniel, since he used the metaphor of a “fiery trial” (1Pe.1:7; 4:12)

⇒ Some scholars date this story around the time of the destruction of Jerusalem (586 BC), which would have been about 20 years after the end of chapter one, while others choose an earlier date.

⇒ **True faith Confronts the Challenge, vv.1-12**

⇒ **The heart of the king, vv. 1-3**

<sup>1</sup> 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.

⇒ **What motivated Nebuchadnezzar to build this tall, golden statue?**

- May not be enough gold in Babylonia to make a solid image (90’ x 9’), so probably wood overlaid with gold (*Isa.40:19; Jer.10:3-9*).

<sup>2</sup> 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.

- Eight separate classes of government officials, probably listed in order of priority.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

⇒ **The hearts of the people, vv. 4-7**

<sup>4</sup> Then the herald loudly proclaimed: “To you the command is given, O peoples, nations and *men of every language*,

<sup>5</sup> *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.

⇒ **Why did he use music to get the people to bow in worship to the statue?**

- “**worship**” ( כָּבַד – cəgid ) = to prostrate oneself, do homage. Used 11x in this chapter.

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

- The furnace had probably been used for smelting the ore for the statue, plus making bricks. “Judging from *bas-reliefs*, it would seem that Mesopotamia smelting furnaces tended to be like an old-fashioned glass milk-bottle in shape, with a large opening for the insertion of the ore to be smelted, and a smaller aperture at ground level for the admission of wood and charcoal to furnish the heat” (Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel*, p. 115). Temperatures could reach as high as 1800° fahrenheit. These furnaces were sometimes built on the side of a small hill or man-made mound so that you could walk up the hill to deposit the ore in the top.

- **Jer.29:22** – Nebuchadnezzar is already on record as burning two men to death.

<sup>7</sup> 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.

⇒ **The hearts of the three Jewish men, vv. 8-12**

<sup>8</sup> For this reason at that time certain **Chaldeans** came forward and **brought charges against** the Jews.

⇒ *Who were the Chaldeans?*

⇒ *What motivated them to bring accusations against Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego?*

- **“brought charges against”** = literally “*ate the pieces of*” suggesting severe hatred and bitter language.

<sup>9</sup> They responded and said to Nebuchadnezzar the king: “O king, live forever!

<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> But whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire.

<sup>12</sup> 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.”

- This will fulfill a prophecy – **Isa.43:1-2**

⇒ **True Faith Confesses the Lord, vv. 13-18**

<sup>13</sup> Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego; then these men were brought before the king.

- He was “*beside himself with rage.*” The opposite of Nebuchadnezzar – **Prov.16:32**

<sup>14</sup> 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?”

<sup>15</sup> 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?”

- “**what god is there?**” – emphatic ... “**What (at all) god is there?**”

⇒ How does Nebuchadnezzar’s question set up the ending of this story?

⇒ What practical life lessons can be gleaned from their response to the king?

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

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

<sup>18</sup> **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.”**

- They indicate that it will not be a matter of God’s inability, but rather of His sovereign will, if they die (**Rom.8:28**).

- “Faith rests on commands and promises, not on arguments and explanations” (Wiersbe, p. 52).

⇒ What are some ways we are asked to compromise within our culture in order to fit in with the general public?

⇒ How would you feel if required to make a choice of faith that could result in your death?

⇒ **True Faith Confounds the Enemy, vv. 19-25**

<sup>19</sup> 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.

- “**seven times**” is an idiom for as hot as possible.

<sup>20</sup> 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.

<sup>21</sup> 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.

<sup>22</sup> 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.

<sup>23</sup> But these three men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, fell into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire *still* tied up.

<sup>24</sup> 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."

<sup>25</sup> 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!"

### ⇒ True Faith Confirms the Promises, vv. 26-30

<sup>26</sup> 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.

<sup>27</sup> 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 nor was the hair of their head singed, nor were their trousers damaged, nor had the smell of fire *even* come upon them.

- "no effect" = literally "no power over"

### ⇒ As a result of the obedience of these three Hebrews, how does Nebuchadnezzar ultimately respond?

- Nebuchadnezzar affirmed (1) the power of the God of Israel; (2) the effectiveness of faith in Him; and (3) the remarkable dedication of the three Jewish men to their God, instead of to Neb's false god.

<sup>28</sup> 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.

<sup>29</sup> 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."

<sup>30</sup> Then the king caused Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego to prosper in the province of Babylon.

- Reportedly, there were more martyrs for Christ during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century than during all the preceding centuries.
- The events in this chapter 3 of Daniel remind us of prophecies found in the book of Revelation (chs. 13 & 14).