

Even if the king himself says so ...
We won't worship your image of gold!
Daniel Chapter 3



King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, ninety feet high and nine feet wide, and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon.



It may have been a gold covered wooden or stone structure.

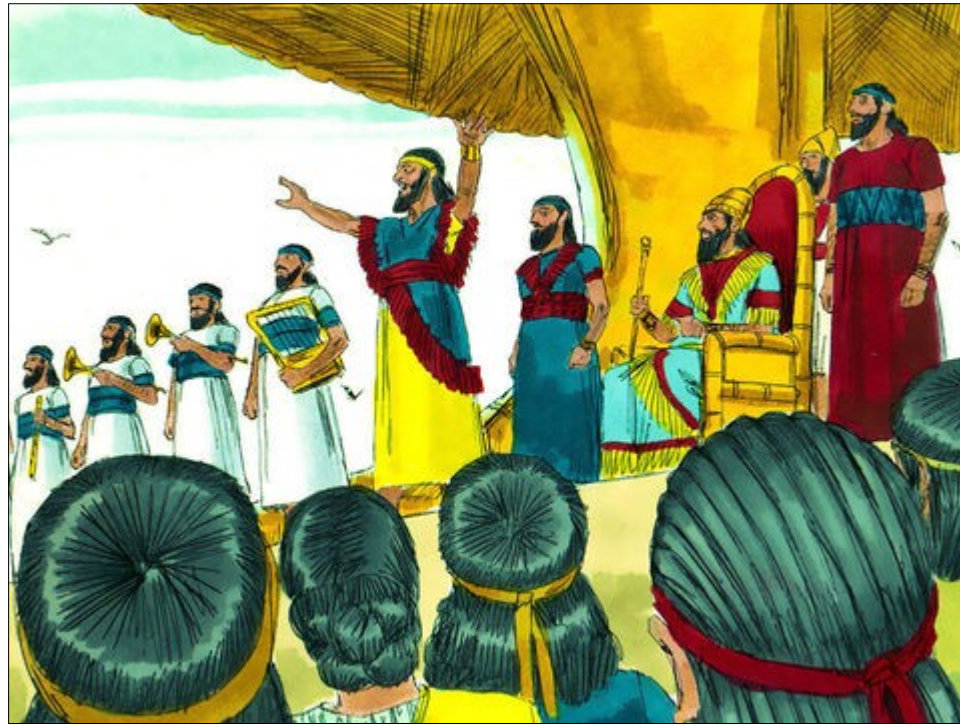
It was a while after his dream. Where did he get the idea?
And why did he do it? Pride? An attempt to unify his kingdom?

He then summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the image he had set up.



All the regional various officials were 'invited' to the dedication.
Daniel may have been 'out of town' on other business.

So the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials assembled for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and they stood before it.



What were they expecting?

Then the herald loudly proclaimed,
"This is what you are commanded to do,
O peoples, nations and men of every language..



All the details of the programme have been worked out. Everybody there as representatives of their people were to submit to Nebuchadnezzar as the representative of the 'gods'.

As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music,



The music of the “Babylonian Philharmonic Orchestra” would provide the moment for action and the background music to further impress the guests.

Notice both the positive and negative role that music can have in motivating and manipulating crowds.

What the exact kinds of instruments were is not certain. Some of the names suggest that there were imported instruments from Greece among them.

As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up.



The image may have been impressive, but it isn't God!
Most people were willing to do it.

Whoever does not fall down and worship
will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace."



This was the “incentive” that Nebuchadnezzar provided.
Obey or Die!

This was the choice believers had to face – and some still do

Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp and all kinds of music, all the peoples, nations and men of every language fell down and worshipped the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.



They all obeyed the authorities. - except ...

At this time some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews.



It wasn't just the young men that these Babylonian 'wise men' were jealous of, but their approach also reveals their antisemitism. It was the "Jews".

They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever! You have issued a decree, O king, that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music must fall down and worship the image of gold, and that whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace.



They reminded the king of what he had said

But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon--Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego--who pay no attention to you, O king. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up."



They phrase it to make it appear that these Jews were ungrateful and arrogant.

So they present it as a clear case of an insult to the king.

They didn't accuse Daniel – he wasn't there at the time. Perhaps they were afraid to include him.

Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king, and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up?"



Although he was angry, Nebuchadnezzar wanted to make sure of the facts himself, so he is prepared to give them another chance.

Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good.



Perhaps they hadn't understood the command, so this was a chance to put things right.

They may have been brave away from the king, but now in front of him it would be more pressure to conform.

The power of fear!

But if you do not worship it,
you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace.
Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?"

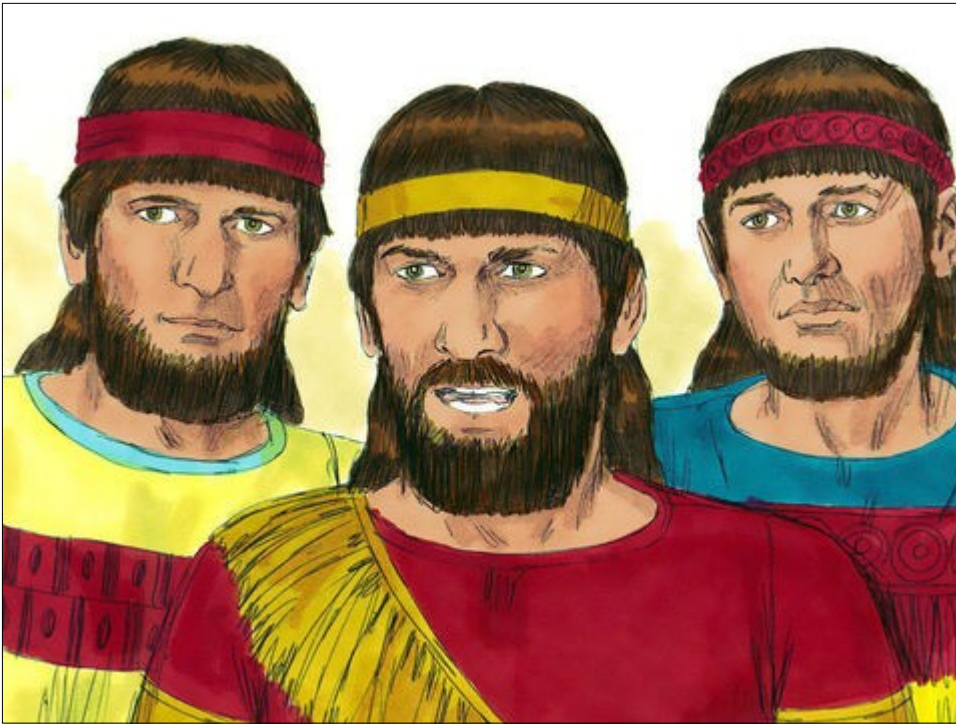


It is obey or die.
BUT his blasphemous
boast may have
encouraged the young
men. He doesn't know the
true God.

In general his threat was
true no (other) god could
rescue them.

Arrogant people including the most powerful king will have to
learn that they are not in charge.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king.

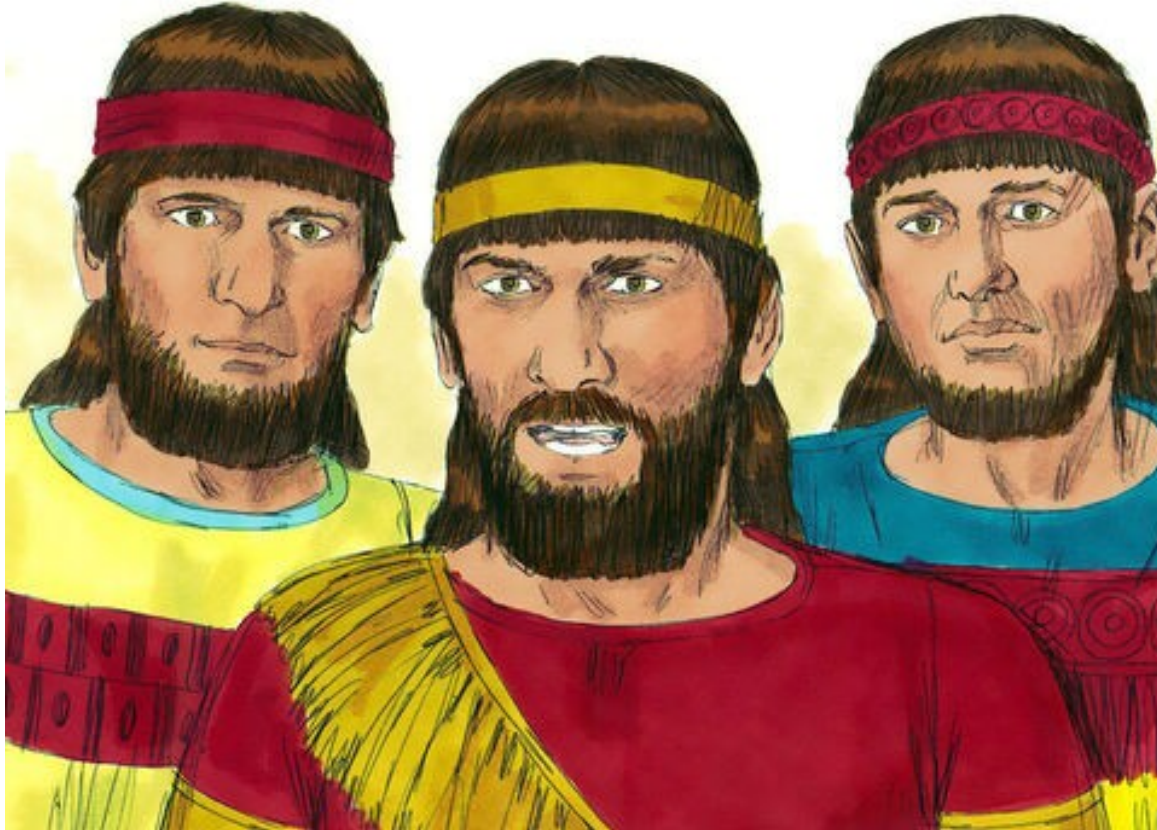


They weren't going to offer excuses. We did what we did because it was what we should do.

OUR God (we serve= worship as an ongoing lifestyle) is able

He can do it – they believe in God's power.

But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.



But if God chooses not to rescue us from your hand
We will obey **Him** and not you.

They passed the test!

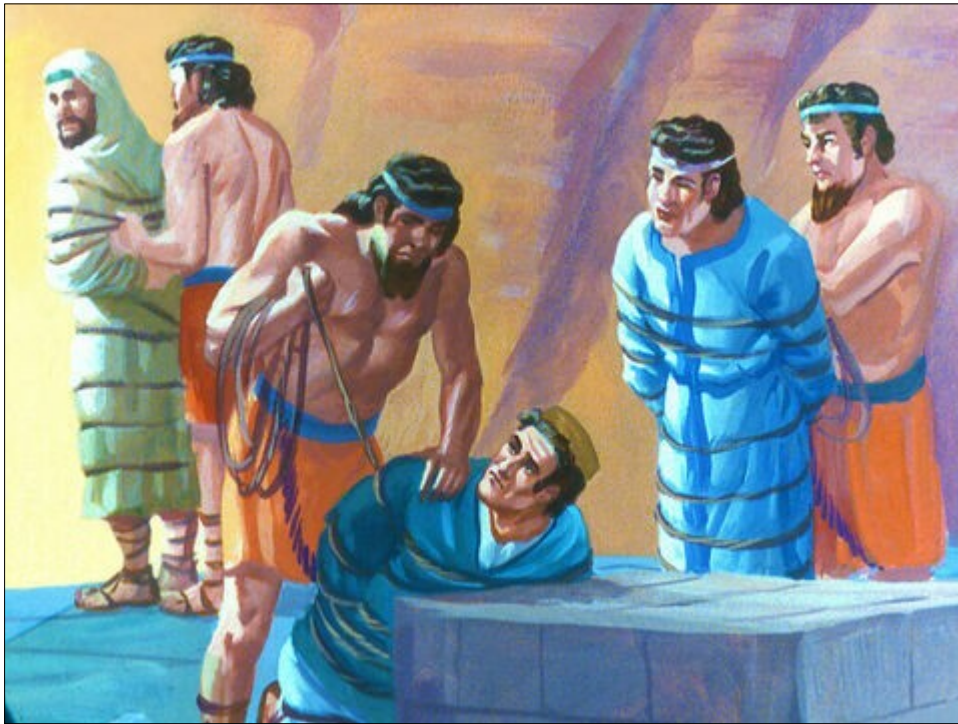
Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed.



Dictators don't like being told "No".

He was really angry now.

He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace.



As far as everyone can see, their situation is helpless and hopeless. Seven times hotter means that they really stoked it up with fuel.

So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace.



No delay!

Perhaps they included all their clothing in order to make them burn better! - God allowed it for a different reason.

The king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego,



Those that touch the Lord's children, touch 'the apple of his eye' (Zechariah 2:8)

It also showed that Nebuchadnezzar wasn't able to protect his own men.

and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace.



What would they have thought?
God hadn't rescued them FROM the fiery furnace!

Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?" They replied, "Certainly, O king."



The king was going to watch them suffer,
viewing from the furnace entrance.
He can't believe his own eyes!

He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods."



They were UNBOUND and UNHARMED. The only thing that burned were the ropes. God is in charge of chemistry and physics!
The fourth person looked very different.
What did Nebuchadnezzar mean? Who was it?

Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!"



He got as near as he safely could.

He acknowledges that The three men were true servants of the Most High God. Quite an admission!

This time they were quite willing to obey the king's command.

So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.



God gets the glory through them.

Their public witness to the power and care of their God was evident to the amazement of them all.

Fire doesn't normally behave this way, but when the Creator says so, even fire has to obey.

Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants!"



Nebuchadnezzar is progressing. He acknowledges God as the Most High God, he praises God as the God of the three men, And recognises God's intervention by means of His "Angel".
God had a plan for Nebuchadnezzar.

They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God.



Nebuchadnezzar was deeply impressed by their faith and their courage that led them to defy the king's orders and obey their God – at the risk of their lives.

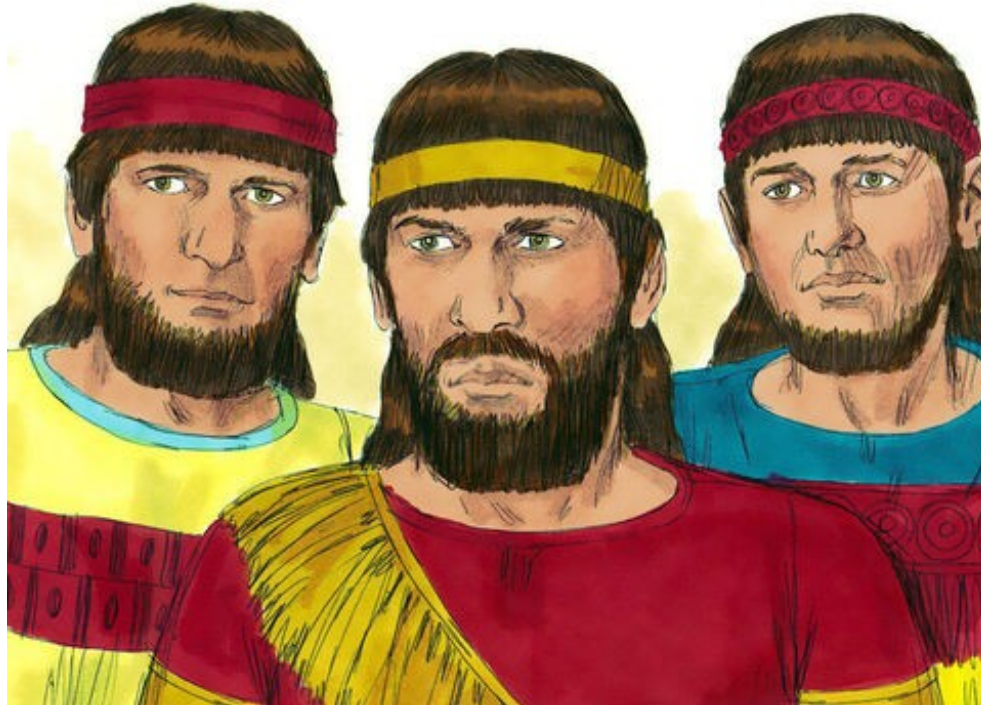
Therefore I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way."



Another decree...

It was good he wanted to honour the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, but this wasn't the way to do it. He still had more to learn about God.

Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego
in the province of Babylon.



The trial of their faith led to greater blessing and influence.

*James 1:12 Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial,
for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life,
which God has promised to those who love him.*

IMPORTANT LESSONS

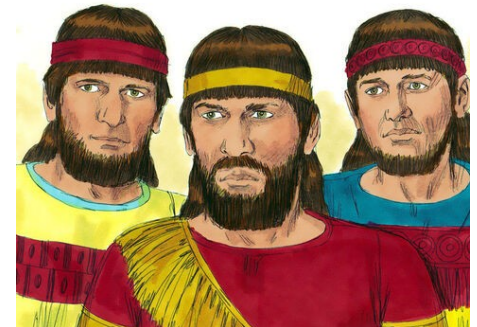
What is the connection between chapters 1 and 3?

Luke 16:10 “One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much.”



The blessing of mutual prayer and support.

Ecclesiastes 4:12 Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.



IMPORTANT LESSONS

Only God and not the state can call for absolute obedience

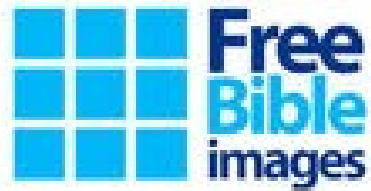
Acts 4:19 But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge,



God's plan for Nebuchadnezzar

1 Timothy 2:4 who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.





CONTRIBUTED BY
MOODY PUBLISHERS



These images are the copyright of *Moody Publishers*
and made freely available for teaching purposes only.
All other rights reserved.

FreeBibleimages would like to thank *Huw Rees* for his work on this contribution.

www.freebibleimages.org