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a ***Grace Notes*** course

## **Daniel**

an expositional study  
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Lesson 103

### **Daniel Chapter 3**

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## Daniel 103 – Chapter 3

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## Daniel 3

### Daniel 3:1-7

**Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its width six cubits. He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.**

**And King Nebuchadnezzar sent word to gather together the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.**

**So the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered together for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.**

**Then a herald cried aloud: To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages,**

**that at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up;**

**and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.**

**So at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the horn, flute, harp, and lyre, in symphony with all kinds of music, all the people, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the gold image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.**

Daniel chapter three opens with a great drama. Nebuchadnezzar made an awesome image of himself. It was awesome because of its height

and being made of gold. The image was 90' high and 9' wide. The gold of Daniel's dream motivated this image made of gold.

Nebuchadnezzar convened eight categories of officials to dedicate his image. Satraps were the highest political officials of the king. Prefects (princes) were military commanders. Governors were civil administrators. Advisors were high ranking judges. Treasurers administered the treasury of the kingdom. Judges administered the law established by the advisors. Magistrates issued judgments of the law.

This was a massive demonstration of loyalty to Nebuchadnezzar.

The command of Nebuchadnezzar covered all the national entities, people groups and languages under his rule. This was a summit representing many nations.

Nebuchadnezzar commanded public demonstration of loyalty to his rule. He made elaborate arrangements for this event. The orchestra incorporated wind instruments (horn, pipes), a reed instrument (flute) and stringed instruments (zither, lyre, harp).

The purpose of the erection of this image was to consolidate Nebuchadnezzar's authority. The image was to be the central symbol of his reign. The addition of worship indicates that this event had religious as well as political implications. Nebuchadnezzar's subjects were to recognize both his political and religious authority. Failure to comply meant death – turn or burn.

This may be another attempt at forming a one world government and religion. Worship here is forced worship. We can find no individual volition here.

**PRINCIPLE:** God wants loyalty to truth rather than internationalism or religion.

**APPLICATION:** The three friends of Daniel face a life or death situation. They either bow before the idol or die. Their faith shone brighter than the flames of the furnace. They would rather

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burn than turn. People of character can take a stand in the face of adversity.

**Hebrews 11:33,34.** ...who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

Both internationalism and religion are enemies of the truth. Religion comes from Satan himself (2 Corinthians 11:3,4; 13-15; 2 Timothy 4:1). Internationalism is also from Satan (Genesis 11:1-9; Revelation 17:1-14).

#### **Daniel 3:8-17**

**Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and accused the Jews.**

**They spoke and said to King Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live forever!**

**You, O king, have made a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the gold image;**

**and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.**

**There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up.**

**Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. So they brought these men before the king.**

**Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, that you do not serve my gods or**

**worship the gold image which I have set up?**

**Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, good! But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?**

**Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter.**

**If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king.**

Some Chaldeans accused the Jews of not bowing to the Image of Nebuchadnezzar. They may have been astrologers. They may have been the religious watchdogs for Nebuchadnezzar.

The accusers of the Jews sought to curry favor with the king.

The Chaldeans remind the king of his declared consequences of not bowing before the image.

This reminder came from the motivation of jealousy.

The Jews set over the affairs of the province of Babylon were clearly those whom Nebuchadnezzar placed there. They made accusation against Daniel's three friends but oddly not against Daniel.

The king became enraged because of this insufferable insolence.

The high status of the Jews in the kingdom made their refusal to bow before the image even more intolerable.

Nebuchadnezzar gave the three friends of Daniel another opportunity to bow before the image. The king warned of the consequences for not obeying his command. He figured that

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no one would be able to stay this execution because of his absolute power in the kingdom.

The king asked the three Jews (v.15) who will deliver you from my hands? and they felt that there was no need to answer the king because their resolve did not equivocate under duress. They counted the cost and were willing to accept the consequences.

Notice that the three do not say, O king, live forever as did the Chaldeans.

The three Jews expressed confidence that God was able to deliver them from the fiery furnace. They also asserted that they served God first and foremost.

**PRINCIPLE:** God expects unequivocal allegiance to Him and His plan.

**APPLICATION:** God expects His children to operate with undaunted courage and constancy. We cannot parley with sin for, if we do, it will be fatal to our walk with God. The only way to truly walk with the Lord is to fully resign ourselves to do the will of God.

**Job 13:15.** Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him.

**Matthew 10:28.** And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

God does not want us to operate in sullenness when things do not go our way. Resolve to do the will of God does not grant us the privilege of resenting that will. There is no equivocation here. We must have the idea of Get you behind me, Satan. There is no contrivance here. There is no wiggle room.

### **Daniel 3:18**

**But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.**

Should their God not deliver them, they would still refuse to bow before the image. They did not presume on God's will for their case – if not. They recognized the sovereignty of God in their situation. God has a purpose for what He does. They did not have a quid pro quo relationship with God.

The trio was not in the business of trying to coerce God's sovereignty. They did not try to make a trade with God. They simply accepted God's sovereign prerogative to do with them as He pleases.

**PRINCIPLE:** Mature believers have a good grasp of God's sovereignty.

**APPLICATION:** God expects us to respect the sovereignty of God as to whether he will deliver us or not deliver us from a given situation. They did not seek to coerce or bribe God to deliver them. They did not attempt to dictate to God what He should do.

**Exodus 14:13,14.** And Moses said to the people, 'Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever.

'The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.'

**1 Samuel 17:47.** Then all this assembly shall know that the Lord does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands.

**Psalms 37:5.** Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass.

**Psalms 55:22.** Cast your burden on the Lord, And He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved.

If God can, why doesn't He? The Bible declares that God limits His power by a number of things. He is unable to contradict Himself. His character limits what He does. Unbelief limits Him (Mt 13:58). God also limits Himself by His purposes. As the trio submitted themselves to

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God's will whatever the cost, so should we. Not my will, but yours be done. We leave certain things in God's hands. This is an act of faith.

### Daniel 3:19-23

**Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. He spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated.**

**And he commanded certain mighty men of valor who were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, and cast them into the burning fiery furnace.**

**Then these men were bound in their coats, their trousers, their turbans, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.**

**Therefore, because the king's command was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego.**

**And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.**

Nebuchadnezzar enraged by what he deemed insolence, heated the fiery furnace to seven times more than usual. He was going to make an example out of the trio of renegades. Everyone would see the price of rebellion against the authority of the king. They could see it in his face. He was incredulous.

Nebuchadnezzar called some of his best troops to bring the three Hebrew young men to justice.

The point of mentioning clothing is to show that the trio was well dressed and thus part of the aristocracy.

The flames killed some of Nebuchadnezzar's best men.

What stark terror these young men faced!

**Isaiah 43:2.** When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you.

**PRINCIPLE:** All believers inexorably and inevitably enter trial by fire.

**APPLICATION:** God allows trial to enter our lives because he wants to separate the genuine from the phony. It separates chaff from wheat. Trial always breaks those ties that bind us to our sufficiency. When this happens, we live in the power and strength of God.

### Daniel 3:24-25

**Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said to the king, True, O king.**

**Look! he answered, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.**

Nebuchadnezzar sees something astonishing. He wanted to check with others in case he saw an illusion. Did we not cast three men...?

The king sees an additional person in the furnace. That fourth person was like the Son of God. We should translate this like a son of the gods. To Nebuchadnezzar it looked like something in the pantheon but it was the preincarnate Christ. Nebuchadnezzar did not understand this fourth figure as the Son of God. This is a theophany (a pre-incarnate appearance of the Son of God).

**PRINCIPLE:** Christians with courage can take a stand against opposition.

**APPLICATION:** Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, opposed the heretical teaching of Arius who denied the deity of Christ. He was exiled five times for his opposition to Arius. They brought him before Emperor Theodosius

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who mandated that he cease his opposition to Arius. The Emperor sharply reproved him and said, Do you not realize that all the world is against you? Athanasius answered, Then I am against all the world!

### Daniel 3:26-30

**Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace and spoke, saying, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire.**

**And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king's counselors gathered together, and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them.**

**Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God!**

**Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this.**

**Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the province of Babylon.**

Nebuchadnezzar approached near to the opening of the furnace. He commanded the three to come out of the furnace. In doing so, he called them servants of the Most High God. In a distinct change of mood, he acknowledge that they were God's servants, not his.

The name the Most High occurs 13 times in Daniel (3:26; 4:2, 17, 24-25, 32, 34; 5:18, 21; 7:18, 22, 25, 27). Clearly, Daniel puts God above any other god and shows that others acknowledge Him as well.

After examining the trio, Nebuchadnezzar's officials confirmed that what they saw was real.

Nebuchadnezzar declared what he saw as a work of the God on behalf of the trio. The words blessed be the God manifests an awe and approval of the God of these Hebrews.

The phrase send His Angel is a reference to the fourth person in the fiery furnace.

Nebuchadnezzar made a public decree to uphold the God of the three Hebrew young men and their God. The penalty would be to be cut in pieces and their houses burned to rubble.

The king promoted the trio to position of greater power in the kingdom.

**PRINCIPLE:** A mature believer accepts the fact of tribulation and orients to it under the plan of God.

**APPLICATION:** God will thrust all of us into our own trial by fire. In the biblical Hall of Fame, we see a roll call of heroes of living by faith through trial.

**Hebrews 11:36-40.** Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment.

They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented—

of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.

And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise,

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God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

**Acts 14:21,22.** And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch,

strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, 'We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.'

**2 Timothy 3:12.** Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

Jesus said that all true believers will enter into tribulation:

**John 16:33.** These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.