

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Let's pray...

[Dan 3:1-30 NKJV] 1 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.

Now, a few years have passed from the end of chapter two to the beginning of chapter three.

Some of the theologians estimate this time to be around 15-20 years.

And you might recall in chapter two, Nebuchadnezzar had a dream, a dream that troubled him.

And he ordered all his minions to not only give him the interpretation of the dream, but also he demanded that they tell him the context of his own dream.

And because they were incapable of giving Nebuchadnezzar his dream and interpretation, he ordered all the wise men in Babylon to be killed.

And this is how God opened the door for Daniel to come in.

God arranged, God allowed all these circumstances to take place – all the hardships that Daniel had to go through – the brainwashing that he had to endure – the new

language, the name change, the culture shock of being kidnapped and taken prisoner to a foreign land.

But God allowed it to prepare Daniel and bring him to the right place and the right time.

It was a divine set up.

An appointment set by God.

Not only does God reveal the contents of Nebuchadnezzar's dream – He also revealed to Daniel the interpretation and Daniel then tells it to the king, giving all the glory to God.

Through the dream, God was providing insight to Nebuchadnezzar of the major empires that were going to rule in the future.

Babylon was the head of gold, the Medes and Persians were the chest and arms made of silver, the Greek Empire was the belly and thighs, the Roman Empire was the legs made of iron and then the feet of clay mixed with iron spoke of an Empire that to this day has not happened. This Empire will be around when Jesu Christ returns.

And one of the things that Nebuchadnezzar does when Daniel provides him with the interpretation is that he falls on his face –

He is totally blown away by the revelation.

Look at verse 47 again from chapter 2,

[Dan 2:47 NKJV] 47 The king answered Daniel, and said, "Truly your God [is] the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret."

Nebuchadnezzar had an experience.

He acknowledges who God is – Truly your God, Daniel, is the God of gods, the Lord of kings.

However, church, the problem with experiences is that they tend to be short lived.

And over time, we go back to the way we were before the experience.

That is why we cannot depend on experiences to help us mature in our faith.

We cannot have intimate fellowship with our Heavenly Father relying on experiences.

We do it through prayer and reading and living His word.

I asked you to make note of the word, image, here in verse 1 because it is the same Aramaic word that is used in chapter two regarding the image of his dream.

Even though God revealed to him that his kingdom was going to be short lived, he builds a physical copy of the image from his dream with the exception that it is covered completely in gold.

He was being defiant – He decides that his kingdom is going to last forever.

And he proceeds to build it for all to see.

The height of it – sixty cubits or 90 feet

The width – 9 feet wide.

2 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. 3 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.

Because Babylon was a vast kingdom – with many different languages and religious beliefs – he attempts to unite his kingdom.

That is why he brings all these officials – he is going to first make sure that they all worship the same thing – him.

4 Then a herald cried aloud: "To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, 5 "[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; 6 "and whoever

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

So Nebuchadnezzar gives the decree that when the music starts playing – everyone must worship the golden image that he set up.

To not bow before the image was going to be in violation of a religious offense as well as treason. That is another reason that he brings in all the officials – he is going to test their loyalty.

And those that defy his decree are to be cast into the furnace.

Nebuchadnezzar is a shadow of the antichrist – because the antichrist will have his own image that he will force the world to worship it.

Turn with me to the book of Revelation 13,

[Rev 13:11-15 NKJV] 11 Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. 12 And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. 13 He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. 14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the

sword and lived. 15 He was granted [power] to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and **cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.**

7 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.

Here we have compliance by the people – as they are forced to worship the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

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

9 They spoke and said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever! 10 "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; 11 "and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. 12 "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."

These Chaldeans were one of the groups called to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter two.

They were the spokespersons for all the magicians, astrologers and sorcerers.

But when Daniel gives Nebuchadnezzar the revelation of the dream, they lose their political clout as Daniel and his three friends were the ones that were promoted.

So there is some jealousy on their part.

The word that is used for accused – it means to slander, to denounce maliciously.

That is what these Chaldeans were doing here to Daniel's three friends.

"These guys are purposely defying your edict king. They don't want a united Babylon. They are not loyal to you king."

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

14 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?

Nebuchadnezzar was one angry dude.

When he was told that Meshach, Shadrach and Abednego were not bowing to his image, he brings them in to question them.

He wants to find out for himself. He is not going to make his decision based on hearsay.

He is going to personally interview the three young men.

And notice the first words out of his mouth to them, **Is it true???**

They are going to have to make a public stand for God.

Many times, we as believers, we cave in when asked this same question about our faith, "Is it true?"

Is it true –

You believe that Jesus is the only way to heaven

You believe that homosexuality is wrong

And as a result – we compromise on God's word.

Because we are afraid of what people are going to think of us or we feel like we don't want to offend anyone or because we are afraid of the consequences.

Remember, after Jesus was arrested, Peter was asked, "Is it true?" three times and three times he said – it is not true.

Instead of standing up for Jesus, he wilted and denied Him three times.

So let's see what Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego do.

15 "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?"**

I am going to give you guys one more chance. When the music starts playing you either bow down to the image or I will throw you into the fiery furnace.

And then Nebuchadnezzar goes further by challenging them by stating that nobody will be able to deliver them out of the situation.

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

"King Nebuchadnezzar – we have an answer for you right now, you don't have to play the music"

We will not compromise – we will not bow down to your image.

And the reason that they did not bow down to the image was because that was one of the reasons that they were in exile in the first place – idolatry.

So why would they turn to idolatry???

17 "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.

Do what you have to do king – we know that God will deliver us.

How did they know that God would deliver them?

His word.

Turn to Isaiah 43

[Isa 43:1-2 NKJV] 1 But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called [you] by your name; You [are] Mine. 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.**

I had you underline the word **when**. Notice that it doesn't say **if** you pass through waters or **if** you walk through fires.

Trials are inevitable, and trials are varied – we don't all face the same trial.

However, it is important to note that God will be with us in the toughest of circumstances.

When we walk through waters, when we go through rivers or through the fire.

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."

Even if God chooses not to save us from this dilemma – we are still not going to compromise on His word.

Church, real faith is trusting God, no matter what the outcome.

Sometimes we make the mistake to think that obedience to God means that we don't get to walk in the midst of the fire.

"I don't know why God is doing this to me – I don't deserve this."

Job said,

(Job 13:15 NKJV) Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him...

That is faith.

19 **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.**

The scriptures point this out so that no one will discredit the miracle of God.

Maybe the reason that they survived was because the oven wasn't turned on as hot as it normally would have.

No, the scriptures tell us that it was turned up seven times what it would normally be turned to.

This also shows us just how angry Nebuchadnezzar was – as he wants to make sure that they suffer more for disobeying him.

20 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. 21 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. 22 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.

The king ordered men to dress Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego with their official dress – he wants to make a point – these were officials that he had promoted and now they are being disloyal.

And the oven was so hot that the men that were supposed to throw them in the oven died themselves as they succumbed to the heat of the oven.

23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. 24 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." 25 "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."

King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished that anyone survived inside the oven when others perished at the door.

And then he was astonished that he saw four men in the oven instead of three and the three men he ordered thrown in were no longer bound – they are walking freely in the midst of the fire.

The fourth person walking with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego is thought to be a Christophany – Jesus Christ in the Old Testament.

26 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. 27 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 calls them out of the oven and there was no evidence that they had actually been walking in the midst of fire as their clothes and hair were not burned in the fire.

And this just shows how complete God's deliverance was.

28 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!"

Now, I want to make it clear that this acknowledgment by Nebuchadnezzar is not a conversion.

All he is doing is giving recognition to the God of the Jews – just like he did when Daniel interpreted the dream for him.

He also gives recognition to the fourth person –

And he also gives recognition to the three young Jews who refused to bow before his image, at the cost of their lives.

29 "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." 30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the province of Babylon.

The king's decree here in verse 29 was a prohibition of defaming the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego –

Much in the same way that the Chaldeans came in and tried to defame the three young Jews.

it was not a decree for the people to start worshipping the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

Turn with me to Romans 12,

[Rom 12:1-2 NKJV] 1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, [which is] your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what [is] that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

I want to finish with this verse tonight – and the reason is that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego – exemplified these two verses in Daniel 3.

They did not compromise, they did not bow to the image.

They surrendered themselves completely to God.

And it is the same thing that is expected from each one of us.

Amen.

Let's pray...

