

Daniel 3

Verses 1 - 7

Nebuchadnezzar the king made a statue 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. ² Nebuchadnezzar the king also sent *word* to assemble the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the chief treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the administrators of the provinces to come to the dedication of the statue that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. ³ Then the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the chief treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the administrators of the provinces were assembled for the dedication of the statue that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the statue that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. ⁴ Then the herald loudly proclaimed: "To you the command is given, you peoples, nations, and *populations of all* languages, ⁵ that at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe, and all kinds of musical instruments, you are to fall down and worship the golden statue that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up. ⁶ But whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be thrown into the middle of a furnace of blazing fire." ⁷ Therefore as soon as all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe, and all kinds of musical instruments, all the peoples, nations, and *populations of all* languages fell down *and* worshiped the golden statue that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

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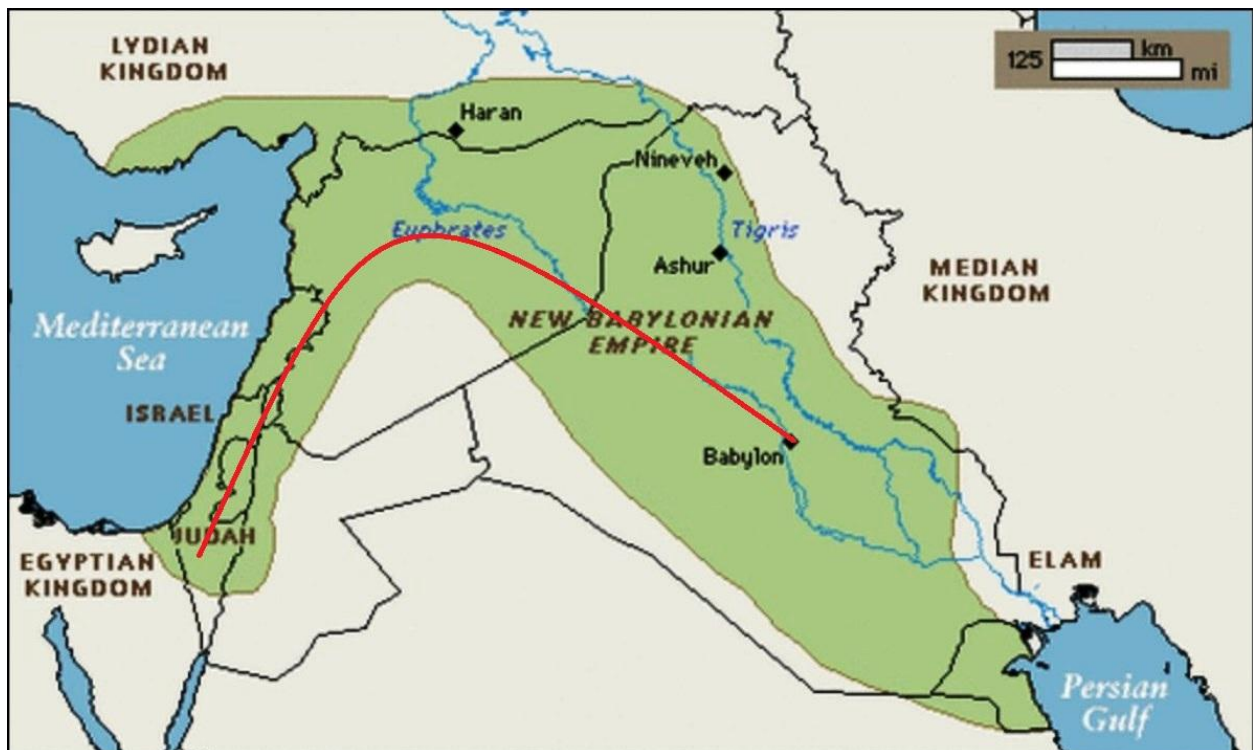
God revealed a great prophesy to Nebuchadnezzar that depicted a man with a gold head, chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, legs of iron and feet of iron and clay. So the king decided to erect a 90 foot statue of gold and he had all of the important rulers of the kingdom come to the dedication of the statue.

See pic 305



The government officers were from every part of the Babylonian kingdom

See pic 310



From Judah to Babylon via the trade routes was a distance of about 900 miles.

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The rulers of Babylon were told to come to this dedication of the statue but on the day of the dedication it was proclaimed that anyone who didn't worship the statue would be thrown in a furnace of blazing fire. While this seemed to be a surprise announcement it would not have been an issue for most of the leaders to worship the statue because the pagan world worshiped many gods.

Verses 8 - 12

For this reason at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and brought charges against the Jews. ⁹ They began to speak and said to Nebuchadnezzar the king: “O king, live forever! ¹⁰ You, O king, have made a decree that every person who hears the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, and bagpipe, and all kinds of musical instruments, is to fall down and worship the golden statue. ¹¹ But whoever does not fall down and worship shall be thrown into the middle of a furnace of blazing fire. ¹² 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, nor do they worship the golden statue which you have set up.

¹² 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, nor do they worship the golden statue which you have set up.

The officials brought two charges against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego.

1. These men do not worship your gods.

This indicates these officials had a prior issue with these three Jewish men but failed to bring this issue up to the king prior to this incident. It is likely that they were jealous of the three men because they had been promoted over them.

2. Nor do they worship the golden statue.

We don't know for sure why Daniel was not in this group that was accused but it is possible that the officials were unwilling to challenge Daniel since he was second in command only to the king. However, it wouldn't be wise to accuse the three men that Daniel had promoted after getting the king's approval.

Verses 13 - 15

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

¹⁴ Nebuchadnezzar began speaking and said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods, nor worship the golden statue that I have set up? ¹⁵ 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 musical instruments, to fall down and worship the statue that I have made, *very well*. But if you do not worship, you will immediately be thrown into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can rescue you from my hands?"

Even though the king was outraged, he took the time to investigate the accusation against the three men before he took any action. He may have been aware of the jealousy that prompted the charges so he gave the Hebrews another chance to clear themselves of the charges.

The king had already seen what the God of Daniel could do and he knew that Daniel had recommended the three Hebrews to be over the entire kingdom but maybe his anger temporarily blinded his judgment. It is also possible that God hardened his heart so this miracle would take place and the top leadership of the country would not be challenged again, at least not as long as this king ruled (he ruled for 44 years).

Verses 16 – 18

¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego replied to the king, "Nebuchadnezzar, we are not in need of an answer to give you concerning this matter. ¹⁷ If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to rescue us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will rescue us from your hand, O king. ¹⁸ But *even if He does not*, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods nor worship the golden statue that you have set up.

¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego replied to the king, “Nebuchadnezzar, we are not in need of an answer to give you concerning this matter.

The 3 Hebrew men didn't need to mull over their response because they had already decided what they would do. They knew that God was more than capable of saving them but even if He didn't, they would still do the right thing.

These three verses are one of the greatest statements of faith that one can find in the bible. When a time of testing comes our way we can only hope and pray that we will respond in a like manor.

Verses 19 - 23

¹⁹ Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with wrath, and his facial expression was changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. He answered by giving orders to heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. ²⁰ And he ordered certain valiant warriors who *were* in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego in order to throw *them* into the furnace of blazing fire. ²¹ Then these men were tied up in their trousers, their coats, their caps, and their *other* clothes, and were thrown into the middle of the furnace of blazing fire. ²² For this reason, because the king's command was harsh and the furnace had been made extremely hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. ²³ But these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, fell into the middle of the furnace of blazing fire *still* tied up.

¹⁹ Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with wrath, and his facial expression was changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. He answered by giving orders to heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated.

The expression 7 times hotter may be an idiom meaning they made it as hot as possible but in either case, the result was the same.

²¹ Then these men were tied up in their trousers, their coats, their caps, and their *other* clothes, and were thrown into the middle of the furnace of blazing fire.

Normally the condemned would be stripped of their clothing so why did the guards send them to the furnace fully dressed? There are at least 3 reason this may have been done.

1. The urgency demanded by the king.
2. By keeping them dressed in their official court attire the king was sending a strong message to those in his administration.
3. The miracle was enhanced by the fact that their clothes did not smell of smoke.

²² For this reason, because the king's command was harsh and the furnace had been made extremely hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. ²³ But these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, fell into the middle of the furnace of blazing fire *still* tied up.

If the furnace was so hot that it killed the guards then the 3 men should have died before they reached the furnace since they would have been in front of the guards. Also the ropes used to tie up the 3 men should have burned up before they reached the furnace. Both of these facts add to the spectacular nature of this miracle.

Verses 24 - 27

²⁴ Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up quickly; he said to his counselors, "Was it not three men *that* we threw bound into the middle of the fire?" They replied to the king, "Absolutely, O king." ²⁵ He responded, "Look! I see four men untied *and* walking about in the middle of the fire unharmed, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of *the* gods!" ²⁶ Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the furnace of blazing fire; he 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 middle of the fire. ²⁷ The satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king's counselors gathered together *and* saw that the fire had no effect on the bodies of these men, nor was the hair of their heads singed, nor were their trousers damaged, nor had *even* the smell of fire touched them.

²⁴ Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up quickly; he said to his counselors, "Was it not three men *that* we threw bound into the middle of the fire?" They replied to the king, "Absolutely, O king."

The king seems to be more amazed that there was a fourth person in the furnace than the fact that the three men were still alive.

²⁵ He responded, “Look! I see four men untied *and* walking about in the middle of the fire unharmed, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of *the* gods!”

This was a pre-incarnate manifestation of Christ.

²⁶ Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the furnace of blazing fire; he 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 middle of the fire.

Since the king came near to the door of the furnace his servants most have cooled down the temperature of the furnace or some time had passed and the furnace had cooled down naturally. In either case the king told the 3 men to come out of the furnace and they followed his instruction.

²⁷ The satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king’s counselors gathered together *and* saw that the fire had no effect on the bodies of these men, nor was the hair of their heads singed, nor were their trousers damaged, nor had even the smell of fire touched them.

The interesting thing about miracles is that no explanation is really needed because miracles break the laws of nature and are therefore self-evident. However, these four additional facts are noteworthy. The last fact about even the smell of fire not touching them is significant because anyone who has enjoyed spending some time around a camp fire even at a very safe distance cannot escape the smell that remains on their clothes. That is as close to a fire as most of us ever want to get.

Verses 28 - 30

²⁸ Nebuchadnezzar responded and said, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who has sent His angel and rescued His servants who put their trust in Him, violating the king’s command, and surrendered their bodies rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. ²⁹ Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or *population of any* language that speaks anything offensive against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego shall be torn limb from limb and their houses made a rubbish heap, because there is no other god who is able to save in this way.” ³⁰ Then the king made Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego prosperous in the province of Babylon.

²⁸ **Nebuchadnezzar responded and said, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who has sent His angel and rescued His servants who put their trust in Him, violating the king’s command, and surrendered their bodies rather than serve or worship any god except their own God.**

Nebuchadnezzar says that God sent His angel to rescue His servants. It was not uncommon for Jesus to be referred to as an angel in the O.T.

See pic 315

Genesis 22

⁹ Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰ And Abraham reached out with his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. ¹¹ But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” ¹² He said, “Do not reach out your hand against the boy, and do not do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.”

¹⁵ Then the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven, ¹⁶ and said, “By Myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand, which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies.

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Genesis 16

⁶ But Abram said to Sarai, "Look, your slave woman is in your power; do to her what is good in your sight." So Sarai treated her harshly, and she fled from her presence. ⁷ Now the angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur.

¹⁰ The angel of the Lord also said to her, "I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they will be too many to count."

¹³ Then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, "You are a God who sees me"; for she said, "Have I even seen *Him* here *and lived* after He saw me?"

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Exodus 3

Now Moses was pasturing the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² Then the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not being consumed. ³ So Moses said, "I must turn aside and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burning up!" ⁴ When the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am."

²⁹ **Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or *population of any* language that speaks anything offensive against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego shall be torn limb from limb and their houses made a rubbish heap, because there is no other god who is able to save in this way.”**

The king responded to miracles in a very passionate way.

1. When Daniel revealed the dream and interpreted it.

This caused the king to promote Daniel to the #2 position in the kingdom and upon Daniels recommendation, the king allowed Daniel to promote his 3 friends.

2. When God saved Daniel’s three friends from the fiery furnace.

This caused the king to put a safety net around the whole Jewish population.

God sent His people to Babylon because of their sins but he also put a safety net around His people so they would not be harmed. This should give all of us comfort when we find ourselves being punished for our sins.