

# Daniel Chapter Three

- King Nebuchadnezzar erected an image of gold 90 feet tall and 9 feet wide in the plain of Dura [3:1].
  - This was possibly done in response to being told he was the head of gold in his dream [2:38].
  - The image (תְּצֵלֶם tselem – image, idol) could have been of human form, but its dimensions make it more likely to have been an obelisk such as Nebuchadnezzar might have seen while in Egypt.
  - Given its enormous size, it was most likely plated with gold, but nonetheless an impressive sight.
- Nebuchadnezzar called together his “cabinet” and other government officials for a dedication [3:2-3].
  - Satraps – chief representatives of the King
  - Prefects – military commanders
  - Governors – civil bureaucrats
  - Counselors – advisors in governmental affairs
  - Treasurer – overseers of kingdom funds
  - Judges – administrators of the law
  - Magistrates – adjudicators according to the law
  - Rulers of the provinces – regional authorities
- The king then had a decree issued to all of the Babylonian Empire [3:4-7].
  - Everyone was included – all peoples, nations, and languages (tongues) under Babylonian rule [3:4].
  - The command required worship of the image [3:5].
  - This worship was to occur the moment the king’s elaborate music ensemble began performing [3:5].
  - Disobeying this order would result in very severe (and swift) punishment [3:6].
  - The majority of people obeyed the king’s edict [3:7].
- Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah (Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego) refused to worship the image and charges were brought up against them [3:8-12].
  - They would not disobey God’s command [Ex 24:14].
  - The Chaldeans likely resented the high ranking Jews.

- Notice that Daniel was not among the accused.
  - Daniel would surely not have worshiped the image.
  - Daniel was in a position of authority above the Chaldeans, so perhaps they were afraid to accuse him.
  - Another possibility is that Daniel was away at the time.
- Nebuchadnezzar got very upset, brought the three before him and demanded that they obey [3:13-15].
- Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah (H-M-A) responded to the king with incredible divine viewpoint.
  - Since God was their authority in spiritual matters, they did not need to answer Nebuchadnezzar [3:16].
  - They showed amazing trust in God [3:17].
    - God will deliver them from Nebuchadnezzar's hand.
    - God is able to rescue them from the fiery furnace.
  - They were ready to die, if that was God's will [3:18].
- Nebuchadnezzar was filled with wrath at this point and decided to utterly destroy H-M-A [3:19-23].
  - He demanded that the furnace be turned up to seven times its normal temperature [3:19].
  - He commanded his warriors to tie up H-M-A, fully clothed, and throw them into the furnace [3:20-21].
  - The king was in a big hurry to get this done which, along with the intense heat, resulted in the death of the valiant warriors who were carrying them [3:22].
  - Nonetheless, H-M-A fell into the furnace [3:23].
- Through a miracle by the very hand of God Himself, H-M-A were saved from death [3:24-27].
  - The king knew that only three men went into the fire, yet he now saw four men walking around in the fire unharmed and they were all untied [3:24-25].
  - The fourth one was like a "son of the gods" [3:25].
  - Nebuchadnezzar called for H-M-A to come out of the fiery furnace and so they did [3:26].
  - His entourage verified that the intense fire had absolutely no effect on them whatsoever [3:27].
- Nebuchadnezzar responded with positive volition toward the Most High God [3:28-29].
  - The king had already recognized that H-M-A were servants of the Most High God [3:26].

- Nebuchadnezzar now gives an amazing testimony to the faithfulness of God to His servants [3:28-29].
  - God delivered His servants who put their trust in Him.
  - He sent His “angel” to personally deliver them.
  - No other “god” is able to deliver in this way.
  - Therefore, blasphemy against God became illegal.
- Nebuchadnezzar also responded by blessing H-M-A with temporal prosperity [3:30].
- Most importantly, the king responded with faith in the Most High God and was filled with joy [3:31-33].
  - In the Hebrew text chapter three does not end until what is chapter 4, verse 3 in our English Bible.
  - The king wished all in the kingdom well [3:31].
  - He recognized God as his personal God [3:32].
  - Nebuchadnezzar in his excitement as a new believer wrote a brief psalm of praise to God [3:32-33].