

Corresponds to Programs 84-86

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the NKJV and KJV.

Daniel 3 – Parts 1-3 STUDY GUIDE

DANIEL 3 – PART 1

Daniel 3:1-7

In Daniel 2, Nebuchadnezzar had been on fire for God, openly confessing that Daniel's God was the God of gods. And now, just one chapter later, the king is making an image all of gold and commanding all the leading men of his kingdom to bow down and worship the image at the sound of the music. The obvious question to be asked is, "What happened?" The answer informs our own relationship with God.

Nebuchadnezzar was intellectually convinced that Daniel's God was the only true God, yet intellectual truth was not enough to keep him faithful to that conviction. The second point that is so beautifully revealed in Daniel 3, is that God is longsuffering toward us. Even when we turn from Him, He still holds out for us as He did with Nebuchadnezzar. This reminds us that we cannot rely on yesterday's experiences with God. As imperfect, fallen human beings, we need fresh, life-changing connection with the God of Heaven in every new chapter of our lives.

What God delivered to Nebuchadnezzar in the image of Daniel 2 was the sure word of Bible prophecy. What Nebuchadnezzar delivered to the people in the image of Daniel 3 was false prophecy. Nebuchadnezzar changed God's sure Word of Bible prophecy to reflect his own vision and the future he wanted. Like Nebuchadnezzar, we, too, can often live in a delusion of false prophecy, imagining a future that is not reality, and are disappointed when reality hits. We can be just as guilty of painting a picture that is all golden in our eyes. We can become so invested in ourselves that we insist that others yield to our power,

influence, and fabricated images. We see much of this same mismanagement of God's truth for our own future visions in our world today. To one degree or another, we can all act like Nebuchadnezzar.

When we compare Daniel 3 to Revelation 13, we see a parallel between Nebuchadnezzar's golden image and the Revelation 13 image of the beast that all are commanded to worship. Both the image in Daniel 3 and the image in Revelation 13 are counterfeit views of the future as God has revealed it to us. And when we compare Daniel 2 with Revelation 14, they reveal a future that is based in reality: one that has all creation turning their backs on earthly powers and worshiping God alone. Like Nebuchadnezzar,

many people are deceived because they end up rejecting God's true version of the future for a false, man-made one. Like Daniel 3, the false image depicted in Revelation 13 comes with a death threat: worship this image or die. Such a fear factor is an especially powerful motivator to people who may not buy into a false narrative. By and large, people want to live, so the threat of death for non-compliance is man's way of overruling God's truth.

However, we do not need to fear man. The Bible says that God has put eternity in our hearts (Ecclesiastes 3:11). God is calling us to trust Him for that eternity, especially when we are faced with worshiping man and his narrative in the place of God and His sure Word of Bible

prophecy. We need to remember that the only future that is permanent and lasting is God's future, not man's.

Ezekiel 26:7; Ezekiel 28:12-19; Isaiah 14:12-14

As fallen human beings—and without even realizing it—we tend to be the personification of Lucifer, the fallen angel who



“Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its width six cubits...” **DANIEL 3:1**

KEY SCRIPTURES

Ezekiel 28:12 YOU WERE THE SEAL OF PERFECTION

Revelation 14:7 FEAR GOD AND GIVE GLORY TO HIM

Revelation 14:8 BABYLON IS FALLEN, IS FALLEN

Hebrews 12:29 OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE

was once a covering cherub. When Nebuchadnezzar exalted himself by making the image all of gold, he was in reality exalting Lucifer, the fallen angel who once stood at God's side as an anointed cherub. God is the true King of the north and Lucifer is seeking to take God's place by leading this world to exalt and worship him in the place of God. Lucifer, the fallen angel, deceives us into worshipping him by replacing God's Word and worship with a counterfeit that is very close to the truth.

Daniel 3:8-13

Pride and fear are huge issues with humanity today; however, God is able to remove both pride and fear from the human experience. Pride and fear led Nebuchadnezzar to erect an image of gold in an effort to symbolize that his kingdom, designated by the gold head of the prophetic image in Daniel 2, would never come to an end. The people were compelled to bow down and worship the image through the threat of death by being thrown into the fiery furnace. Yet the three young men who feared God were not afraid of the king's commandment. The fear of God supersedes the fear of men. We see this over and over again in the Bible. Those who are filled with the love and fear of God, lose their fear of men.

DANIEL 3 - PART 2

Daniel 3:14-18

Nebuchadnezzar has gathered all the rulers of his kingdom together for an enforced display of loyalty to his throne. The command to worship the golden image was a test set up by Nebuchadnezzar to quash any idea of rebellion among his leaders. Based on the king's misrepresentation of Bible prophecy, the head of gold would neither end at the neck nor be replaced by other kingdoms. He would have all his leaders acknowledge this new idea. It was outrageous to Nebuchadnezzar that the very men whom Daniel had recommended for leadership roles in the highest positions in his government would resist the king's test of loyalty.

Revelation 13:14

Here we see a parallel event to Daniel 3. We see an image and the command to worship. Mishael, Hananiah, and Azariah refuse. To them, worshiping images is a violation of God's ten-commandment law (Exodus 20:4-5). In Revelation 13, we also see an image being made by the "beast" or earthly kingdom. With its lamb-like horns, it is likened unto the first "beast" or earthly kingdom that was wounded. This earthly kingdom that was wounded represents the man of sin (2 Thessalonians 2:3). Therefore, Revelation 13 is a reiteration of Daniel 3, but in an end time scenario.

We are now in the toes of the Daniel 2 prophetic image. Just as with Nebuchadnezzar, the leaders of the world at the toes of the image are attempting to change what God has said is certain to happen. And just as Nebuchadnezzar saw the three Hebrews as a threat to his future, so will the false image mak-

ers of the last days see those who refuse their commands as a threat to the system of government that they believe will bring in world peace and longevity.

Revelation 14:6, 7

This is the message that counters the worship of the image set up by the governments of the world in the last days. The Everlasting Gospel calls us to fear God. When we fear God, the fear of man is lost. That was the experience of the three Hebrews on the plain of Dura. They had no fear of Nebuchadnezzar and the fiery furnace because they were filled with the fear of God. As difficult as it may seem to stand for God when the final test comes, these three men testified that God's grace is sufficient for us. Besides, the very worst time to compromise our faith in God is when we face death.

Revelation 14:8

Another reason the three Hebrews could not bow to the image was because Babylon was a fallen kingdom. That is the message that was delivered to Nebuchadnezzar through the dream God gave him. That is the message that comes as a result of the Everlasting Gospel message of the three angels. The false image is a counterfeit, this earthly kingdom is not reality, and it will not last for eternity. It's going down, so why worship it? Why give our lives for anything less than God's eternal kingdom?

Daniel 3:19-27

The only thing that was burned in the fiery furnace were the ropes that bound these three Hebrews. Sometimes God allows us to go through fiery trials so that He can remove the ropes that bind us. When we trust God in our fiery-furnace trials, He removes the human ropes the devil wants to bind us with—God sets us free.

What a blessing to realize that Jesus could have sent any one of the angels of heaven to stand with the three Hebrews in the fire, but He Himself showed up. Jesus is a personal God who feels what we are feeling. He goes through what we are going through. Jesus comes alongside us at the very times when things are the worst.

DANIEL 3 - PART 3

Daniel 3:19

Nebuchadnezzar was angry at himself and at his own insecurity in contrast to the peace of the three young men. His anger was also a means of intimidation. It intimidated the rest of the rulers of his government, but it failed to intimidate these three Hebrews. Anger is a form of intimidation, but godly fear will not be intimidated by human anger.

These three young men remembered the image represented by the different metals. They understood that the various metals pointed to the fall of Babylon and three succeeding kingdoms.

Cyrus, a type of Christ and the king of the Medo-Persian empire, was next (Isaiah 45:1, 2). So, whenever we face a fiery trial, we can take heart that One greater than any of the kingdoms is coming: God who will subdue all things to Himself.

There are times when our trials get worse before they get better. We see this with the three young men and the fiery furnace that was now heated seven times hotter than before. This is because when we stand for God, we draw the wrath of the devil and all his fallen foes working through those who reject God. Like these three young men, Job also experienced an increase in the intensity of his trials before they got better. Yet in the end, God stepped into Job's situation. God blessed Job with more in the end than he was blessed with in the beginning. God has promised to do that for all who trust in Him.

Daniel 3:22

The mighty men died at the entrance to the fiery furnace. They had no intention of stepping into the furnace, so they were not protected by the Son of God. The Hebrews were willing to go into the furnace, to go all the way for God. It's only as we go all the way with God that we will be delivered: no half-way believers, no fifty percenters, no lukewarm followers. God wants all or nothing. Delivery is found when we go all in with God. It's in the trial in the furnace where we meet God. God meets us in our trials and He will ultimately deliver all who trust in Him.

Revelation 13:10

There is a parallel here with Revelation 13:10 where those who led into captivity go into captivity themselves, and those who kill with the sword, die by the sword. The mighty men were leading the Hebrews into a captivity and they experienced the sword of the furnace fire. In God's kingdom, when we lead others captive, we bring upon ourselves the same result we wished upon others. We will see this same truth revealed in Daniel 6:24.

Song of Solomon 8:6; Hebrews 12:29; Isaiah 33:14-16

God is a consuming fire. Fire is the language of love. God is seeking to restore us to His image, to fill us with His fiery love and make us fireproof again. God wants us to be able to stand in His presence and not be consumed. God restores us through the baptism of the Holy Spirit with fire (Matthew 3:11; Acts 2:3, 4). God wants to set us on fire for Him because the righteous will dwell in the everlasting burnings and righteous devouring fire of God's presence for all eternity.

Revelation 15:2

In this Bible verse, we see yet another parallel between Daniel and Revelation. Those who get the victory over the beast and his image, stand on the sea of glass mingled with fire. The righteous stand in the fiery presence of God forever, but the wicked cannot endure the fire of God's holy presence. That fire is torment day and night and it eventually consumes them. God

wants us to be on fire for Him, to flame on for Him for all eternity, and not to be consumed by His fiery presence.

Daniel 3:25

How did Nebuchadnezzar know that the fourth person in the fire was the Son of God? Could it be that Nebuchadnezzar had seen so much of the Son of God through Daniel and his three friends that he could recognize Him when he saw Him? When we reveal Christ in our lives, people will recognize Him among us.

In addition, the three people in the fire are a message to Nebuchadnezzar that parallels the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12. The three young men had the fear of God. They glorified God. They refused to worship anyone but God. Their loyalty to God proved that Babylon would indeed fall, and they were delivered from the fiery furnace that consumed the mighty men of Babylon. They kept God's commandments and had faith in Him. The fourth person in the fire parallels the fourth angel in Revelation 18, who reveals the glory of God and calls all God's people who are yet in Babylon to come out.

Daniel 3:26-30

Here we see that Nebuchadnezzar's conversion experience deepens. He is now preaching the three angels' messages, albeit, like many new converts, a rather rough version. He is proclaiming to all nations that men should worship God, have faith in God, or face dire consequences. Yes, like many of us, the king had some growing to do in his walk with God. There is one thing we see in the experience of Nebuchadnezzar that perhaps we could use more of as believers—he is all in for whatever he believes:

- If you don't show me the dream, you will all die – the king said to his wise men.
- If you don't worship the image you will all die – the king said to his rulers.
- If you don't worship the Hebrew God you will all die – the king now says to all people.

Nebuchadnezzar is passionate about what he believes. And shouldn't we who have the truth be even more passionate than Nebuchadnezzar? In our next chapter, we see some tremendous growth taking place in the king's experience as he has a more personal encounter with the true God.

Summary

Nebuchadnezzar is growing in his experience with God. His intellectual knowledge is not enough to keep him from idolatry or fear. God uses three Hebrews to help the king see the truth of who He is and what it means to believe in Him, not just in a dream but in real-life trials. The faith and loyalty of these Hebrews has a huge impact on Nebuchadnezzar, especially as the king sees the fourth person in the fire. This reminds us that trials are often God's way of reaching the world

with the message of the Gospel. May God help us to endure the trials of our faith so that others will see Him in the trial with us and be led, as was Nebuchadnezzar, to a deeper walk with God. In Jesus' name, amen. ★

