

# Daniel 3 - The Fiery Furnace

**DOMINANT THEMES IN DANIEL 3:** The constant repetition of dominant themes is for emphasis. An excellent idea is to colour these in: "image" 11x "set up" 8x "the king" 18x "Nebuchadnezzar" 15x "fall down and worship" 5x "furnace" 7x "deliver" 5x "serve" 6x The number 6 is also prominent. There are 6 instruments mentioned. The size of the image is 60x6 cubits, the flesh: Rev 13:18. Ironically 666 is also used in 1 Kings 10:14 to measure gold in Solomon's Kingdom. Neb. is setting himself up to replace the Kingdom of God!

**Daniel 3** is a foundation chapter for over 1000 years of Papal oppression during the Dark Ages in Rev 13:11-18. The parallels are striking! The Holy Roman Empire of **Babylon the Great** creates an **image** (the pope), **breathes life** into it (sets himself up in the place of God) and forces people to **bow down and worship**. His number is of a man: 666. Those who disobey are cast into **the fire**, but Jesus Christ **walks amongst believers** in their suffering: Rev 1:13. Despite the **power** he wields, the emperor is really just a **beast of the earth**. Persecuted believers are ultimately elevated to a place to **rulership** in God's Kingdom: Rev 14:1-5. Babylon is then destroyed with a **loud voice proclaiming all nations** to worship the one true God: 14:6-8.

## DANIEL 3:1-3 NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DECREE

Neb's blatant rebellion against God's plan for a Kingdom on Earth. It is likely that Daniel was away on business at this time. It is unknown how long after Dan 2 this is, however there are clear links (cp. 2:44).

**v1 King:** Constant emphasis! Neb thinks he is in control. **Image:** Man is made in the **image of God** and believers are called on to manifest the **image of Christ**: Gen 1:26-27; Mk 12:13-17; Col 3:10. The image represents the King and his empire. It is highly likely the image looked identical to the dream of **Dan 2 but was all of gold**. This was a direct challenge to God's authority and purpose with the earth. He believed Babylon would go on forever. He sets himself up in the place of God. Image was most likely on a pedestal (otherwise 60x6 would be out of proportion). **Set it up:** Key phrase constantly repeated in contrast to **Dan 2:44**. **Dura:** A **circle** ie. **eternity** (eg. wedding ring). **Plain:** No mountains! No stone to destroy this image!

The only other place we find a plain in the land of Shinar is Gen 11:2 where they built the tower of Babel. Likely the same location. The same time Neb revealed his glory in a **plain**, God revealed His glory to Ezekiel in a **plain**, a vision of Cherubim: Ezek 3:22,23; 8:4. A contrast between the Kingdom of Men and the Kingdom of God!!

**v2-3 Emphasis** on worldly power and glory. All "important" people were there with their titles emphasised and repeated in 3:3,27. The musical instruments similarly are repeated in 3:5,7,10,15. Similar to the Olympic Games or service in the Vatican. We can be tempted to bow down and worship the gods of this world. The ultimate idol is ourselves. Jesus knew this: Mt 4:8-10.

**NEBUCHADNEZZAR** the king made "an **image** of gold, whose height was three-score cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he **set it up** in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.

2 Then **Nebuchadnezzar the king** sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which **Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up**.

3 Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that **Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up**; and they stood before the image that **Nebuchadnezzar had set up**.

## DANIEL 3:4-7 AN INTERNATIONAL GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

**v4 Herald cried aloud:** cp. 4:13-14. God remembered this! A herald cried aloud to hew down Babylon! Also Rev 14:7-8; 18:2. **People, nation, languages:** Also Dan 4:1; 6:25; Rev 14:6. cp. Rev 5:9. Why the emphasis? Because "everyone is doing it"! An example of peer group pressure to conform. Also 7x in Rev.

**v5 All kinds of music:** 6 instruments are specifically named. These are of Greek, Babylonian and Semitic origin. They were made to appeal to all people. This Babylonian music is remembered in Isa 14:11. Some music is abhorrent to God: Amos 6:5. Music is used today to make people bow down and worship the gods of this world, cp. Rev 18:22. A golden image is given as a prize to the world's movie stars in our days as the world bows down and worships.

**v6-7 Fall down and worship:** Jesus was also offered the kingdoms of the world: Mt 4:8-10. He responds by citing Deut 6:13 but using the theme of **Dan 3** "him only shalt thou serve". This is the key issue in **Dan 3: Who will we serve?** 3:12,14,17,18,28. We are also offered money and material things to take us away from God. They understood the principle of Deut 4:23-24. **The same hour:** God remembered this: Dan 4:33; 5:5. Ironic! **Fiery furnace:** cp. Jer 29:22. Worse than just embarrassment!

## DANIEL 3:8-18 JEWS INTERROGATED

**v8 Accused:** Lit. to chew up by slander. v9-11 Constant repetition for emphasis.

**v12 Certain Jews:** Chaldean names are not mentioned. They are being accused as **Jews**. Babylon is the great enemy of the Jews. Also an appeal to Neb's ego, ie. "you made a mistake!" v13-14 **Is it true?** ie. Have you done this on purpose? In v12 there are 3 accusations, but Neb only accuses them of 2 because "not regarded thee" was a lie. Daniel's friends obey the laws of the land so long as this does not contradict God's law: Rom 13:1-7; Acts 4:19-20; 5:29. **v15 Who is that God?** Here is a direct challenge to God Himself. Similar taunts had been made before: Isa 36:18-20 (Rabshakeh); 2 Kgs 18:28-35 (Senacharib); Exod 5:2 (Pharaoh). They are given a second opportunity to appeal to any doubts. Quite a concession: **Dan 5:18-19**. **v16 Careful to answer:** NIV "we do not need to defend ourselves before you". v17 **If it be so:** They didn't presume upon God's deliverance. We should be the same: Prov 3:5-6. **v18 But if not:** Their response was immediate. We face similar situations in life where we must be ready to make the right decision on the spur of the moment. Our faith is like gold tried in the fire: 1 Pet 1:6-7; 1 Cor 3:10-15. They were willing to die for what they believed: Rev 13:10,13. Neb. did not realise that the God of heaven was a consuming fire: Deut 4:24; 9:3; Heb 12:29.

4 Then an herald cried 2 aloud, To you 3 it is commanded, 4 O people, nations, and languages, 5 That at what time 5 ye hear the sound of 6 the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, 6 dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, 7 ye fall down and worship the golden image that **Nebuchadnezzar the king** hath set up: 6 And whose falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour 8 be cast into the midst of a **burning fiery furnace**.

7 Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of musick, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that **Nebuchadnezzar the king** had set up.

8 ¶ Wherefore at that time certain 9 Chaldeans came near, and 10 accused the Jews.

9 They spake and said to the king **Nebuchadnezzar**, "O King, live for ever.

10 Thou, O King, 11 hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, shall fall down and worshippeth, the golden image: 11 And whose falleth not down and worshippeth, that he should be cast into the midst of a **burning fiery furnace**.

12 There are certain Jews whom 13 thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O King, 14 have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

## DANIEL 3:19-23 TRIAL IN THE FURNACE

**v19 Heat 7 times more:** Expressive of Neb's extreme anger: Jer 50:7. The furnace was the **fire of affliction** which would purify their faith: Isa 43:2; Heb 11:33-34. The nations are heating the furnace today. The time of Jacob's trouble is coming: Jer 25:31-33; 30:6-7.

**v20 Most Mighty Men:** The king brings in most elite troops to display his power, just as they did against the humble Messiah: Jn 18:3-12.

**v21 Coats, hose, hats, garments:** These clothes completely cover the body. In Rev 1:13 the multitudinous Christ body is "clothed with a garment down to the foot". Clothes represent forgiveness and being clothed with robes of righteousness: Gal 3:27; Jas 1:27; Rev 3:4-5,17-18; 16:15; 19:8. In Mk 9:19-23 we read of a child who had a disease which "cast him into the fire". Jesus said "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." **v22 The fire slew those men:** Ironic! Haman also was hanged on the gallows he prepared for Mordecai: Est 7:10. In the same way, Israel's enemies will be burnt alive at Armageddon: Isa 66:15-16; Mal 4:1-2; 2 Pet 3:10-14. **v23 Fell down bound:** Notice the play on words!

## DANIEL 3:24-25 THE TRIUMPH OF FAITH

**v24** Jesus came to preach deliverance to the captives: Lk 4:18. Some receive deliverance now: Psa 34:7. For others (as it was with Christ), deliverance only comes at their resurrection: 1 Cor 15:51-57.

**v25 Son of God:** No definite article in original, ie. a son of the gods. Dan 3:28 tells us the 4th person is God's angel. Some suggest that this angel would have been Michael, cp. Ex 23:20-22; Dan 10:13,21.

## DANIEL 3:26-30 THE KING ACKNOWLEDGES YAHWEH

This typifies the future conversion of the Gentiles in the Kingdom.

**v26 Servants of the most high God:** Echoed in Acts 16:17 by the woman with a spirit of divination. The Most High God is a title given to Yahweh to show He has no equal: Gen 14:18; Acts 17:24-26.

**Came forth:** There are echoes in the resurrection of Lazarus in Jn 11:43-44 "He that was dead came forth" What is the issue in John 11? "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet he shall live."

**v27 Hair singed:** Lk 12:7-8: "But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered." Lk 21:12-18: "...But there shall not an hair of your head perish." **v28 Yielded their bodies:** Rom 6:12-14 "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God." Rom 6 is about baptism - rising to a new life in Christ. This is the lesson of **Dan 3: Who will we serve?**

**The furnace a symbol of tried faith:** Prov 17:3; Deut 4:20-24; Psa 26:2; 1 Kgs 8:51. The furnace is a process by which characters are tried: 1 Cor 3:11-15. Our characters are shaped by trial: Job 34:31-32; Ezek 22:20,22,31; Acts 14:22; Heb 12:8-9; 1 Pet 2:20.

**The furnace is a type of the future:** Life's trials: 1 Pet 1:7. Sin is a king seeking our obedience: Rom 6:12-18. Christ in the midst of the furnace will deliver us: Rev 1:13-16. Furnace is a symbol of European Babylon: Rev 13:13; 18:8. Lake of fire is Catholic Europe: Ezek 38:22; Rev 19:20. Daniel's 3 friends represent Israel ("certain Jews") who are cast into the furnace at Armageddon: Joel 3:6; Zech 13:9. Jewry will survive in their return to Israel with Elijah: Ez 20:33-39; Mal 4:1-6.

Colour code: Blue (God and Jesus); Red (sin/devil/judgment of wicked); Green (Kingdom); Orange (important words and phrases); Purple (Israel, Jews, Jerusalem); Yellow (practical exhortation). Prepared for Adelaide Youth Conference 2013. Much assistance has been obtained from notes by HP Mansfield and talks by John Martin and Carl Parry. For a PDF file, email [adelaidefield@webshield.net.au](mailto:adelaidefield@webshield.net.au) or download from [www.adelaide2013.com](http://www.adelaide2013.com)