

Daniel & Revelation End-time Prophecies Sermon Series
Study # 6: Daniel 3 – The Fiery Pulpit
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Before we continue our study in Daniel chapter 3 let's get some background of king Nebuchadnezzar and the growing empire of Babylon. (show on map- close to Bagdad, Iraq)

Babylon also known as “Babel” in Hebrew was originally established by Ham’s (son of Noah) grandson, Nimrod, the son of Cush, after the worldwide flood.

Genesis 10:8-10

8 And Cush begat Nimrod [“rebellion” or “the valiant”]: he began to be a mighty one in the earth.

9 He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD.

10 And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

Babel was the place in which the people rebelled against God and began to build the “tower of Babel.” God confused their language and many people scattered to different regions of the earth. **Babylon = confusion by mixing.** Babylon the center of rebellion was also the central place of the pagan religion and idolatry. It was the birth place of sun worship. Babylon through the centuries lost its prominence and power overtime.

Nabopolassar

At the time of Nebuchadnezzar’s birth in 658 BC Babylon was controlled by the powerful Assyrian Empire. (show map) Babylon’s pagan temples and groves were battered and broken. It was only a shadow of it’s hey day at the time of Nimrod. Nebuchadnezzar’s father, Nabopolassar, was an ambitious and pompous Assyrian official who lived in Babylon.

After the death of the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal around 627 BC, Nabopolassar lead in the conspiracy to overthrow the Assyrian kingdom and bring Babylon back to prominence! Shortly after, he totally rebelled against Assyria and made himself king with Babylon as its capital. Overtime with the help of allies such as the Medes, Nabopolassar was able to overthrow and break the Assyrian Empire.

Did you know that the fall of the Assyrian Empire was prophesied by the prophet Nahum in the Bible? It’s capital city was Nineveh. Remember this was the site of the great revival during the time of Jonah. They turned to the God of heaven, but as time past they apostatized and went back to the vomit of idol worship and wickness!

Nahum 3:7, 10, 18

7 And it shall come to pass, that all they that look upon thee shall flee from thee, and say, Nineveh is laid waste: who will bemoan her? whence shall I seek comforters for thee?

10 Yet was she carried away, she went into captivity: her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets: and they cast lots for her honourable men, and all her great men were bound in chains.

18 Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria: thy nobles shall dwell in the dust: thy people is scattered upon the mountains, and no man gathereth them.

Prophet Zephaniah at the time of King Josiah of Judah also prophesied of the Assyrian empire demise many years before it came crumpling down by Babylon, king Nabopolassar.

Zephaniah 2:13, 15

13 And he will stretch out his hand against the north, and destroy Assyria; and will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness.

15 This is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me: how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! every one that passeth by her shall hiss, and wag his hand.

King Nabopolassar wanted to make Babylon great again! He repaired the broken pagan temples in Babylon. He brought the pagan religion of Babylonians and sun worship was brought back to prominence again. He credited all of his success and the establishment of the Neo-Babylonian kingdom to his pagan gods. Neo-Babylon was the restored and new Babylonian era! The golden empire!

Nebuchadnezzar

Nebuchadnezzar was the oldest son of Nabopolassar. He grew up worshiping the sun and the pagan gods. His ambitious father named him, Nebuchadnezzar, in hope that the pagan god of Nebo will protect his son and the Babylonian kingdom forever! By the time Nebuchadnezzar was around 27 years old, in 607 BC, he co-reigned with his father who died two years later in 605 BC.

King Nebuchadnezzar was just as ambitious and pompous as his father to bring Babylon to empire greatest again - "make Babylon great, again!" He continued his father's ambitious building projects that were dedicated to the pagan gods. He continued to grow the kingdom by capturing other Egyptian and Assyrians strongholds such as Judah.

In 605 BC Nebuchadnezzar brought Judah (Israel's southern kingdom) under his rule and took many princes of Judah to Babylon as captives which included Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

This young king who grew up worshiping the sun and pagan gods from his birth did not know the true God of heaven. He did not know the one who made the heavens, the earth, and the sea. He did not know the One who formed man and blow into his nostrils the breath of life. Even though King Nebuchadnezzar had great worldly success there was still emptiness and despair in his life. He had no real peace.

Through the powerful witness of the four captives from Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, King Nebuchadnezzar saw the glory and the power of God at work through these men. He witnessed the bravery of these young men who took a faithful stand not to defile themselves with the king's food or wine. He was amazed at their intellect and wisdom in which they were found ten times smarter than all the "wise men" of Babylon.

Only in his second year of his reign after his father's death, king Nebuchadnezzar was extremely troubled by a dream in which he could not remember. He went to his magicians, sorcerers, and Babylonian "wise men" for them to tell him the dream and its interpretation. He decreed to kill ALL the wise men of Babylon including Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. To his surprise God gave Daniel the dream and its interpretation! God revealed the future of Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon and all the kingdoms of the earth. They will ALL fall and be destroyed by the everlasting kingdom in which God will set up. Jesus is the King of king and the Lord of lords of this everlasting kingdom!

Nebuchadnezzar's dream reveals to us prophecy from the time of Babylon until the end of time

Daniel 2:28-29

28 But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar **what shall be in the latter days.** Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these;

29 As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, **what should come to pass hereafter:** and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee **what shall come to pass.**

Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel gives the prophecy of the rise and fall of kingdoms starting from Babylon unto the everlasting kingdom! In the dream God revealed a statue with a head of gold, arm and breast of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron, and feet of part iron and clay. A stone was cut out of a mountain without hands and struck the feet of the image which broke into many pieces as dust and was blown away in the wind. The stone then grew into a great mountain and filled the earth.

What did each metal on the statue represent? Kingdoms / nations

What was the main theme? The rise and fall of kingdoms starting from Babylon to the everlasting kingdom

What was interpretation of each metal on the statue?

Head of Gold = Babylon (605 to 539 BC)

Arms and Breast of Silver = Medes and Persian (539 to 331 BC)

Belly and Thighs of Brass = Greece (331 to 168 BC)

Leg of Iron = Pagan Rome (168 BC to 476 AD)

Feet of part iron and clay = Divided Europe (476 AD to present)

Stone = Everlasting Kingdom

What was clearly revealed to king Nebuchadnezzar and to us at the end of the dreams' interpretation?

Daniel 2:45

45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to **pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.**

The dream is certain, the truth is fixed and the interpretation of the dream will happened as God revealed. The message was loud and clear to King Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon is fallen is fallen. It will be destroyed. It will NOT last forever! **His pride, ambition for world dominion, and being greatest was challenged! He was face to face with the reality of TRUTH.**

King Nebuchadnezzar saw the power and glory God through the witness of God's true remnant men of Judah. God was calling young king Nebuchadnezzar to kingdom of God! He was calling him to humble himself, repent, and be converted. He wanted him to know the real King, Jesus! He wanted him to know that the kingdoms of this earth will not last forever that Jesus has an everlasting kingdom that will be set up in NO man or nation can conquer!

Daniel 2:48-49

48 Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon.

49 Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.

King Nebuchadnezzar was convicted of the TRUTH. He recognized that God is Lord of kings and revealer of secrets, but he was NOT converted to the TRUTH. He did not repent and turn from sin. Nebuchadnezzar pride was still in his way of his conversion. (Knowing the truth is not enough, we must repent and be convert to the TRUTH.)

As a senior official in Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom of Babylon, Daniel had an opportunity to continue to minister to Nebuchadnezzar's about the true God of heaven. The impressions of the dream and it

interpretation continued to prick and convict Nebuchadnezzar's heart. **But he continued to be surrounded with the pomp and accolades of being king. He was surrounded by idolatry and pagan worship. As time past by Nebuchadnezzar's pride and ambition continued to be fed and nourished. Enough though the dream still lingered in his mind his pride and ambition grew as wild thorns and weeds that crowded out the conviction of his heart.**

The counsels and witness of Daniel about the true God of Heaven gave way to the counsels of the wicked "wisemen" of Babylon. Yes, these are the same magicians, soothsayers, and sorcerers that he wanted to kill because they could not tell him the dream nor its interpretation.

With the dream still lingering in his mind what did King Nebuchadnezzar do out of rebellion to defy the dream's interpretation and the God of heaven?

Daniel 3:1

1 Nebuchadnezzar the king made an **image of gold**, whose height was threescore cubits [90 feet tall], and the breadth thereof six cubits [9 feet wide]: he set it up in the **plain of Dura**, in the province of Babylon. [1 cubit is about 18 inches]

This was one of the most ambitious projects in Babylon's history. This statue of gold stood about 90 feet high which can be seen from all directions on the plain of Dura. It was an imposing figure of ingenuity, but built out of rebellion against the true God of heaven. This image was not an image of Nebuchadnezzar as some may suppose, but it was the image that God revealed to him in the dream. This image did not have an identifiable face to Nebuchadnezzar nor Daniel. When Daniel revealed the dream to Nebuchadnezzar he did not say that it was an image of Nebuchadnezzar. It was a general image of a man that was described as a symbol not an idol to be worshiped. When Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar that "thou art this head of gold" was not inferring that Nebuchadnezzar was the face on the image, but that he, the kingdom of Babylon, represented the head of gold on the image.

Since Daniel "sat at the king's gate" as a prominent leader and chief of the governors, he more than likely warned king Nebuchadnezzar of this abominable project. He spoke to him about God's hatred and prohibition of the making of images and idol worship. He reminded him again of the dream and its meaning. Even though king Nebuchadnezzar was deeply pricked to the heart, he rejected Daniel's counsel and immersed himself deeper and deeper into idol worship. Not fearing his life, Daniel probably told him, "don't expect at the dedication, I won't be there."

Remember, pagan worship was the official religion of Babylon. There was no separation of religion and the government, they were merged together like hand in glove. Like many other pagan nations, the kings served both as a judge and pagan priest. The king was seen as the highest authority when it came to religious matters.

King Nebuchadnezzar ignored Daniel and listened to the counsel of his wicked "wise men". When the idea was floated to King Nebuchadnezzar, "build the image that was in the dream." Out of defiance and Satanic influence they showered the king with flattery and false interpretations, "You don't only represent the head of gold, you represent the entire body king." They continued, "Long live the king! Your kingdom will last forever, Babylon will NEVER fall." Another may have said, "King, your kingdom is the everlasting kingdom." Another, "King remember your name! Nebo our god will protect your crown forever!"

Filled with pride and arrogance, the king went forward with the ambitious project and made the 90 foot tall image of gold from head to toe! It was in direct defiance of God's prophecy. But remember what God said the **"dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure"**! It does not matter what king Nebuchadnezzar does or thinks God is still in charge, He is the king, so when God says it is sure, it is sure! That is why we can

all have a “sure word of prophecy!” Remember, man can never defy God’s words and win, they will LOSE EVERY TIME!

Like the old Babylon who built the tower of Babel out of rebellion, Nebuchadnezzar builds the golden image out of rebellion! This golden image represented the imaginations of the wicked heart of the king and his counselors that Babylon was going to last forever and never be destroyed. Since Babylon was a new growing empire, it was probably thought that this golden image will unify the empire together as one to “make Babylon great again.”

What decree did King Nebuchadnezzar make after the image was set up?

Daniel 3:2-3

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.

This was not a “ribbon cutting” dedication. This was a worship service to dedicate the image of gold to the pagan gods of Babylon.

Dedication (Chaldean) = consecration. Consecration is a ceremonial form of worship to set apart something or someone for a sacred purpose.

King Nebuchadnezzar formed this image to be set up apart for a sacred purpose of worship. It was supposed to be a symbol of “Babylon’s greatest.” It was to be deified as a pagan god and worshiped.

What were ALL commanded to do at the dedication service?

Daniel 3:4-7

4 Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages,

5 That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up:

6 And whoso **falleth not down and worshippeth** shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

Who made this image? The king of Babylon, a religious and political power, a mixture of church and state!

At the end of time there is also a nation that will also make an image. What will happened to those who do not worship this image?

Revelation 13:15

15 And he (government power) had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

What did the people do when the music played at the worship service to the golden image began?

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.**

They ALL fell down to this false pagan image that is in reality dedicated to the corrupt imaginations of the heart of man and Satan!

At the end of time, what will the world do?

Revelation 13:3-4

3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.

4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

This is false worship like at the time king Nebuchadnezzar's image. False worship is Satanic worship! But beware Satan can transform himself in an angel of light. Jesus says beware of false christs and false prophets. Beware of Satan counterfeits in the last days.

- **The Beast, papal Rome, Pope Francis... successfully brought ALL the religions together: Christian, Jews, Muslims, Buddhism.... They say they are "ALL ONE TEAM!" They are pushing the beast's agenda!**
- **Propaganda: Toyota Commercial during Superbowl! (show clip)**

Did everyone at the king's dedication service bow down?

Daniel 3:12

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

Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, also known by their Babylonian names given them, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These are the same young men who purposed in their hearts not to defile and corrupt themselves. They knew that idol worship was an abomination to God!

What happened next?

Daniel 3:13-15

13 Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king.

14 Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, **do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?** [every else is doing it!]

15 Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and **who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?**

Nebuchadnezzar knew the characters of the three young men. But he thought he could force them to defy the God of heaven and worship the golden image with the threat of pain and death! He thought that he would receive their loyalty because he set them up to be over the affairs of the providence of Babylon! He was willing to kill three of the brightest young men in Babylon. **But these three young men understood that God sent them to Babylon as captives to be witnesses for the true God of Heaven. They were not there to live in luxury and get wealth. They were missionaries in a foreign pagan land. This is their moment and opportunity that they dare not let slip by.**

What was the three young men's response to the king's threat?

Daniel 3:16-18

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.

17 If it be so, **our God whom we serve is able to deliver us** from the burning fiery furnace, and he **will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.**

18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will **not serve thy gods,** nor **worship the golden image** which thou hast set up.

These men were bold and a time of terror, threats, and accusations. This is an example how we must stand in that last days.

Proverbs 28:1

1 The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the **righteous are bold as a lion.**

You must be bold as a lion and stand for TRUTH as a servant of Jesus Christ!

What happened to these men as a result of standing for the truth and not compromising with false worship?

Daniel 3:19-21

19 Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated.

20 And he commanded the **most mighty men** that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.

21 Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

Notice that the fire was seven times hotter and that the three men were bound and thrown in the midst of the fiery furnace!

What happened to the "most mighty men" when they threw the three men in the fiery furnace?

Daniel 3:22

22 Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

This was some deadly fire! Nebuchadnezzar's most mighty men of his army was killed because out of defiance to King of kings and Lord of lords. Satan does not have love for anybody! He does not care how many people

are killed in doing service of false worship! He gets delight in those who die lost without making a total surrender to Jesus Christ.

What happened to the three men in the midst of the fiery burning flames?

Daniel 3:23-25

23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished [alarmed], and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king.

25 He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

The only things that burned on the three truly mighty men of God were the things that bound them! They walked around in the fire like it was a cooling midst. **Jesus, the King of king and Lord of lords showed up and took away the consuming power out of the flames. Why did Nebuchadnezzar call Him the son of God?** He knew the truth of the son of God through the witness of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

What does the flames of the fiery furnace represent for God's people?

1 Peter 1:7

7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 4:12-13

12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

God wants us to turn the furnace of fiery trials into a pulpit to be a witness for Jesus Christ and His TRUTH. You have nothing to fear because says "lo I am with you even until the end of the world, so be strong and of good courage!"

The fiery furnace that was meant for the three young men's destruction was turn into a pulpit to be a witness to ALL in Babylon and the world today.

As Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah are walking in the flames conversing and praising the King of kings whose kingdom will last forever what happened next?

Daniel 3:26-27

26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire.

27 And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.

This was one of the biggest evangelism services in Babylon! The king and all his princes, governors, captains, and counselors were there to witness for themselves the power of the true God in heaven!

What was the king's response to all that he witnessed?

Daniel 3:28-30

28 Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God.

29 Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.

30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon.

The king recognized the power of the God of heaven, but still did not understand how to truly worship the true God of heaven. God is not a God of force. True worship and obedience to God is motivated out of true love for God and others which is the foundation of God ten commandments! Nebuchadnezzar also saw that God's word is SURE!

The mighty character that Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah is the type of character that we MUST have in order to make it through the fiery trials in the end. This type of character is not formed by mixing the holy with the profane things of the world!

What is God telling us as we face end time crisis and fiery trails?

Isaiah 43:2

2 When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

Isaiah 41:10

10 Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

Joshua 1:8-9

8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

The true mighty men, women, boys, and girls are those who stand for God's truth and refuse to bow to false worship even at the threat of their lives!

“The greatest want of the world is the want of men--men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall.” Ellen White, Education, p. 57

Appeal