

## The Fiery Furnace

### Daniel 3

#### Part 1

**Introduction:** Tonight, in our study of Daniel we have come to chapter 3. In this chapter we have the very familiar story of Daniel's 3 friends and the fiery furnace. Before we get into this chapter there are a few thoughts about the book of Daniel that I want to share with you. The book of Daniel is a Wisdom book. We look at it as a book of prophecy because it does contain prophecies, but it was not written to be included in with the other books of the Prophets. The letter is written to teach us who are believers how to live godly lives in the midst of a corrupt pagan society. In the chapter before us we are going to see that there are times when we must stand against the governmental authorities that are ruling us. Let us keep in mind that the authorities that rule over the nation we are in are placed there by God and they are His ministers.

#### Romans 13:1-5

*Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.*

<sup>2</sup> *Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.*

<sup>3</sup> *For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:*

<sup>4</sup> *For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.*

<sup>5</sup> *Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.*

While we acknowledge that the authorities over us are the ministers of God, we also must be aware that we are not to allow the authorities to cause us to walk in disobedience to the Word of God.

#### Acts 5:25-29

*<sup>25</sup> Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.*

*<sup>26</sup> Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned.*

*<sup>27</sup> And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them,*

*<sup>28</sup> Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.*

*<sup>29</sup> Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, **We ought to obey God rather than men.***

In Daniel chapter 3 we will see this very Truth and most importantly we will see how we are to handle such situations in order that God will be honored in our stand. Now I said that this is a Wisdom book and it is but also in this chapter we have a prophetic picture that we need to see. The 3 friends of Daniel in this chapter represent the nation of Israel and in this chapter, they will represent the Jews during the Tribulation. This chapter though it is historically the first of the Gentile kingdoms of the Times of the Gentiles, this kingdom also pictures the last of the Gentile kingdoms. In this chapter Daniel's 3 friends will be thrown in the fiery furnace and will come out unburned.

### **Zechariah 13:8-9**

*<sup>8</sup> And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein.*

*<sup>9</sup> And **I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried:** they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.*

In the Tribulation God will take Isarel through the fire and two thirds will die but one third will come through the fire and they will be saved. That is the picture that we see in Daniel's 3 friends as they are preserved in the furnace of affliction. Let us also know that this comes about because there is a command to bow down and worship an image and those who refuse will be put to death.

**Revelation 13:11-15**

<sup>11</sup> And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

<sup>12</sup> And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

<sup>13</sup> And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

<sup>14</sup> And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

<sup>15</sup> And he 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.

In Daniel chapter 3 Nebuchadnezzar represents the final world ruler in the Gentile kingdoms and that would be the Anti-Christ. One of the main points behind the chapter is to teach us as believers how we are to live in this world as well as to be an encouragement to the Jews for the Tribulation period to let them know that God will bring them through the fire.

**Jeremiah 31:33-37**

<sup>33</sup> But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

<sup>34</sup> And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

<sup>35</sup> Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name:

<sup>36</sup> *If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.*

<sup>37</sup> *Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD.*

Notice the words of Pentecost.

*"Chapter 2 gives us the times of the Gentiles; chapter 3 tells how he's going to preserve Israel even during the times of the Gentiles. So the times of the Gentiles is for Israel a fiery furnace experience but chapter 3 says He's going to deliver Israel so that it is a promise, it's a comfort, it's an assurance to a people who have been delivered over to the Gentiles that God has not forgotten His covenants."*

Notice the words of Oliver Greene.

*"Daniel and his Godly companions, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, were historical characters; but they were also a type of the nation of Israel—the nation to which they belong. The experience of the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace and the experience of Daniel in the lions' den typify the history of Israel during the time of the Gentiles, the reign of Antichrist, the time of Jacob's trouble, when the devil will make his last all-out but futile, drive to annihilate Israel."*

### **The Image**

#### **Notice Daniel 3:1-6**

We will take time to consider these verses but to begin with I want to think about when this image was set up and why it was set up.

#### **1. When**

The Bible does not tell us when it was set up but it seems as though there has been some time that has passed since the interpretation of the dream in chapter 2. In chapter 2 Nebuchadnezzar praised the God of Daniel.

#### **Daniel 2:47**

<sup>47</sup> *The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret.*

In chapter 2 the king gave the appearance that his heart was changed but as we come to chapter 3, we see that his heart was still full of pride and here in chapter 3 he is focused upon himself.

### **Application:**

The king here reminds me of the one individual in the parable of the sower.

### **Matthew 13:19-21**

<sup>19</sup> *When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.*

<sup>20</sup> *But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;*

<sup>21</sup> *Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.*

This man in the parable heard the Word and received it but there was no repentance. He received the Word with joy, but it did not last. When the trials of life came upon him the trial revealed that there was no change. I see this same thing in the king. He heard the Truth of the dream, and he knew it was from God, and he was full of joy and praise. But there was no conversion at this time and when the trial came upon him it revealed what his heart was truly like. You might ask, "What trial came upon him?" That brings us to why he set up the image.

## **2. Why**

To help understand why the king had the image made and called only the leaders to come to and worship we need to consider the words of John Walvoord.

*"The likely background for the events of chapter 3 is a coup attempt against Nebuchadnezzar that occurred December, 595 to January 594 during the tenth year of his reign. This event was significant enough to have been recorded in the Babylonian Chronicle as the major event of that year. After the coup attempt failed it is likely that Nebuchadnezzar summoned all his rulers and vassal kings back to Babylon to participate in a loyalty oath."*

Therefore, Nebuchadnezzar had this image of gold built as a way to control the loyalty of his leaders. Most likely this idea came from the interpretation of the dream and the fact that God made it known through Daniel that he was the head of gold. The image was most likely in the form of a man possibly made to look like the king. It was probably on a pedestal because the dimensions in verse one would seem to be out of proportion without a pedestal

**Notice Daniel 3:1**

Based upon the dimensions the image would have been over 100 feet high and 10 feet wide. For this reason, it is believed the image was set upon the pedestal and the dimensions included the pedestal. Looking at the dimensions in modern measurements causes us to miss something very important here. The Babylonians measured with the sexagesimal system. This meant that everything was measured in 6's. The number 6 in the Bible is very important to notice, and it is used many places. First of all, it is the number of man. Notice the list of what was measured in 6's.

- Man was created on the sixth day (Gen. 1:26-27)
- The height of Goliath is given as six cubits and a span (1S. 17:4)
- The weight of Goliath's spearhead was six hundred shekels (1S. 17:7)
- The giant men of Gath had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot (2S. 21:20; 1Chr. 20:6)
- The weight of gold that came to Solomon yearly was six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold (2Chr. 9:13)
- Solomon's throne had six steps (2Chr. 9:18)
- The idolatrous image erected by Nebuchadnezzar was sixty cubits tall and six cubits wide (Dan. 3:1-)
- There were six stone waterpots Jesus used when changing water to wine (John 2:6)
- The number of the beast, 666, is said to be the number of a man (Rev. 13:18-)

**Conclusion:**

The number 6 is the number of man because man was created on the 6<sup>th</sup> day. But there is another reason. In the Bible 7 is the number of perfect and because man is 6, he is one number short of perfection. No matter how good he thinks he is and no matter what he does man is not complete. It takes one more added to man and that one more is Jesus Christ. When we have Jesus, we are then perfect in position.

**Colossians 2:10**

<sup>10</sup> *And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:*