

The Golden Image & The Fire

Daniel 3:1-29 CEV

3 King Nebuchadnezzar ordered a gold statue to be built 27 meters high and nearly 3 meters wide. He had it set up in Dura Valley near the city of Babylon, ² and he commanded his governors, advisors, treasurers, judges, and his other officials to come from everywhere in his kingdom to the dedication of the statue. ³ So all of them came and stood in front of it.

⁴ Then an official stood up and announced:

People of every nation and race, now listen to the king's command! ⁵ Trumpets, flutes, harps, and all other kinds of musical instruments will soon start playing. When you hear the music, you must bow down and worship the statue that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. ⁶ Anyone who refuses will at once be thrown into a flaming furnace. ⁷ As soon as the people heard the music, they bowed down and worshiped the gold statue that the king had set up.

⁸ Some Babylonians used this as a chance to accuse the Jews to King Nebuchadnezzar. ⁹ They said, "Your Majesty, we hope you live forever!

¹⁰ You commanded everyone to bow down and worship the gold statue when the music played. ¹¹ And you said that anyone who did not bow down and worship it would be thrown into a flaming furnace. ¹² Sir, you appointed three men to high positions in Babylon Province, but they have disobeyed you. Those Jews, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, refuse to worship your gods and the statue you have set up."

¹³ King Nebuchadnezzar was furious. So, he sent for the three young men and said, ¹⁴ "I hear that you refuse to worship my gods and the gold statue I have set up. ¹⁵ Now I am going to give you one more chance. If you bow down and worship the statue when you hear the music, everything will be all right. But if you don't, you will at once be thrown into a flaming furnace. No god can save you from me."

¹⁶ The three men replied, "Your Majesty, we don't need to defend ourselves. ¹⁷ The God we worship can save us from you and your flaming furnace. ¹⁸ But even if he doesn't, we still won't worship your gods and the gold statue you have set up."

¹⁹ Nebuchadnezzar's face twisted with anger at the three men. And he ordered the furnace to be heated seven times hotter than usual. ²⁰ Next, he commanded some of his strongest soldiers to tie up the men and throw them into the flaming furnace. ²¹⁻²³ The king wanted it done at that very moment. So, the soldiers tied up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and threw them into the flaming furnace with all of their clothes still on, including their turbans. The fire was so hot that flames leaped out and killed the soldiers. ²⁴ Suddenly the king jumped up and shouted, "Weren't only three men tied up and thrown into the fire?" "Yes, Your Majesty," his officers answered.

²⁵ "But I see four men walking around in the fire," the king replied. "None of them is tied up or harmed, and the fourth one looks like a god."

²⁶ Nebuchadnezzar went closer to the flaming furnace and said to the three young men, "You servants of the Most High God, come out at once!"

They came out, ²⁷ and the king's high officials, governors, and advisors all crowded around them. The men were not burned, their hair wasn't scorched, and their clothes didn't even smell like smoke. ²⁸ King Nebuchadnezzar said:

Praise their God for sending an angel to rescue his servants! They trusted their God and refused to obey my commands. Yes, they chose to die rather than to worship or serve any god except their own. ²⁹ And I won't allow people of any nation or race to say anything against their God. Anyone who does will be chopped up and their houses will be torn down, because no other god has such great power to save.

The Golden Image & The Fire

Daniel 3:1-29 CEV

A. Overview of the Book of Daniel

- Daniel is a prophetic book revealing God's plan across ages and highlighting significant individuals.
- Chapter 3 focuses on Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, detailing their faith, trials, and triumphs against idolatry.

B. Nebuchadnezzar's Golden Image

- King Nebuchadnezzar, driven by pride, constructed a massive golden statue to consolidate worship and power.
- Despite a previous acknowledgment of Daniel's God, Nebuchadnezzar sought to centralize devotion through the statue.

C. Defiance of the Three Men

- The king commanded all to worship the statue or face death by fire.
- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused, risking their lives rather than betraying their faith.

D. The Men's Unyielding Faith (vv. 8-18)

- Despite threats and potential excuses, the men stood firm, adhering to God's commandment against idolatry.
- Their steadfastness exemplified true faith, choosing divine obedience over life itself, challenging believers to examine their own faithfulness.

E. The Men's Courage and Conviction

- Unafraid of the king's wrath, the men trusted God's power to deliver them, much like Job and Jesus in their times of trial.
- Their unwavering commitment set them apart, showcasing a daring and transformative faith.

F. Nebuchadnezzar's Fury and the Furnace (vv. 19-30)

- Enraged, Nebuchadnezzar ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter.
- The three men were bound and thrown in, but a divine presence, resembling "the Son of God," joined them, protecting them from harm.

G. Miraculous Deliverance

- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego emerged unscathed, with not even the smell of fire on them.
- Their deliverance illustrated God's supreme power and faithfulness, encouraging believers to trust in His protection.

H. Dramatic Impact of the Miracle

- This miraculous event led Nebuchadnezzar to recognize God's power, though not fully committing to worship Him exclusively.
- The men were promoted and God's name was honoured throughout Babylon, demonstrating the far-reaching effects of faithful witness.

I. Faithfulness Rewarded

- Believers facing trials are reminded to maintain steadfast faith and trust in God's deliverance.
- This story serves as a powerful testament to the rewards of unwavering devotion to God, encouraging believers to remain faithful and prayerful.