Having A Basic Understanding of Some Old Testament Truths

Part 395 – The Image Of Gold Through The Decree And Promotions (Daniel 3:1-30)

1. What did Nebuchadnezzar the king set up?

An image of gold: *"(1) Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore 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"* (**Daniel 3:1-2**).

- Previously, Nebuchadnezzar saw a great image in a dream (**Daniel 2:31-32**).
- The making of an image is language indicative of creating an idol (**II Chronicles 33:7** and **Isaiah 48:5**).
- We know that God is and always has been opposed to all forms of idolatry from setting up physical idols to having idols in the heart to even the idol of covetousness (**Exodus 20:3-6**, **Leviticus 19:4**, **Deuteronomy 29:16-17**, **Ezekiel 14:1-5**, **Habakkuk 2:18-20**, **I Corinthians 10:14-22**, and **Ephesians 5:5**).
- He calls his leaders to the dedication of this image. He uses his authority to further sin among his people (**II Kings 21:11-12**).

2. What was to be done at the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick?

Idol worship: *"(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. (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. (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"* (**Daniel 3:3-7**).

- The people fall when leaders lead them astray (**Psalms 81:10-12**, **Isaiah 3:12**, **Isaiah 9:16**, **Hosea 4:1-19**, and **Matthew 15:1-14**).

3. What caused Nebuchadnezzar to have his rage and fury against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego?

Politicking Chaldeans that reported them for not worshipping Nebuchadnezzar's idol: *"(8) Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the*

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Jews. (9) They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live for ever. (10) Thou, O king, 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 worship the golden image: (11) And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. (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. (13) Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king" (**Daniel 3:8-13**).

- After the days of Nebuchadnezzar, Darius will be the ruler that sends Daniel to the lion's den similarly, for the people he appointed to rule will bring the charge against Daniel (**Daniel 6:1-13**).
- What we can learn from this is that evil people lie in wait seeking to bring charges against the just (**Psalms 37:32-33**, **Psalms 56:5-6**, **Matthew 5:10-12**, **Mark 3:1-6**, and **Luke 11:53-54**).

4. Could it be said that Nebuchadnezzar challenged God?

Yes: *"(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? (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**"* (**Daniel 3:14-15**)?

- We've seen challenges like this before in the Scriptures (**Exodus 5:1-2** and **II Kings 18:28-35**).
- It is not wise to challenge God (**Isaiah 2:11-12**; cf. **Job 32:1-42:6**).

5. Were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego sure God would [this is not a question of what He could do] deliver them from the furnace?

No, they knew it was possible He might not: *"(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"* (**Daniel 3:16-18**).

- What is meant by: "We are not careful to answer thee in this matter" (vs. 16)? The meaning of their words is better understood in this rendering: "we have no need to answer thee in this matter" (ASV 1901). The point is, God's power

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stands without anyone needing to answer the question as to what He is or is not capable of doing. Their answer about what God was capable of was not necessary (**Genesis 17:1**, **Genesis 18:14**, **Psalms 33:1-22**, **Psalms 66:1-6**, **Isaiah 40:28**, **Jeremiah 32:27**, **Mark 14:36**, **Ephesians 1:19-20**, **Hebrews 1:1-12**, and **Revelation 1:8**).

- Unlike the gods of men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abedneg knew God was able to deliver them (**Psalms 115:1-18**).
- However, whether God did deliver them or not [for He made no such declaration or promise] - they would not compromise (**Exodus 23:24**, **Joshua 1:6-9**, **Proverbs 23:23**, **Matthew 10:32-33**, **I Corinthians 15:58**, **I Corinthians 16:13**, **Ephesians 6:10-17**, and **Hebrews 10:23**).

6. What change came about against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego?

"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" (**Daniel 3:19**).

- Making a king angry is scary stuff (**Proverbs 19:12**). It can even be sinful (**Proverbs 20:2**). However, what are men to do with challenged with obeying man over God? Men are to stand against those in rule who want us to act adversely to God's will (**Acts 3:1-5:42**).
- If it were not contrary to God's will, they would have yielded to the king's request (**Proverbs 16:14** and **Ecclesiastes 10:4**).
- Nebuchadnezzar was so angry he wanted the furnace heated seven times greater than normal (**James 1:19-20**).
- How quickly Nebuchadnezzar forgot the God whom had Daniel tell him his dream and interpret his dream. It is easy for some to quickly forget (**Psalms 106:7** and **Galatians 1:6**).

7. What did Nebuchadnezzar do to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego?

He had then bound and thrown into the furnance: *"(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. (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. (23) And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace"* (**Daniel 3:20-23**).

- The faith of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego brought about their being delivered from this exceedingly hot fire. The text shows how terrifying this would be. We stand before men such as this, figuratively speaking, as we endure through faith to greater promises (**Hebrews 11:32-12:3**).

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8. What caused Nebuchadnezzar the king to be astonied?

"(24) Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonied, 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" (**Daniel 3:24-25**).

- He was startled, alarmed when he saw four men loose walking in the midst of this extremely hot fire. He just simply ignored the might of God (**Isaiah 43:1-14**).
- There was a fourth figured whose form was "like [resembles] the Son of God". Could he have seen an appearance likened to Jesus (**Luke 1:35**)? It is possible. Jesus was active during Old Testament times (**I Corinthians 10:1-11**).
- He also said an angel came to deliver them (**Daniel 3:28**). Neither statement proves one way or the other. Nor does it matter. God delivered them one way or the other.
- Here is an interesting study on texts that could be Jesus in the Old Testament: https://www.wordsoftruth.net/jesusintheoldtestament_bay_2016.html

9. Did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego die or get severely injured in the fiery furnace?

No harm came on them at all: *"(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"* (**Daniel 3:26-27**).

- Not even the smell of fire passed on them. There was NO harm. This is a miracle for sure. What was the purpose of such miracles (**Isaiah 44:6-8**; cf. **Mark 16:20** and **Hebrews 2:1-4**)?

10. As this account comes to a close, what happens to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego?

God was exalted and these three men promoted: *"(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*

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after this sort. (30) Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon" (**Daniel 3:28-30**).

- Again (**Daniel 2:47**), Nebuchadnezzar praises God.
- He recognized Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's faithfulness in not bowing to any other gods (**Proverbs 4:18** and **Romans 1:8**).
- Nebuchadnezzar then made a law, because of the actions he had seen had changed his law (**Psalms 76:10**), that no one could speak against God with the threat of severe punishment if they did.
- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were then promoted (**Psalms 1:1-3**).

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