

The Fearless In A Furnace of Fire

Daniel 3



Walking Thru The Bible DANIEL

Introduction:

1. Daniel 3 is a very familiar section of Daniel and it is about "The Fearless In A Furnace of Fire" or "Three Young Men Who Would Not Bend."
2. It is about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego who had rather burn than turn. They "quenched the violence of fire" (Hebrews 11:34) and there are many good lessons to learn.

I. THEY WOULD NOT **BOW** (3:1-13)

- A. The image *revealed*-- v. 1-3
- B. The worship *required*-- v. 4-7
- C. The order *refused*-- v. 8-13c

II. THEY WOULD NOT **BUDGE** (3:14-18)

- A. Given another change they would not *budge*. They would not *bow* in spite of the fury they faced and they would not *budge* in light of the faith they followed.
- B. We observe that their faith was:
 1. Settled -- (v. 16 & 18)
 2. Sure -- (v. 17)
 3. Steadfast -- (v. 18)

III. THEY WOULD NOT **BURN** (3:19-30)

- A. The furnace was heated as much as possible.
- B. The men who cast them in were killed by the heat.
- C. The king saw an amazing thing in the furnace!
- D. The men were called out and carefully examined. Their bodies were not hurt, their hair was not singed, their coats were not scorched!
- E. They would not burn because the God they served was:
 - 1) Personal; 2) Powerful; and 3) Present.

Conclusion:

1. The three Hebrews would not **BOW** in spite of the fire they face. They would not **BUDGE** because of the faith they followed. And they would not **BURN** because of the favor they found.
2. We must remember these lessons when we are in the "fiery trials" that we too sometimes must face (I Peter 4:12).

I. The Man: About eight years *before* Ezekiel was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar-- the young man Daniel was taken from Jerusalem to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar the king. He was young, intelligent and skillful in wisdom (1:4). Daniel is one of the few men about whom God says only good. Three times he is referred to as "the greatly beloved" one (9:23; 10:11, 19). Taken into captivity with Daniel were three other young men whom you know by their Babylonian names-- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. The name "Daniel" means -- "God is Judge."

II. The Book: Daniel is sometimes called the Old Testament "Apocalypse" while Revelation is the New Testament "Apocalypse." The word "Apocalypse" means -- "an unveiling of the secret purposes of God." The secret purposes of God can never be known until they are revealed. The manner in which the events are unveiled in Daniel is mainly by visions. In the book of Daniel the word "vision(s)" appears 32 times.

Much of the book of Daniel is written in Hebrew but a large section (2:4b - 7:28) is written in Aramaic, the common language spoken in Babylon at this time and also later used by the Jews when they returned from Babylonian captivity.

III. The Contents of Daniel:

1. The first part of Daniel (1:1-6:28) deals with the history of Daniel and his friends.

Nebuchadnezzar first conquered Jerusalem in 605 BC and took away many of the better educated young men from leading families to be trained for government service in Babylon (1:1-5). Daniel was of royal blood and he and his three young friends were from the tribe of Judah (1:6-7). These four young men would not defile themselves with the food from the king's table (1:8-16). God blessed them with progress far above the others who were in similar training in Babylon (1:17-21).

Later when Nebuchadnezzar had a troublesome dream only Daniel was able to tell the king about it and give him its interpretation (2:1-45). Daniel attributed his ability to the Lord God of heaven and was elevated to a position of prominence in Babylon's royal court (2:46-49).

Nebuchadnezzar erected a giant golden image and required everyone to worship it (3:1-7). Because Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would not participate in this idolatry the King had them cast into a fiery furnace but they were miraculously delivered (3:1-30).

Another of Nebuchadnezzar's dreams is interpreted for him by Daniel in 4:1-37. Its message was that because of the King's pride he would be temporarily insane living like a wild animal. His recovery was predicted and he gave glory to the Lord.

Belshazzar was a Babylonian king when the nation fell to the Medes (5:1-28). Daniel was called on to interpret a mysterious hand writing which appeared on a wall during a feast. The message was a warning spelling doom to the king. That night Darius the Mede conquered Babylon and Belshazzar was killed (5:29-31).

Daniel was given a position in government supervision under Darius the Mede (6:1-3). Some jealous rivals plotted against Daniel (6:4-9) which led to the famous episode of Daniel in the lions' den (6:10-24). Darius honored Daniel and his God as a result of this event (6:25-28).

2. The second part of Daniel's book encompasses his visions and prophecies (7:1 - 12:13).

The later part of the book focuses on the revelations given to Daniel about the coming kingdoms of the world. There are four of these and there is a parallel between a dream of Nebuchadnezzar which is recorded in chapter 2 and the vision of Daniel in chapter 7.

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream An Image	FULFILLMENT	Daniel's Vision 4 Beasts
2:31-35	World Powers	7:1-27
Head-v.38--gold	Babylon	Lion - v.4
Breasts & arms - silver	Medo-Persia	Bear - v.5
Belly & thighs - brass	Greece	Leopard - v.6
Legs & feet - iron	Rome	Diverse beast-- v.7 & 19
The Stone - v.34-35 & 45 becomes a mountain	God's Kingdom the church	Everlasting Kingdom --v. 27

In Daniel's vision he sees four great beasts which symbolize the coming of four kingdoms (7:1-28); the vision of the ram and he-goat

(8:1-27); the vision of the seventy weeks (9:1-27); and the visions of some events of the Maccabean era (between the testaments) 10:1-12:3. Daniel was told to seal up his book (12:4) and the prophecy was concluded (12:5-13).

IV. Lessons From Daniel:

1. Faithfulness under difficult circumstances is one of the major lessons from Daniel. The Bible is filled with examples of godly people who maintained their faith in difficult situations. There was Joseph (Gen. 38-50), John the Baptist (Matt. 14:1-2); and the unnamed Christians in Nero's household (Phil. 1:12-14; 4:22). The book of Daniel brings outstanding examples of faith withstanding great trials: a) the fiery furnace of chapter 3, and b) the den of lions in chapter 6.

A number of situations come to mind where Christians today face special challenges: a) people who go to plant the gospel in new areas; b) Christians in certain employment situations; c) young people in their school and social relations; and d) persons living in non-Christian homes.

Being a Christian today is not always easy. The church came into being in suffering and sacrifice and the world today is not cordial to Christian beliefs and values. Daniel challenges us to serve God with the same devotion and singleness of heart he displayed.

2. Prophecy fulfilled so explicitly and perfectly serves as evidence for divine inspiration and a supreme God who controls the rise and fall of nations.

In Daniel we see prophesied the rise of four world empires. In Daniel 2 we read of Nebuchadnezzar's dream about an image composed of four substances. Daniel interprets it's meaning: 1) the gold = the Babylonian kingdom; 2) the silver = the Medo-Persian empire; 3) the brass = the Greek empire; and 4) the iron = the Roman kingdom.

In the days of the fourth kingdom, God himself was to set up an eternal kingdom. Thus the stone cut of a mountain which destroyed the great image pointed to the establishment of the church (Acts 2).

3. There is a prophecy of the rise of Alexander the Great and conquest of the Medo-Persians by the Grecian empire in Daniel 8 under the vision of the ram and he-goat. Daniel asserts that God is in control of history and will set aside these human kingdoms for the sake of establishing the church.