

OLD TESTAMENT STORIES FOR

PERILOUS¹ TIMES

2 Timothy 3:1-5

GOLD IMAGE IN DURA

INTRODUCTION

During the time of Israel's first captivity in Babylon, King Nebuchadnezzar in his lofty pride and arrogance erected an opulent idol for all peoples, nations, and languages to fall down and worship. But three humble young Hebrew men defied the king's edict and putting their lives on the line, they would not bend, they would not bow, they would not burn.

THEME SCRIPTURE

And whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace (Daniel 3:6).

¹ PERILOUS - Greek *chapelos* reducing strength: difficult, dangerous, furious, fierce, savage.

SECTION I - The Gold Image in Dura

READ Daniel 3:1-7.

1. What blasphemous thing did King Nebuchadnezzar² do (v. 1)? _____

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2. Who did he order to attend the dedication of the image (v. 2)? _____

3. How did all the governing officials respond? What was their posture (v. 3)? _____

4. What did the king's herald command? What were the consequences if they disobeyed the king's command (vv. 4-6)?

5. When the people, nations, and languages heard the symphony with all kinds of music, what did they do in obedience (v. 7)?

² Nebuchadnezzar - Aramaic *Nebuwkadnettsar* may nebo (a Babylonian god) protect the crown: the great King of Babylon who captured Jerusalem and carried Judah captive.

³ height was sixty cubits width six cubits: 90 feet x 9 feet.

SECTION II – Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-Nego⁴

READ Daniel 3:8-18.

1. At the time of the worship of the gold image in Dura, who accused the Jews (v. 8)? _____

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2. What was their accusation? Who were the Jews they were accusing (vv. 9-12)? _____

3. How did King Nebuchadnezzar react (v. 13)? _____

4. The king interrogated the three Jewish leaders. How did he threaten them (vv. 14, 15a)? _____

5. How did he taunt them concerning their God (v. 15b)? _____

6. What bold statement did these three men of God give to the king (v. 16)? _____

7. What two scenarios did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego present to the king that demonstrated their strong faith in God?

v. 17 _____

v. 18 _____

⁴ Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-Nego: three young godly men of the children of Israel captured during the Babylonian captivity who were Daniel's friends. They were chosen to serve King Nebuchadnezzar. Their original names were Hananiah - God has favored, Mishael - who is like God? and Azariah - Jehovah has helped. The Babylonian names given to them were Shadrach - royal of great scribe, Meshach - guest of a king, and Abed-Nego - servant of Nebo.

⁵ Chaldeans - Aramaic *Kasday*: a magician, professional astronomer; persons considered the wisest in the land.

PERSONAL

Honestly think about it, how do you think you would respond to a deceptive command that is disguised in a worshipful manner? Would you be swayed with the masses? Or would you make a stand at the cost of your life?

SECTION III – The Fiery Furnace

READ Daniel 3:19-25.

1. How did King Nebuchadnezzar’s demeanor radically change upon hearing Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego’s immovable allegiance to God Almighty (v. 19)?

2. In his fury, what did the King of Babylon command? DESCRIBE in detail what was done to the young men (vv. 19b-21).

3. What happened to the *mighty* men of valor as they cast the three God fearing young men into the furnace (vv. 22, 23)?

4. Why was King Nebuchadnezzar astonished as he looked into the blazing furnace? How did the counselors⁶ respond (v. 24)?

5. What alarming thing did the king see (v. 25a)? _____

6. To whose *form* did he compare the fourth man in the fire (v. 25b)? _____

LOOK DEEPER

What is said about the LORD as our Divine Deliverer in the following Scriptures?

II Samuel 22:2 _____

Psalm 18:17 _____

Psalm 34:4 _____

Psalm 56:13 _____

Psalm 91:14, 15 _____

Isaiah 46:4 _____

⁶ counselors: high officials.

Jeremiah 1:8 _____

II Timothy 4:18 _____

PERSONAL

How has the LORD been your Strong Deliverer? _____

SECTION IV – The Most High God

READ Daniel 3:26-30.

1. How did King Nebuchadnezzar humbly call out the three men from the ravaging flames (v. 26)? _____

2. What did the satraps, administrators, governors, and the counselors observe about the state of the men (v. 27)?

3. King Nebuchadnezzar gave glory to God Most High. Who sent His Angel, the Son of God, to deliver His servants? Why (v. 28)?

4. What did the King decree (v. 29)? _____

5. How did the King honor Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego (v. 30)? _____

PERSONAL

How will you, given your present circumstance, prepare your life to bring honor and glory to God?

THEME SCRIPTURE

WRITE out the THEME SCRIPTURE.

_____ (Daniel 3:6)

*Look! he [King Nebuchadnezzar] answered,
I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire;
and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth
is like the Son of God.*

Daniel 3:25

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