

## DANIEL

Lesson 6: Daniel 3:1-30  
Saved From or Saved Through?

### SURPASSING DEVOTION TO GOD

- Three young men from Israel stand firm in their resolve NOT to bow down to a massive image based on their surpassing allegiance to God.
- The required action seems so small; The cost so high. But they do not flinch.
- How did they do it?

### SIX CONTEXT QUESTIONS

- Who is here?
- What kind of image is this?
- Why is Neb doing this?
- What kind of furnace is this?
- Where's Daniel?
- Who is the fourth man?

### WHO IS HERE?

- Satraps (chief representatives of the king), prefects (military commanders, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, and magistrates – all those in positions of power and authority.
- “of the provinces” = from entire empire.
- A “made for TV” Olympics opening ceremony: The Dura-Bowl!

### WHO IS HERE?

- Imagine! Well-organized bureaucracy represented; Empire wide attendance list; Different language groups represented; Attendance in the hundreds, perhaps thousands. National orchestra.
- Whatever this is, something big is going on.
- A possible parallel account is intriguing.

### ANOTHER LAYER

- Jeremiah 51:59: *The message which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the son of Neriah, the grandson of Mahseiah, when he went with Zedekiah the king of Judah to Babylon in the fourth year of his reign. (Now Seraiah was quartermaster.)*”
- In 594-593 BC, Zed (w/ Baruch’s brother, Seraiah) went to Bab. Seraiah took a word from Jeremiah.

### ANOTHER LAYER

- There was an attempted revolt in 595BC.
- So Neb summoned everyone to Babylon in 594.
- The Convocation in the Plain of Dura (Daniel 3) may well be a loyalty test used with all, including Zedekiah.
- Jeremiah 50-51 peels back another layer.

### ANOTHER LAYER

- Jeremiah 51:60–64: *So Jeremiah wrote in a single scroll all the calamity which would come upon Babylon, that is, all these words which have been written concerning Babylon. Then Jeremiah said to Seraiah, “As soon as you come to Babylon, then see that you read all these words aloud, and say, ‘You, O Lord, have promised concerning this place to cut it off,*

### ANOTHER LAYER

- *so that there will be nothing dwelling in it, whether man or beast, but it will be a perpetual desolation.'And as soon as you finish reading this scroll, you will tie a stone to it and throw it into the middle of the Euphrates, and say, 'Just so shall Babylon sink down and not rise again because of the calamity that I am going to bring upon her; and they will become exhausted.'"*

### ANOTHER LAYER

- Around the same time the Drama at Dura is playing out (demonstrating God's supremacy) Jeremiah's prophecy against Babylon echoes in the streets affirming Babylon's accountability to God.
- **Nothing new!** Luke 22:22: *"For indeed, the Son of Man is going as it has been determined; but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!"*

### WHAT KIND OF IMAGE?

- Not proportionate – 90' tall, 1:10  $\neq$  1:5
- Probably not solid gold but gold plating could be substantial. (King Tut's coffin has 1.5 tons.)
- Could be an image of Neb, could be a deified image of Neb, probably an image of a god like Nabu ("speaking," i.e., you listen).

### WHY IS NEB DOING THIS?

- Political unity is often bolstered through religious unity.
- Logical request in light of recent events - conquered peoples swearing allegiance to Neb and willingness to incur the god's wrath should they break faith.
- Threat suggests he suspects some resistance.

### WHY IS NEB DOING THIS?

- *Nebuchadnezzar purposed to establish a unified government and also a unified religion. The king constituted himself as both head of state and head of religion. All who served under him were to recognize both his political and religious authority. Pentecost, J. D. **Rev!***
- Neb can think of no reason for non-compliance except insubordination!

### WHY IS NEB DOING THIS?

- The language in verse 7 = literally, “As soon as they were hearing they all fell down.”
- This is both a loyalty test (toward Neb) and his gods
- Daniel 3:12: “*These men, O king, have disregarded **you**; they do not serve **your gods** or worship **the golden image** which you have set up.*”

### WHY IS NEB DOING THIS?

- Neb has come to see himself as the supreme head of the Babylonian pantheon:
- Daniel 3:15: “*What god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?*”
- Bottom line: Neb seeks to compel everyone to worship him and serve him as one greater than all gods. Plan: Unity via naysayer elimination.

### WHAT KIND OF FURNACE IS THIS?

- Perhaps like a railway tunnel blocked at one end, chimney (above) w/ bellows openings (below).
- One estimate of heat is 900-1000°C (1800°F).
- Neb likes his fires. Exiles curse in Jeremiah 29:22: “*May the Lord make you like Zedekiah and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire.*”

### WHERE'S DANIEL?

- Unknown – but saved **from** fire.

### WHO'S THE FOURTH MAN?

- Also unknown. Could be Jesus (pre-incarnate form) or an angel. Clearly an emissary from God.

### THREE STORIES

- Opportunists
- The Ultimate Narcissist
- Three Bold Souls

### THE OPPORTUNISTS

- Daniel 3:12: *“There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the administration of the province of Babylon, namely Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. These men, O king, have disregarded you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up.”*
- These men were saved by D+3 in chp 2!

### THE OPPORTUNISTS

- But clearly they resented Daniel and his friends who were promoted above them.
- They think this is their window of opportunity!
- One lie (“disregarded you”) + two truths.
- Cast some blame – “whom you appointed.”

### THE OPPORTUNISTS

- Text does not say so, but they must have relished it when Neb went into a rage.
- Was the outcome what they hoped?
- By seeking the demotion of men dedicated to God, they facilitated these very men's promotion!

### THE OPPORTUNISTS

- Romans 8:31: *If God is for us, who is against us?*
- For those who love God (alone), God is perfectly capable of working our good, even through the efforts of those who seek our harm!

### THE ULTIMATE NARCISSIST

- No god can deliver = I'm bigger than God / this is the lie we can believe, "I'm the exception!"
- Their reply makes him go ballistic – filled with wrath / countenance changes.
- Three measures (valiant warriors, tied, heat x 7) = (in his mind) defiance will be crushed & point made!

### THE ULTIMATE NARCISSIST

- He loses good men, ropes, and PR momentum.
- He succeeds (in spite of himself) in powerfully demonstrating the supremacy of the one true God.
- When you think you're bigger than God, get ready for a rude awakening.
- Neb shows there is hope for even an raging egotist.

### THE ULTIMATE NARCISSIST

- Daniel 3:28-29: *Nebuchadnezzar responded and said, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, who has sent His angel and delivered His servants **who put their trust in Him, violating the king’s command, and yielded up their bodies so as not to serve or worship any god except their own God.**”*

### THE ULTIMATE NARCISSIST

- Neb is making progress: **After dream reveal:** “Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries.” **God is special!**
- **After the flames:** The God of SM&A honors and delivers those who serve Him alone (vs. 28). There is **no other God** who is able to deliver in this way (vs. 29). **Your God is in a class by Himself.**

### THREE BOLD SOULS

- Daniel 3:16-18: *“O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”*

### THREE BOLD SOULS

- *The three men could have compromised with the king and defended their disobedience by arguing, “Everybody else is doing it,” or “Our office demands that we obey,” or “We’ll bow our knees but we won’t bow our hearts.” They might have said, “We can do our people more good by being officers in the king’s service than by being ashes in the king’s furnace.”*

### THREE BOLD SOULS

- *But true faith doesn't look for loopholes; it simply obeys God and knows that He will do what is best. Faith rests on commands and promises, not on arguments and explanations – Wiersbe, W.W.*

### FOUR BEDROCK AFFIRMATIONS

- “Participation in idolatry is not an option.”
- “We know God has the power to save.”
- “We do not presume He will.”
- “We are prepared to die whether He saves or not!”
- **Theirs is not a benefit based belief!**

### THREE BOLD SOULS

- *First, the young men recognized that God's will might be different from what they would find pleasant, and they were willing to have it so, without complaining. Second, they did not make their own obedience contingent upon God's doing that which was pleasant to them. ...In other words, they found their object of affection in God Himself, not in what God did for them – Leon Wood*

### GOD HAS A BETTER IDEA

- Being saved through the fire (3 friends) is better than being saved from the fire (Daniel)!
- The fire became a means of blessing!
- Because of being saved through the fire, they have something to share! When God means more than life itself that's when we have something others will want to hear.



### **GOD HAS A BETTER IDEA**

- 1 Peter 4:14: *If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.*
- Blessed = congratulations from God.
- Reason for congrats: Because the Holy Spirit who is God and clothed in glory will “rest” on you.

### **GOD HAS A BETTER IDEA**

- If you are reviled for your devotion to Jesus – who He is, what He has done, what He has said – you are to be congratulated. Here is why: You will actually experience the refreshing presence of the Spirit of glory and of God.
- You will enjoy something of what Daniel’s three friends experienced.