

DANIEL: THRIVING IN A GODLESS CULTURE
IV: God's Confirming His Sovereignty Over World History
(Daniel 3:1-30)

I. Introduction

- A. As believers living in a spiritually decaying, godless culture, we need to live affirmatively in victory over sin.
- B. Daniel as a young man was taken captive by godless Babylonians, and he lived through Persia's conquest of Babylon, righteously and wisely serving the Lord in a godless culture as a great example for us.
- C. We view Daniel 3:1-30 on God's affirming His sovereignty over world history for our edification:

II. God's Confirming His Sovereignty Over World History, Daniel 3:1-30.

- A. After God enabled Daniel to tell the king his dream and its interpretation, king Nebuchadnezzar became infatuated with "his significant role in Gentile history" typified in his kingdom's representation as the most valuable part of the image in his dream -- the head of gold, Daniel 2:37-38; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1337.
- B. So, impressed with his importance, Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, set it up in the plain of Dura in the Province of Babylon, ordered his officials to the site and directed that at the sound of music, they were to bow down and worship his gold image or suffer execution by being thrown into a fiery furnace, Daniel 3:1-6.
- C. Amazingly, Nebuchadnezzar's egotistical intent resembled that of Satan's future intent with the Antichrist!
 - 1. In the Great Tribulation, Satan will empower the Antichrist and his deputy, the false prophet, and the false prophet will cause the world to make an image of the Antichrist and he will animate it, Rev. 13:14-15a.
 - 2. The false prophet will then cause all who do not worship the image to be executed, Revelation 13:15b.
- D. Consequently, all of Nebuchadnezzar's officials bowed down to worship his golden image except Daniel's three Hebrew companions, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, Daniel 3:7-12.
- E. News of their disobedience infuriated Nebuchadnezzar, so he called these Hebrews and gave them another opportunity to heed his edict in bowing to worship his gold image or be cast into the furnace, Dan. 3:13-15.
- F. The three Hebrews said they did not need to defend themselves on the matter, Dan. 3:16 NIV. God was able to deliver them from the fiery furnace, but even if He did not rescue them, they would still not serve the king's gods or worship his golden image, Daniel 3:17-18.
- G. Upon hearing this, Nebuchadnezzar was furious, and he ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than it was normally heated, Daniel 3:19. He ordered some of his mighty men to bind the three Hebrew men up and cast them into the fiery furnace, Daniel 3:20.
- H. Accordingly, the three Hebrews were bound in their flammable cloaks, tunics, hats and other garments and were thrown into the furnace that was so hot, the mighty men who took brought them to the furnace died, and Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego fell down bound into the burning fiery furnace, Daniel 3:21-23 ESV.
- I. Suddenly, the king looked with shock into the flames and asked his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?" to which they answered, "True, O king," Daniel 3:24 ESV. Nebuchadnezzar then said, "But I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods," Daniel 3:25 ESV. The fourth was the Preincarnate Lord Jesus Christ!
- J. Nebuchadnezzar then came near the furnace and charged the three Hebrews to come out of the fire, calling them "servants of the Most High God," Daniel 3:26a ESV. They obeyed the king and came out, Daniel 3:26b.
- K. In astonishment, the Babylonian officials gathered around and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of these three Hebrews, that their hair was not singed, their clothes were unharmed and they didn't even have the smell of fire on them, Daniel 3:27.
- L. The king then blessed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, glorifying their God who had sent His angel to deliver them for trusting in Him, and he decreed that anyone who said anything against their God would be tortuously executed and their homes destroyed, Daniel 3:28-29. Nebuchadnezzar then promoted these three Hebrews in the capital province of Babylon, Daniel 3:30.

Lesson: *When Nebuchadnezzar became infatuated with God's revelation of his key role in world history as the head of gold in the image of his dream so that he made an image of gold and ordered his officials to worship it, God used the stand of three Hebrew believers in opposition to the king's idolatry to teach him that the Hebrews' God was the Sovereign God of history, that He was the One to be honored as He it was who set up and put down kings. For honoring the Lord, God had Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego promoted in the province of Babylon.*

Application: *May we trust and obey Scripture's God Who sovereignly rules today's world history for blessing.*