

RUSSELL SANDERS

3-19-2021

DANIEL THE MAN – LESSON 8

GOD'S DELIVERANCE

Chapter three of the Book of Daniel tells of the incident of Daniel's three companions being cast into an extremely heated fiery furnace and their subsequent deliverance. It took place in the plain of Dura in the Province of Babylon, but well away from the City of Babylon. The exact location is undetermined but possibly could have been in or near the city of Shushan which was traditionally a resort area for Babylonian and Persian kings.

Nebuchadnezzar had gathered the princes, governors, captains, judges, sheriffs, rulers of the various provinces and the wisemen of his court. It was to celebrate the dedication of a huge idol of gold representing the pagan gods whom the king worshipped. He was requiring everyone (vs. 5) to ***"fall down and worship the golden image"*** every time the many musical instruments were played. This idol of gold was ninety feet tall and nine feet wide, so you could not help but see it.

Daniel's friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were there but not Daniel, who was likely still in the city of Babylon overseeing the business of the government, seeing as he was second in command only to the king. Someone had to "stay at home" to "take care of business."

Upon the playing of music everyone bowed down and worshipped the image of gold except these three Hebrew men. The Chaldeans (wise men) went to the king and told him of their disobedience. The king commanded that they be brought to him. He was furious and in a deep rage at their defiance.

He questioned them and gave them another chance to worship the idol. He favored them with another chance because he knew them well and had set them into rulership positions. As rulers they must set an example to others and disobedience would not be tolerated. He told them if they did not do it, they would be promptly cast into the fiery furnace.

Nebuchadnezzar further said in vs. 15, ***"and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?"*** They replied that their God is indeed able to deliver them and will deliver them. Verse 18 says, ***"But (even) if not (delivered), be it known unto thee, Oh King, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."***

Nebuchadnezzar became extremely agitated and commanded the furnace to be made seven times hotter than normal and ordered the mightiest men of his army to cast them into it. These mighty men tried to protect themselves from the extreme heat by putting on coats and other protective garments, yet when they cast these three devout Hebrews into the furnace the heat was so extreme that it killed every one of the mighty men.

Nebuchadnezzar then became quite astonished as he saw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego with their bonds loosed and they were walking about freely in that huge furnace unharmed. He was even more astonished at what he saw, and he said in vs. 25 (a literal translation) ***“and the form (visage) of the fourth is like a son of a god.”*** Alternate translations render it as ***“a son of the gods.”***

The king brought them out and there was not even the smell of smoke on them. He called them in vs. 26, ***“ye servants of the most-high God”***, acknowledging their God was the only god who could do such a thing.

The King then published it throughout his empire honoring the Hebrew’s God. He also gave them even greater promotion in his kingdom.

Friends, when you totally trust God in all circumstances with unwavering faith, God will in turn elevate you. There may soon come a time (looking at today’s signs of the times) when you will have to make a “life or death” decision to be faithful to Jesus. What will you do when that time comes?