

Daniel 3 Part 1

Worship of Nebuchadnezzar's Statue

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Daniel 3: The Statue

- Between chapters **2** and **7**, there are four events connected to the first and second world-kings (Babylon & Medo-Persian).
- These events reveal the attempts of the rulers of the world to force true believers in God to pray to idols and false gods
- These events also show the *failure* of these attempts (**3** and **6**), and,
- How rulers were brought low under God's judgments, in spite of boasting of their own power (**4** and **5**)

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Daniel 3: The Statue

- In the *first* chapter of Daniel heathen customs were judged;
- In the *second* chapter heathen philosophy was judged; and
- In the *third* chapter heathen pride is judged. - (J. Vernon McGee)

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Daniel 3: The Statue

- It's possible Nebuchadnezzar got the idea for this statue from the dream God gave him
- Interestingly Nebuchadnezzar did not take to heart God's sovereignty over the affairs of man

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Daniel 3: The Statue

- ¹ King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, sixty cubits high and six cubits wide, and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon.
- ² He then summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the image he had set up.
- ³ So the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials assembled for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and they stood before it.
- ⁴ Then the herald loudly proclaimed, "Nations and peoples of every language, this is what you are commanded to do: ⁵ As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. ⁶ Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace." Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp and all kinds of music, all the nations and peoples of every language fell down and worshiped the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

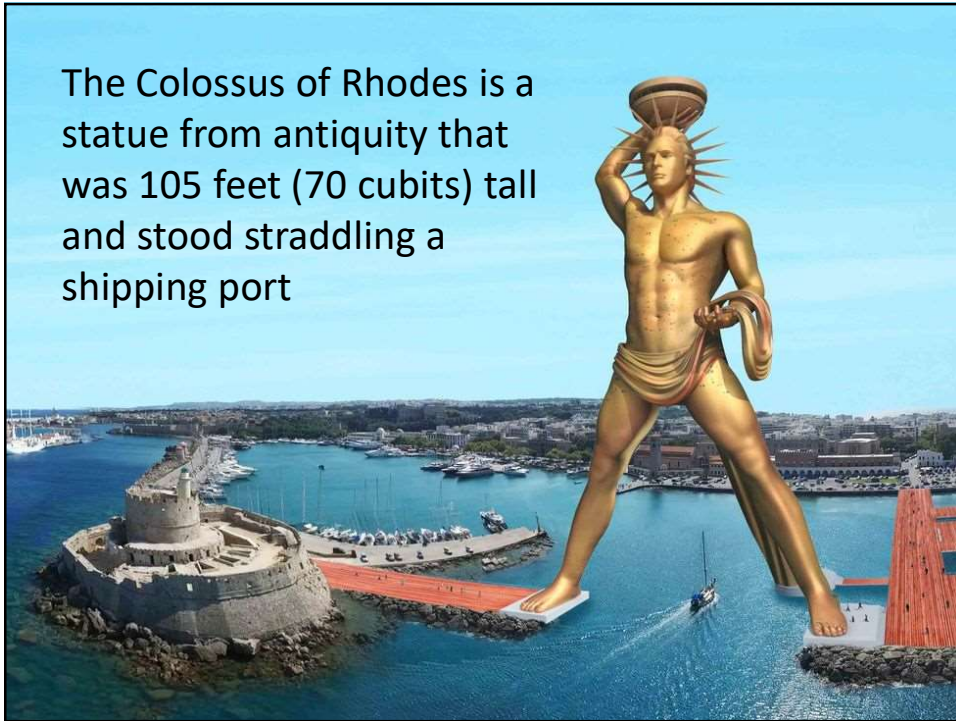
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Daniel 3: The Statue

- **3:1** – the entire image Nebuchadnezzar has constructed is made of gold, not just the head
- This shows his arrogance because he did not believe any other kingdom could follow his
- The image was about 99 feet tall and 9 feet wide, roughly 10 stories tall
- We do not know what the statue represented

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The Colossus of Rhodes is a statue from antiquity that was 105 feet (70 cubits) tall and stood straddling a shipping port



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Daniel 3: The Statue

- Nebuchadnezzar used this statue and the worship of it as a test of his subjects' loyalty to him
- Babylonians were polytheists, worshiping many gods
- This was simply a representation of another god (Nebuchadnezzar?) that they were to worship on pain of death

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Daniel 3: The Statue

- We glean three things from the creation of this statue by the king:
 1. Nebuchadnezzar was in rebellion against God
 2. His pride is on display; a form of self-deification
 3. Seems Nebuchadnezzar was using the statue to create unanimity among all the various people groups of Babylon; something everyone could rally around

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Daniel 3: The Statue

- **3:2** – various officials in Babylon
 - Satraps – highest political office
 - Administrators – subordinate to Satraps
 - Prefects/princes – military chiefs
 - Governors/chiefs – heads of certain areas of the province
 - Counselors/judges – high-ranking judges
 - Treasurers – superintendents of treasury
 - Magistrates - sheriffs

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Daniel 3: The Statue

- **3:4-7** – when music was played all must stop and worship the golden image
- Anyone not worshiping the image would be thrown in the fiery furnace
- These furnaces were used for brick making
- And served a dual purpose as execution chamber
- Other documentation of antiquity proves they were used for executions

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Daniel 3: The Statue

- Execution would be carried out on anyone refusing to worship
- In **Revelation 13:13-18**, during the Tribulation people will be killed who...
 - Refuse to worship the image set up, and
 - Refuse the mark of the beast
- The issuing of the mark of the beast is likely also a form of allegiance to the beast
- Those who refused the mark and did not overtly worship the image would face death

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Daniel 3: The Statue

- **3:8-11** - The Chaldeans who brought charges against the three men were in the position to gain from their executions
 - They might have been able to step into those political positions
 - In the end, they would have profited somehow from turning in the three young men

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Daniel 3: The Statue

- **3:12** - Since Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego would not worship the image, it “proved” they were not loyal to the king
- *“In situations like this, no crime is greater than nonconformity, yet that is exactly what God asks of us when the things of the world are arrayed against the things of God (**Rom. 12:1-2**).” – Charles Feinberg*

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Daniel 3: The Statue

- **3:12** – The king’s wise men, etc., accused the three “Jews” of being disloyal to the king
- The term “Jews” here is used in a pejorative sense.
- We have no idea why Daniel was not included here with the other three young men
- Was Daniel out of the area? We have no clue at all because Scripture does not tell us

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Daniel 3: The Statue

- **3:13-14** – Upon hearing of the young men’s refusal to obey, Nebuchadnezzar became very angry
- This was a personal affront to the king
- He provided an opportunity for the young men to prove their loyalty
- The three men reject Nebuchadnezzar’s ultimatum

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Daniel 3: The Statue

- **3:15-16** – The response from the three men was direct and telling...
- They had absolutely no need to even explain it to the king
- They continued to refuse to worship the king's image
- They explained that their God could absolutely save them but even if He did NOT, they would continue to refuse to worship anything or anyone other than God Almighty

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Daniel 3: The Statue

- Imagine facing death in a furnace!
- We'd all like to think we would gladly enter the furnace for our Lord...
- Remember Peter? He was sure too but he failed



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Daniel 3: The Statue

- **3:17-18** – Nebuchadnezzar apparently did not believe God would save the three men
- The men basically told the king – politely yet firmly - that God would answer him by His action
- Clearly, the three young men loved Yahweh more than life itself!
- We should not put ourselves deliberately in a potential martyrdom situation but if one presents itself, we should not run from it