



Daniel

Key to Bible Prophecy

Chapter 3



In Daniel Chapter 2, Daniel and his three friends are elevated from university students at “Babylon University” to administrators in the province Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of the composite metallic-image of a man separates Daniel and his three friends *Shadrach*, *Meshach* and *Abed-Nego* from the “wise-men” of Babylon. God uses Nebuchadnezzar’s dream to elevate His people to a position of authority over the province of Babylon. The exact title these young men held is not known, but their elevation caused anger from the ethnic Chaldeans is certain.

In Daniel chapter 2, Daniel explained to Nebuchadnezzar he was the head of Gold in the image, while the silver, brass and iron represented kingdoms which would follow. Here in chapter 3, Nebuchadnezzar constructs a gold image, possibly modeled after the image in chapter 2, demanding his whole kingdom to worship the image. The order specifically applied to leaders including Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego. They reject the demand, choosing death rather than worshipping the image of the king.

God uses their sincere faith as demonstration of His faithfulness to those who know Him. Nebuchadnezzar to his surprise sees one like the “Son of the gods” appear in the midst of the fire protecting the three men in the flames. Through their faith, God sends a message to all true worshippers, we are not to fear the trials the world offers, but we are to persevere even if it means death.

The message here threefold, *instructional*, *historical* and *prophetic*, the event actually happened in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon over 2500-years ago. Through this event all followers of the Lord, can be encouraged and draw strength, learning how to handle the trials the world offers. There is a prophetic element also; this event foreshadows a future event. In the end-times, the Antichrist, like Nebuchadnezzar will force the whole world to worship an image of himself, those who refuse face certain death. Like Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, the Jews and “True” believers refuse to worship the Antichrist and his image. They face death as they are cast into the midst of tribulation, tribulation such as the world has never known, since it began (Daniel 12:1, Matthew 24:21). Like Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, the Son of God will deliver those who put their trust in Him.

David through the Holy Spirit promised blessing to all those who put their trust in the Son and wrath to the kings of the earth who refuse. This is the ultimately fulfilled at the Second-coming when Christ returns in glory and power, seen as the stone smashing the feet of the image in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (Daniel 2;45).

10 Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth.

11 Serve the Lord with fear, And rejoice with trembling.

12 Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little.

Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him. **Psalm 2:10-12**

The Gold Image

1 Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its width six cubits. He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.

2 And King Nebuchadnezzar sent word to gather together the satraps, the administrators,

the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

3 So the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered together for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

4 Then a herald cried aloud: "To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, 5 "that at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up;

6 "and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."

7 So at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the horn, flute, harp, and lyre, in symphony with all kinds of music, all the people, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the gold image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. **Daniel 3:1-7**

(1) Nebuchadnezzar: Chronologically chapter 3 follows chapter 2, the exact timing is not clear. The *Septuagint*¹ and *Theodotion*² connect this event with the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., the 19th year of the rein of Nebuchadnezzar. (2 Kings 25:8-10, Jeremiah 52:12) .

God through these events demonstrates the futility of idol worship, despite allowing the Babylonians to destroy Jerusalem and His Temple. He uses three Jewish servants to demonstrate He is able to save those who trust Him. Nebuchadnezzar was merely a vessel of judgment against a sinful and disobedient people.

Image of gold: The image of gold reflects the dream Nebuchadnezzar had in chapter 2, Daniel explained to Nebuchadnezzar he was the head of gold. This image is entirely gold in appearance, from head to foot. In Babylon, the king represented the incarnation of his god, and so to worship the king was a demonstration of loyalty. Though not certain, but likely, this very well could be an image of Nebuchadnezzar, presented to all the people. The image was probably gold on the outside, with a wooden base, this was the common way idols were made, rather than being solid or hollow gold (Isaiah 40:19, 41:7, Jeremiah 10:3-9).

Sixty cubit...six cubit: The image is described as being 60 cubits high, and 6 cubits wide. A cubit is approximately 18 inches, 1.5-feet. So the height would be 90 feet high, 9 feet wide. Either the image rested on a platform or the image itself was the dimension.

The image is out of proportion to that of man, since its 10 to 1, verses 5 to 1, which is more common to human proportions. So the image would have looked odd, elongated if it was a man. More than likely it rested on a pedestal, and reached a total height of 60 cubits.

The prophetic aspect of Nebuchadnezzar's image is that it parallels the image in the book of Revelation. The number associated with it is 60 cubits by 6 cubits. The image in the book of Revelation is associated with the number 666. Also those who refuse to worship the image face certain death (Revelation 13:15-16) for not worshipping the image. Submission to the image is both political as well as religious, demonstrating allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel and the Beast in Revelation 13.

	Daniel Chapter 3	Revelation
King	King of Babylon	Ruler of New Babylon (Rev. 17-18)
Image	King sets up an image for the whole kingdom to worship.	Antichrist set up an image for the whole world to worship (Rev. 13:14)
Penalty	Those who refuse are cast into the furnace	Those who refuse are beheaded (Rev. 13:10)
Number	Images is 60 x 6 cubits	666 (Rev. 3:18)
Jews	Jews defy the king of Babylon and face death	Jews reject image of Antichrist, and flee into Judah (Matthew 24:15-20)
Help	Described as one like the "Son of the God (s)"	Return of the Son of God
Dominion	All peoples, nations and languages	Everybody whose name was written in

¹ Septuagint, Greek translation of the Old Testament 250-100 B.C.,

² Jewish translator of the Old Testament

Plain of Dura: Scholars write there is a plain, about 6 miles, south of Babylon, which would be ideal for such an image to be set up. The image located on the plain, would be visible for miles, as the government officials would be forced to gather in full view of each other to pledge allegiance to the image of the king. The plain of Dura, could be the area bricks were manufactured since Babylon was known for their brick kilns.

(2) gather together: All the people entrusted with power and government were forced to submit to the authority of the king of Babylon. Here is a listing of the various government offices represented at the dedication and worship of the gold image. The Aramaic used here has demonstrated the accuracy in the book of Daniel, as archeology has proved these terms were commonly used in the 5th century B.C. in Babylon.

KJV	Aramaic	Meaning
Princes	אחשדרפן <i>'achashdarpan</i>	Satrap
Governors	גן <i>'gan</i>	Prefect
Captains	פחה <i>Pechah</i>	Governor
Judges	אדרגזר <i>'adargazer</i>	Counselor
Treasures	גדבר <i>G'dabar</i>	Treasurer
Counselors	דתבר <i>D'thabar</i>	Law official, judge
Sheriffs	תפתי <i>Tiptay</i>	magistrate

Dedication of the image: The entire government was to submit to the king and his image, rejection was treated as rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar. There were no exceptions to the law. This was not merely the official dedication of a public image, but was intended to unify the Kingdom of Babylon and its conquered territories under a single religious system. Note, Nebuchadnezzar demands worship of the image and Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego see it as act of idol worship (vs. 18).

In many ways this scene mirrors, events in the end times, where all people will be forced to submit to the image of antichrist, no exceptions will be permitted, regardless of status.

¹⁵ He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

¹⁶ He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, ¹⁷ and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. **Revelation 13:15-17**

(3) All the officials: Nebuchadnezzar required submission from all people under his authority, which included his whole kingdom. This event mixed politics and religion, as the leaders in the government were required to submit to the spiritual, political and military leadership of the King of Babylon. There was no separation of church and state, the two were linked in every way.

Stood before the image: The official government body and anybody important would have been there, gathered before the image. A huge throng has gathered, before the image of the king, any who did not worship the image would be exposed, some have estimated the number to be in the hundreds of thousands. This method allowed Nebuchadnezzar to establish his authority and eliminate any who did not submit.

(4) Herald cried: כרוז *Karowz*, critics have tried to point to a Greek date in Daniel, claiming it was written during the Maccabean period (165 B.C.) by claiming the word used here is Greek. Greeks were present in the time of Daniel 605-539 B.C. They were both merchants and mercenaries, so several Greek words would not be out of the ordinary. This word however has been shown to have Old Persian origin, being *khrausa*, meaning "caller"³.

³ Walvoord, John F. Daniel, The Key to Prophetic Revelation, pg. 83, Moody Press.

Peoples ..nations...languages: Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom was a united kingdom of many peoples including Jews, Israelites, Arameans, Edomites, Arabians, Medes, Persians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Egyptians and others.

In the same way, the kingdom of the world's final ruler, the antichrist will be a universal kingdom, gathering the nations of the earth under his authority in the last days. He forces everybody to submit both politically and religiously under his system.

(5) at the time... you hear: When the Babylonian orchestra played, the whole world under Nebuchadnezzar's control would be forced to submit. Music was used as an instrument of seduction by the king of Babylon, providing a feel of unification. Have you found yourself humming along with a group of friends, only to realize later what you were singing?

Satan use of music is noted both in Ezekiel 28:13 and Isaiah 14:11. Many songs commonly sung may seem innocuous, but in reality exalt sin and rebellion against God. Examples...*Highway to Hell*, AC/DC, *Imagine* John Lennon.



North Korean Christians face what the Jews in Daniel's day faced.

Imagine there's no heaven
It's easy if you try
No hell below us
Above us only sky
Imagine all the people
Living for today

Imagine there's no countries
It isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion too
Imagine all the people
Living life in peace

(John Lennon)

How biblical is this message from John Lennon with its seductive sound of peace and harmony?

No Heaven, No Hell....only sky...living for today....no religion.

Is this a message from God? Unified humanity under what?

11 Your pomp is brought down to Sheol, And the sound of your stringed instruments; The maggot is spread under you, And worms cover you.'

Isaiah 14:11

Worship...the image: Worship of the image, is scored with the music of the Babylon's national orchestra, as the kingdom is unified in worship and song before the image. A unified world with one image to worship sounds like a recipe for peace in world torn apart by war. Those in Babylon could now celebrate peace at last. The problem is God did not agree with their new system centered on the figure of Nebuchadnezzar.

(6) whoever does not: The Babylonian world is given two choices, either obey Nebuchadnezzar and live, or disobey him and die.

The secular world often confronts the Christian with the same ultimatum, demanding the Christian submit to secular ideology. Are we willing to confront a fallen world, with the truth of scripture? How do you respond when you are told God does not exist and you a product of evolution? What do you say when asked about gay marriage? Are we willing to go to the furnace and face trial for our faith?

In the same way, the world will be given the same option in the last days, either to worship the image of the "Beast" and live or to reject his image and die. (Revelation 13:15, Matthew 24:19, Daniel 12;1)

8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

9 If anyone has an ear, let him hear.

10 He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. **Revelation 13:8-10**

Cast...into ...fiery furnace: Nebuchadnezzar was known for his cruelty, Zedekiah the king of Judah was blinded after he witnessed the death of his children, while Nebuchadnezzar watched. (Jeremiah 39:6-7) The furnaces here are probably the brick furnaces which were used to bake the bricks used for the buildings, walls and gates of Babylon.

(7)all the people: All the people, with the exception of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, these three stood out in the huge crowd of officials who all complied with the orders of the king. The people of the world submitted to Nebuchadnezzar, while the Jews who knew the true God, rejected the demands of the world.



Exodus 20:4-5

God calls us who know the Lord to a higher standard than those who are in the world, we are not to do what the world does. By being obedient to the commandments of the Lord God, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego allowed the Lord to shine through their lives into a dark and fallen world.

4 "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;

5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me,

The accusation of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego

8 Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and accused the Jews.

9 They spoke and said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever!

10 "You, O king, have made a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the gold image;

11 "and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

12 "There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon:

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you.

They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up."

Daniel 3:8-12

(8) At that time: When the music played, it might seem that Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego tried to remain inconspicuous and not stand out. Chaldeans had no intention of letting the Jews, specifically the three friends of Daniel escape notice. They brought their refusal to bow to the image to the attention of the king.

When believers try to be unnoticed in the secular world, the darkness of the world chooses to expose those who will not conform to its ways. Examples of this litmus test of secular conformity today are homosexual marriage and abortion. Who dares say homosexuality is a sin?

Chaldeans: כַּשְׂדִּי *Kasday* The Chaldeans, would have been the descendents of ancient Babylonians. Since this is a revived Babylon, a "Neo-Babylon" the ancients the Chaldeans were elevated to the authority of wise men in the land.

These wise-men accused the three Jews, who were elevated to a position of authority in the Babylonian province. Their elevation caused envy, the Chaldeans were looking for a way to take them down. Daniel faces a similar trial in the Median-Persian Kingdom, chapter 6, when Daniel refuses to stop praying, violating an order from the king.

The Jews: The Jews stood out as a people, who were obedient to a greater authority than the world. Their obedience was to the Lord God, Creator of the heavens and earth. Today Christians, like Jews have a greater obligation to the Creator than to the commands of government. When the laws of government conflict with the laws of God, we are to choose God. Our obedience allows the light of Christ to shine through us into a dark and fallen world.

(9) they spoke: The Chaldeans appealed to the king's ego, as well as his claim to deity by saying "Live forever".

(10) Made the decree: The decree was part of the king's pride and arrogance, Nebuchadnezzar is picture of our fallen nature. The King of Babylon, who conquered the nations around him militarily, now demands spiritual allegiance. Our fallen nature, ultimately leads us to the path Nebuchadnezzar choose, its not enough to be successful, we seek to be worshipped. Leaders such as Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Hitler, Stalin reinforce this fallen aspect of our nature.

Worship the gold image: The image was not just a political image, but had a spiritual dimension. His goal was to unify his kingdom under both a military and spiritual union. The empire was to be established with Nebuchadnezzar as the high-priest demanding worship.

(11)Whoever does not: No was not an option, this will be repeated in the last days, as the world will be given the option of death or worship of the final world leader, called the *Beast* in Revelation chapter 13. Paul calls him the "Lawless one", the "Man of sin", "son of perdition" who is empowered by Satan with signs and wonders.

3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,
4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.
8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.
9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,
10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. **2 Thessalonians 2:3-10**

(12) certain Jews: This was not a problem with all Jews, only certain ones. Those who choose to obey God's commandments, willing to defy the king's orders and choose death. Other Jews no doubt choose to obey the order and worshipped the image, even if for appearance only. We can draw the parallel in our own day, many Christians choose to conform to the ways of the world, rather than stand out they submit. We hear nothing of the Jews who submitted only the *certain Jews* who choose to make a stand. God highlights their life as an example for us.

Not paid due regard; Who do we owe our allegiance to? What if the government asks us to violate the laws of God, how are we to respond? Daniel Chapter 3 tells us how to respond, we are not to regard the law of man, when there is a direct conflict with the law of God.

These three men were government officials, not just residents in Babylon, yet they choose to defy the king and the government. God choose to highlight their life as an example on how to live our life. So if the day comes, and Christians are asked to reject aspects of their faith in favor of the law of men, we have template of action to follow.

Your gods: The gods of Babylon were embodied in the image the king set up in the plain of Dura. The source and power behind Babylon was demonic, the Bible clearly declares Satan as the *god of this age*(2 Cor. 4:3-4), who is at war with God. God chooses to use us in His battle, He allows us to participate and be His army in a fallen world. As we shall see, these three Jewish men were prepared to challenge the gods of Babylon; they were willing to die as martyrs rather than submit.

Refusal to worship the image

13 Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. So they brought these men before the king.
14 Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up?
15 "Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, good! But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?"
16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter.
17 "If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king.
18 "But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up." **Daniel 3:13-18**

(13) In rage and fury: The world rages against those who challenge its dogmas. Nebuchadnezzar like the world, demands conformity, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego refused to conform to a fallen world. The Second Psalm captures this rage of Babylon and the world.

- 1 Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing?
- 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying,
- 3 "Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us."
- 4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision. **Psalm 2:1-4**

Command to bring: The rage of the king and command must have been a very emotional event in the lives of these three guys. What allowed them to handle the trauma they faced? How would we fare in such an event?

(14) Is it true...? Nebuchadnezzar could not believe his orders were being defied by a group of Jews he put into authority and power. How could they be so unthankful? They were captives of Jerusalem and they were given authority in Babylon. All they had to do was put on an act, even if they did not believe, they merely had to perform and show everybody they were on the same page.

My gods...image of gold: From the king's own mouth, we see the image is the embodiment of the gods he serves. These faithful men from Judah understood what was being asked. The pressure and eyes of Babylon focused on them, would they again reject the gods and image of gold of the ruler of Babylon?

(15) if you are ready: Nebuchadnezzar still cannot believe he is being challenged by these three Jewish captives. He is wondering to himself, do they really understand what is at stake? Death is the ultimate fear of the living, it's the unknown for those who are lost. Satan uses the fear of death to gain control, while those who know the Lord have no reason to fear death. These guys were ready to die, because they knew death was not the end.

If you do not worship: The option they faced was death, and not just any death, they faced the prospect of being burned alive while the world watched.

Cast immediately: Their decision was urgent; there was no reprieve their fate was to be decided at that point. Already by this point, they must have known the reason behind their choice, even before they were brought to the king, they knew their decision.

Who is the god: The lost world does not know the "True" God, God has given us the job of revealing His identity to a lost world. Only when we are willing to make a stand, does the God of the Bible, reveal Himself through us. The world still asks the question Nebuchadnezzar asks, "Who is the god?"

(16) answered: They did not fear the King, though they had every reason to fear him, based on his history and actions. They had a confidence, which only comes from Spirit of God.

We have no need to answer: This is an amazing reply, they are telling the king there is no hedging, and they are not going to beg for their life or try to strike a deal. They were prepared to die, right there and then if that was required.

(17) Our God: They knew their God; they had developed a relationship with God.

Is able to deliver us: They contrast the God of Israel from the gods of Babylon, they know He was able to deliver them, if He chooses. They also understand he may choose to not deliver them. This demonstrates a maturity and solidness to their faith, their relationship is not contingent on God performing the way they think He should. They rest in His ability, content with the prospect of death.

(18) If not: They were prepared for an answer of "No" from God. They knew if they were to be saved it would be up to God and a miracle. Their hope was not in this world, they looked to the world to come, as the book of Hebrews explains, they sought a "Heavenly country"

- 1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.
- 2 For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.
- 3 By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.
- 13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.
- 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland.
- 16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be

called their God, for He has prepared a city for them **Hebrews 11:1-3,13-14,16**

Nor will we worship: They defied the government on pain of death, how many of us are willing to take a stand like these men of Judah? Have we prepared in our heart, to answer the challenge before it comes?

Cast in the furnace

19 Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. He spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated.

20 And he commanded certain mighty men of valor who were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, and cast them into the burning fiery furnace.

21 Then these men were bound in their coats, their trousers, their turbans, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

22 Therefore, because the king's command was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego.

23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

(19) Nebuchadnezzar...full of fury: The King of Babylon versus three Jewish captives. The ultimate challenge will now take place between two opposing forces. The might, power and glory of Babylon versus the despised captives of Judah. The condition of these men, being captives from Judah dependent on Babylonian rule, allows the Lord to demonstrate principles for generations to come.

Look at the examples, Moses vs. Pharaoh, David vs. Goliath, Elijah vs. Ahab, Samson vs. the Philistines

Commanded ...seven times more: Nebuchadnezzar wanted to make certain, they suffered for disobeying his orders, in the end, he created a greater miracle of deliverance.

(20) commanded mighty men: The strongest and most valiant men of Babylon were called to bind and throw the Jewish captives into the fire. If the date corresponds to the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., no doubt these must have been veterans of the battle. They are the picture of power in a fallen world, contrasted with weakness of the captives, who had in God's ability.



(21) Bound in their coats: The picture of the urgency and drama is apparent, the might of Babylon carries these helpless Jews to their certain death, wrapped in their clothes. In the natural world, their fate seemed certain, but in the super-natural

(22) because... The fire prepared to destroy God's servants ended up destroying those who would destroy.

The flame...killed these men...who took up: The judgment took place as the Empire of Babylon watched. God turned the spectacle Nebuchadnezzar set up into a demonstration of His power.

(23)these three men...fell down into: They fell to the bottom of the furnace, with their coats, turban and the rope which bound them.

Deliverance from the furnace

24 Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king."

25 "Look!" he 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."

26 Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace and spoke, saying, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here." Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire.

27 And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king's counselors gathered together,

and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them.

(25) I see four: Nebuchadnezzar sees four men walking freely in the midst of the fire. Who is this fourth man? He describes him as like the son of the gods (אלהים *'elahn Aramaic*). Even in the midst of fire seven times hotter than normal, he can tell the difference between the three Jews and the fourth.

Fourth....like the son of God: The appearance of the "Son of the gods" who is in the midst of the fire, is known as a theophany or an appearance of God in the Old Testament. There were two options put forward by Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego;

1. Our God is able to deliver us and will
2. Our God is able to deliver us but chooses not to

In this case God intervened directly, appearing in human form in the midst of the fire. Throughout scripture we see points when God intervenes in human form, to make Himself known. In the beginning, in the Garden of Eden, humanity walked with God (Genesis 3:8). This changed after the fall; only selectively did God intervene and appear to humanity. Here are some examples.

God appeared to Abraham before the judgment of Sodom, to promise him a son.

1 Then the Lord appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day.

2 So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground,

Genesis 18:1-2

Jacob wrestled with God and was renamed Israel

²⁴Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. ²⁵Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. ²⁶And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks."

But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!"

²⁷So He said to him, "What is your name?"

He said, "Jacob."

²⁸And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but [□]Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.".....

³⁰So Jacob called the name of the place "Peniel: "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."

Genesis 32:24-28,30

Moses and the Elders of Israel see God on Mt. Sinai

⁹Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, ¹⁰and they saw the God of Israel. And there was under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in its clarity. ¹¹But on the nobles of the children of Israel He did not lay His hand. So they saw God, and they ate and drank.

¹²Then the LORD said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them."

Exodus 24:12

Commander of the Lord's Army appears to Joshua

¹³And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "Are You for us or for our adversaries?"

¹⁴So He said, "No, but as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come."

And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?"

¹⁵Then the Commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy." And Joshua did so.. **Joshua 5:13-15**

(26) near the mouth: Nebuchadnezzar personally called for the Shadrach and his friends to come out fire and come near him. He had a change of attitude, he saw a demonstration of super-natural power like never before, he wanted to make sure it was real. The king had all kinds of questions at this point. Did they really survive in the furnace? Who was the fourth man? How did it happen? Where did this man come from?

Servants of the Most-High God: The event has earned them the title as servants of the most-high God. Nebuchadnezzar still recognized the other gods, he is merely placing the God of the Jews as the "Most-high".

Came from the midst: They were in the center of the fire, no one could claim it was trickery. God affirmed the event, by the heat of the furnace, the death of the valiant men who brought them, the witness of Nebuchadnezzar and the witness of the nobility.

(27) they saw these men: All the men who thought they were about to witness the power and might of Babylon, got the surprise of their life. They saw the might and power of three captives from Judah, their might is the God of Israel. God identity is linked to His servants. How we represent God, is the way many people see God.

The fire had no power: All the leaders of Babylon witnessed this event, when they returned to their homes in their lands they would remember what they saw. The only burning which took place was the ropes which bound the men. There was not a hint of fire, because God super-naturally preserved them from the flame.

Nebuchadnezzar's decree

28 Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God!

29 "Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this."

30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the province of Babylon.

(28) Nebuchadnezzar spoke: Now the king even testifies of the God of Israel.

**Blessed... the God of:
His angel**

(29) I make a decree: Now Nebuchadnezzar makes a new decree, charging anybody who says anything against the God of Israel (Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego) to be cut in pieces. Nebuchadnezzar identifies the men with God.

No other God: The contrast between the God of Israel and the nations has been made for Nebuchadnezzar, he knew he witnessed something at a super-natural level.