

1. The erection of the golden image is clearly subsequent to the events of chapter 2. (Daniel 3:12 and 3:30/2:49)
2. Nebuchadnezzar's decree for the construction of a large statue and the demand that the Hebrews worship the statue is the occasion for the trial.
3. The refusal of Daniel's friends to follow this mandate results in the wrath of the king and a great demonstration of the reality and power of God. (Daniel 3:1-7)
4. Nebuchadnezzar ordered the statue to be erected in a plain outside of the city and he probably patterned the image from the dream recorded in chapter 2.
5. Nebuchadnezzar probably used gold in the construction because the golden head he saw in the dream represented him.
6. The dimensions in verse 1 indicates the use of the cubit as the unit of measure.
7. In verses 2-3 Nebuchadnezzar assembled the officials of his empire for "the dedication of the image."
8. Seven different classes of officials are named. All of these government officials were brought out to the plain of Dura, where their loyalty was to be demonstrated to the king by bowing before the statue.
9. In demanding that these officials fall down before the image of gold ... Nebuchadnezzar was demanding a public display of recognition and submission to his absolute authority in the kingdom. (3:4-7)
10. The penalty for disobeying the king's order was now announced. Anyone who would not bow down and worship the image would be thrown immediately into "a blazing furnace" and burned to death.
11. When the music began all of the government officials fell down and worshiped the image of gold just as they had been commanded. However - verses 8-12 relate that there were three exceptions. Three men stood alone. (3:8-12)
12. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are now named as the guilty parties - and three charges are brought against them (v12):
 - A. They paid no attention to the king and his commands.
 - B. They did not serve the king's gods.
 - C. They refused to worship the golden statue the king himself had set up. The penalty for such actions was death.
13. The inquisition begins in verses 13-18. Almost in disbelief, Nebuchadnezzar asked Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego if the report was really "true."
14. Nebuchadnezzar asked a very serious question in verse 15.
15. The question seems to reflect the king's previous experience with Israel's God. (Chapter 2)

16. God had proven His power by revealing the dream, but even such a great god would not be able to protect his followers from death in the furnace.
17. If the young men did not change their minds and bow to the image, no power (no god) would be able to deliver them.
18. Notice the phrase "But if not" in verse 18.
19. The phrase should be understood as referring to the deliverance not the ability of God.
20. They understood that sometimes it is not the purpose of God to deliver faithful ones from difficulties even if it means death.
21. The answer of the three men left no doubt as to their determined purpose not to serve the gods of Babylon and worship the image.
22. The sentence is carried out in verses 19-25.
23. Nebuchadnezzar was prepared to watch Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego disintegrate in the flames - but he was not prepared for what he saw.
24. Most likely the fourth man in the fire was the angel of the Lord, God himself in the person of his Son Jesus Christ. We know that the pre-incarnate Christ did appear to individuals in the Old Testament.
25. The result of the event is found in verses 26-30.
26. The king was now convinced that the God of the Hebrews was truly great - "the Most High God."
27. Yet this faith in God was well within the scope of pagan, polytheistic religious concepts, for the king merely considered the great God (at least for the present) among many.
28. Nebuchadnezzar praised the God of the Hebrews for such a great demonstration of his power.
29. The king also was quite impressed with the fact that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had placed their trust in their God, and he had "sent his angel" to deliver them.
30. Then the pagan monarch expressed his admiration for these young men because of their willingness to defy a king's command and suffer a horrible death in order to remain true to their god.
31. The basis of Nebuchadnezzar's decree is found in the last phrase of verse 29.
32. The chain of events also confirmed the position of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego as officials in the province of Babylon.
33. At this point Nebuchadnezzar at least respected the God of the Hebrews.
34. The contrast of the God of Israel to the idols of Babylon is a reminder that the god of this world - behind Gentile dominion - is doomed to judgment at the hands of a sovereign God.