

TRIED BY FIRE

Daniel 3:1-30

## 1. TESTED

3:1-7

King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its breadth six cubits. He set it up on the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. <sup>2</sup> Then King Nebuchadnezzar sent to gather the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. <sup>3</sup> Then the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. And they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. <sup>4</sup> And the herald proclaimed aloud, "You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, <sup>5</sup> that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. <sup>6</sup> And whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace." <sup>7</sup> Therefore, as soon as all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, all the peoples, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

Nebuchadnezzar was like many people today, who profess one thing (Cf. 2:47) and do another. We don't know when Nebuchadnezzar built his idol, but it is thought to have been about 18 years into his reign, or about 585 B.C. The plain of Dura is probably near the capital city of Babylon. Some think that the image was for political reasons; to bring together all of the provinces with a common interest. Whatever was his motive, it was a wrong act!

The furnace was a beehive shaped cone fed from the top and with an opening in the side for viewing.

## 2. ACCUSED

3:8-12

<sup>8</sup> Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and maliciously accused the Jews. <sup>9</sup> They declared to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever! <sup>10</sup> You, O king, have made a decree, that every man who hears the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image. <sup>11</sup> And whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into a burning fiery furnace. <sup>12</sup> There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These men, O king, pay no attention to you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

Notice the prejudice (12) and the lies.

Where is Daniel?

## 3. UNMOVED

3:13-18

<sup>13</sup> Then Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought. So they brought these men before the king. <sup>14</sup> Nebuchadnezzar answered and said to them, "Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up? <sup>15</sup> Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, well and good. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands?"

<sup>16</sup> Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. <sup>17</sup> If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. <sup>18</sup> But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

At least Nebuchadnezzar gives them an opportunity to explain themselves (who really gave them this platform to praise God?). What about all of the beautiful "aids to worship" in our day. Well they make distinctions between veneration and worship and say that they don't really worship those statues. Then why can't they get rid of them?

Does God allow any representation of Himself made by human hands?

Discuss the answer of the three men.

Continuing the discussion of the gold image I am reminded of the adage, “You ask him what time it is and he will tell you how to build a watch.”

Dan 3:1

It is not necessary to suppose that it was of solid gold, for the amount required for such a structure would have been immense, and probably beyond the means even of Nebuchadnezzar. The presumption is that it was merely covered over with plates of gold, for this was the usual manner in which statues erected in honor of the gods were made. (from Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft)

**Gold** (IPA: /' gold/) is a chemical element with the symbol **Au** (from the Latin *aurum*) and atomic number 79. It is a highly sought-after precious metal which, for many centuries, has been used as money, a store of value and in jewelery. The metal occurs as nuggets or grains in rocks, underground "veins" and in alluvial deposits. It is one of the coinage metals. Gold is dense, soft, shiny and the most malleable and ductile of the known metals. Pure gold has an attractive bright yellow colour and is one of only two coloured metal elements, the other being copper. All other metals are silver or grey.

Gold forms the basis for a monetary standard used by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Bank for International Settlements (BIS). The ISO currency code of gold bullion is **XAU**. Modern industrial uses include dentistry and electronics, where gold has traditionally found use because of its good resistance to oxidative corrosion.

Chemically, gold is a trivalent and univalent transition metal. Gold does not react with most chemicals, but is attacked by chlorine, fluorine, aqua regia and cyanide. Gold dissolves in mercury, forming amalgam alloys. In particular, gold is insoluble in nitric acid, which will dissolve most other metals. Nitric acid has long been used to confirm the presence of gold in items, and this is the origin of the colloquial term "acid test," referring to a *gold standard* test for genuine value.

Gold is the most malleable and ductile metal; a single gram can be beaten into a sheet of one square meter, or an ounce into 300 square feet. Gold readily forms alloys with many other metals. These alloys can be produced to increase the hardness or to create exotic colors (see below). Native gold contains usually eight to ten percent silver, but often much more — alloys with a silver content over 20% are called electrum. As the amount of silver increases, the color becomes whiter and the specific gravity becomes lower.

Gold is a good conductor of heat and electricity, and is not affected by air and most reagents. Heat, moisture, oxygen, and most corrosive agents have very little chemical effect on gold, making it well-suited for use in coins and jewelry; conversely, halogens will chemically alter gold, and aqua regia dissolves it by virtue of the elemental chlorine generated by this acid mixture.

Common oxidation states of gold include +1 (gold(I) or aurous compounds) and +3 (gold(III) or auric compounds). Gold ions in solution are readily reduced and precipitated out as gold metal by adding any other metal as the reducing agent. The added metal is oxidized and dissolves allowing the gold to be displaced from solution and be recovered as a solid precipitate.

High quality pure metallic gold is tasteless, in keeping with its resistance to corrosion (it is metal ions which confer taste to metals).

In addition, gold is very dense, a cubic meter weighing 19300 kg. By comparison, the density of lead is 11340 kg/m<sup>3</sup>, and the densest element, Iridium, is 22650 kg/m<sup>3</sup>.

## **Toxicity**

Generally, gold is non-toxic if consumed, and is used as food decoration in the form of gold leaf. However, consumption and thereby accumulation in body of large amount of gold (or gold compounds) is still toxic and the symptoms are similar to those of heavy metal poisoning.

*Medium of monetary exchange.* In various countries, gold is used as a standard for monetary exchange, in coinage and in jewelry. Pure gold is too soft for ordinary use and is typically hardened by alloying with copper or other base metals. The gold content of gold alloys is measured in carats (k), pure gold being designated as 24k.

\* \* \*

Gold weighs 1203 lbs/cu ft

A standard brick of gold measures 2 ½ x 4 ½ x 9 inches, or 101 ¼ cu inches

There are 1728 cu inches in a cu ft.

Gold weighs 0.696 lbs/cu inch

A standard gold brick would weigh 70.48 lbs

Allowing for the narrowness at the head, assume a structure that is  
80 x 9 x 4 ft = 2880 cu ft

And if it were solid gold would weigh 3,464,640 lbs. or 1732 tons

Daniel 3:2

Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

[Then, Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes] It is difficult now, if not impossible, to determine the exact meaning of the words used here with reference to the various officers designated; and it is not material that it should be done. The general sense is that he assembled the great officers of the realm to do honor to the image. The object was doubtless to make the occasion as magnificent as possible. Of course, if these high officers were assembled, an immense multitude of the people would congregate also.

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I do not know the derivation of the word “*Satrap*,” but manifestly all these are names of magistracies, and I allow myself to translate the words freely, since they are not Hebrew, and the Jews are equally ignorant of their origin. Some of them, indeed, appear too subtle; but they assert nothing but what is frivolous and foolish. We must be content with the simple expression — *he sent to collect the satraps*. John Calvin

[Sent to gather together the princes] It is not easy to show what these different offices were, since it is difficult to ascertain the meaning of the Chaldee words. Parkhurst analyzes them thus:

[The PRINCES] 'Achashdarp<sup>a</sup>nayaa' (OT:324), from 'achash, great or eminent, and dar, "to go about freely," and paaniym, "the presence." Satraps or privy counselors who had free access to the presence of the king.

[The GOVERNORS] Cignayaa' (OT:5460), lieutenants or viceroys, for cegan (OT:5461), among the Hebrews, was the name of the high priest's deputy.

[The CAPTAINS] Pachawaataa' (OT:6347), from pach, to extend, because set over those provinces that had been annexed to the kingdom by conquest. Pashas-This word and office are still in use in Asiatic countries. By corruption we pronounce bashaw.

[The JUDGES] 'Adargaaz<sup>a</sup>rayaa' (OT:148), from 'aadar (OT:142), noble or magnificent, and gazar (OT:1504), to decree. The nobles, the assistants to the king in making laws, statutes, etc. The same probably in Babylon, as the House of Lords in England.

[The TREASURERS] G<sup>a</sup>daab<sup>a</sup>rayaa' (OT:1411), from ganaz (the zayin (z) being changed into dalet (d), according to the custom of the Chaldee), to treasure up, and bar, pure. Those who kept the current coin, or were over the mint; the treasurers of the exchequer in Babylon.

[The COUNSELLORS] D<sup>a</sup>taab<sup>a</sup>rayaa' (OT:1884), from dath, a statute, and bar, "to declare the meaning of the law;" for in all ages and countries there has been what is termed the glorious uncertainty of the law; and therefore there must be a class of men whose business it is to explain it. What a pity that law cannot be tendered to the people as other sciences are, in plain, unsophisticated, and intelligible terms, and by persons whose business it is to show what is just and right, and not pervert truth, righteousness, and judgment.

[The SHERIFFS] Tiptaayee' (OT:8614), from taphath, in Hebrew, shaphat (OT:8199), "to set in order." Probably civil magistrates.

[And all the rulers of the provinces] All other state or civil officers, not only to grace the solemnity, but to maintain order. My old Bible renders them: Satrapis, or wise men, Magistratis. Jugis, Duykis, Tyrauntis, or stronge men. Prefectis, and alle the Princes of Cuntreese.

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The instruments?

"I do not know of what kind these musical instruments were." John Calvin

For our instruction on faith, notice especially 3:16-18:

vs. 16    "...we are not careful..."  
          KJV    "...no need to answer..."  
          NKJV    i.e. "we don't need to pray about it."

vs. 17    "...our God whom we serve is able..."

          "...He will deliver..."

vs. 18    "But if not..." He is still God!

When is faith, faith? 1 Corinthians 15:19

If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

Faith is not working for a reward. Luke 17:10

Luke 17:10

So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.'

Faith is not only for "good times." Job 13:15

Though he slay me, I will hope in him;

Faith is looking into a fiery furnace and saying "we do not serve your gods..."

The three Hebrew youths (where was Daniel?):

1. Did not revile those who did worship the idol.
2. Showed quiet courage-meekness.
3. Were prepared with prayer and moderation before their trial.
4. Looked death in the face without panic.
5. Acted upon principle and not impulse.
6. Were remembered in Hebrews 11:34.

When (not if) we are tested (tried) ask, does God get more glory (praise) from a suffering saint that yet trusts Him, or from someone who is not under trial?

"Lord I believe, help my unbelief."

#### 4. DELIVERED

3:19-25

<sup>19</sup> Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was usually heated. <sup>20</sup> And he ordered some of the mighty men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. <sup>21</sup> Then these men were bound in their cloaks, their tunics, their hats, and their other garments, and they were thrown into the burning fiery furnace. <sup>22</sup> Because the king's order was urgent and the furnace overheated, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. <sup>23</sup> And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell bound into the burning fiery furnace.

<sup>24</sup> Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He declared to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king." <sup>25</sup> He answered and 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."

Who is the Fourth Man in the fire?

#### 5. PROMOTED

3:26-30

<sup>26</sup> Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the burning fiery furnace; he declared, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here!" Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire. <sup>27</sup> And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king's counselors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men. The hair of their heads was not singed, their cloaks were not harmed, and no smell of fire had come upon them. <sup>28</sup> Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God. <sup>29</sup> Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way." <sup>30</sup> Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar is like many people who see overwhelming evidence of the truth of the One God and yet will not make an unconditional commitment.

The three Hebrew men were exceptional, but should they be?