**Daniel 1-3**

Daniel’s Training in Babylon

**1**In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. **2**And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia and put in the treasure house of his god.

**3**Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring into the king’s service some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility -  **4**young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king’s palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians. **5**The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king’s table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king’s service.

**6**Among those who were chosen were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. **7**The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.

**8**But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. **9**Now God had caused the official to show favor and compassion to Daniel, **10**but the official told Daniel, “I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you.”

**11**Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, **12**“Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. **13**Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see.” **14**So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days.

**15**At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. **16**So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead.

**17**To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.

**18**At the end of the time set by the king to bring them into his service, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. **19**The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king’s service. **20**In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.

**21**And Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus.

Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream

**2**In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep. **2**So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king, **3**he said to them, “I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means.”

**4**Then the astrologers answered the king, “May the king live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it.”

**5**The king replied to the astrologers, “This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble. **6**But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. So tell me the dream and interpret it for me.”

**7**Once more they replied, “Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will interpret it.”

**8**Then the king answered, “I am certain that you are trying to gain time, because you realize that this is what I have firmly decided: **9**If you do not tell me the dream, there is only one penalty for you. You have conspired to tell me misleading and wicked things, hoping the situation will change. So then, tell me the dream, and I will know that you can interpret it for me.”

**10**The astrologers answered the king, “There is no one on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer. **11**What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among humans.”

**12**This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon. **13**So the decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death.

**14**When Arioch, the commander of the king’s guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact. **15**He asked the king’s officer, “Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?” Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel. **16**At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him.

**17**Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. **18**He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. **19**During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven **20**and said:

“Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever;  
    wisdom and power are his.  
**21**He changes times and seasons;  
    he deposes kings and raises up others.  
He gives wisdom to the wise  
    and knowledge to the discerning.  
**22**He reveals deep and hidden things;  
    he knows what lies in darkness,  
    and light dwells with him.  
**23**I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors:  
    You have given me wisdom and power,  
you have made known to me what we asked of you,  
    you have made known to us the dream of the king.”

Daniel Interprets the Dream

**24**Then Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to execute the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, “Do not execute the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream for him.”

**25**Arioch took Daniel to the king at once and said, “I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means.”

**26**The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), “Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?”

**27**Daniel replied, “No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, **28**but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these:

**29**“As Your Majesty was lying there, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen. **30**As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than anyone else alive, but so that Your Majesty may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind.

**31**“Your Majesty looked, and there before you stood a large statue - an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance. **32**The head of the statue was made of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, **33**its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay. **34**While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. **35**Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were all broken to pieces and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.

**36**“This was the dream, and now we will interpret it to the king. **37**Your Majesty, you are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory; **38**in your hands he has placed all mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds in the sky. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. You are that head of gold.

**39**“After you, another kingdom will arise, inferior to yours. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule over the whole earth. **40**Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron - for iron breaks and smashes everything - and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others. **41**Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it, even as you saw iron mixed with clay. **42**As the toes were partly iron and partly clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle. **43**And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay.

**44**“In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. **45**This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands - a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces.

“The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.”

**46**Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate before Daniel and paid him honor and ordered that an offering and incense be presented to him. **47**The king said to Daniel, “Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery.”

**48**Then the king placed Daniel in a high position and lavished many gifts on him. He made him ruler over the entire province of Babylon and placed him in charge of all its wise men. **49**Moreover, at Daniel’s request the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego administrators over the province of Babylon, while Daniel himself remained at the royal court.

The Image of Gold and the Blazing Furnace

**3**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.”

**7**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.

**8**At this time some astrologers[[h](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Daniel+1-3&version=NIV#fen-NIV-21816h)] came forward and denounced the Jews. **9**They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “May the king live forever! **10**Your Majesty has issued a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music must fall down and worship the image of gold, **11**and that whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace. **12**But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon - Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego - who pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up.”

**13**Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king, **14**and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? **15**Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?”

**16**Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, “King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. **17**If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty’s hand. **18**But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”

**19**Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual **20**and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. **21**So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. **22**The king’s command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, **23**and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace.

**24**Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, “Weren’t there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?”

They replied, “Certainly, Your Majesty.” **25**He said, “Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods.” (none other than Jesus Himself!!! 😊)

**26**Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, “Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!”

So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, **27**and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.

**28**Then Nebuchadnezzar said, “Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king’s command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. **29**Therefore I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way.”

**30**Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the province of Babylon.