SMITH FOR CHRIST

TEACHING THE WORD · WATCHING THE TIMES



THE COMPLETE STUDY

Daniel

Chapter Three

Faith Under Fire — Deep Dive and Workbook Companion in One

NASB 1995 | LESSON 3 | DEEP DIVE | THREE VOICES

Every workbook question from *Discovering Daniel* lesson 3 — the Scripture written out, each answer in one sentence, cross references, three teachers, critical thinking and a key question — with the **Deep Dive** woven in verse group by verse group: the Aramaic behind the story, **Amir Tsarfati**, **John MacArthur** and **David Guzik** at length, and diagrams of the image to scale, the machinery of coerced worship, the three-part answer, what the fire did and did not do, and the furnace beside Revelation 13.

THE PASSAGE

Daniel 3:1–30

The image · the furnace · the fourth man

THE METHOD

Workbook + Deep Dive

Capture · Analyze · Compare · Execute

PREPARED FOR ED & PAUL SMITH · BIBLE STUDY · SMITHFORCHRIST.COM

WHAT'S INSIDE

Contents

One workbook lesson, one chapter, and the Deep Dive inside it — movement by movement

—	How to Read This Study · Before the Passage · the image to scale	3
I	Part One · Faith Under Fire · Capture the Scene, Daniel 3:1–30 (Lesson 3)	5
	Going Deeper I · an image of gold on the plain of Dura · 3:1–7	8
	Going Deeper II · but even if He does not · 3:8–18	14
	Going Deeper III · seven times hotter, and a fourth man · 3:19–25	19
	Going Deeper IV · not even the smell of fire · 3:26–30	23
II	Part Two · Analyze, Compare, Execute · and Closing Thoughts	26
V	The Passage in the Whole Bible · cross-references	42
†	At a Glance & Key Insights · the three voices side by side	44
†	Questions for the Table · discussion	46

❖

"But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up." — Daniel 3:18

BEFORE YOU BEGIN · THE PASSAGE

Daniel 3:1–30

Faith Under Fire — But Even If He Does Not

† How to Read This Study

The workbook lesson runs in the order you work it at the table — **Capture the Scene**, **Analyze the Message**, **Compare This Passage with the Rest of Scripture**, **Execute** — with every question from *Discovering Daniel* written out, the NASB95 text under it, an answer in one sentence you can copy into the book, a cross reference, the three teachers, a point of critical thinking and a key question. Because the whole chapter is one lesson, *Capture the Scene* is read in four verse groups, and after each group the book pauses for **Going Deeper**: the Deep Dive movement for those verses — the passage marked, the Aramaic Daniel wrote, and the same three voices at length. Diagrams sit where the story turns. The book ends with the passage set inside the whole Bible, the three voices side by side, and questions for the table.

- **Capture the Scene** — what do I see? Observation, straight from the text, in four verse groups.
- **Going Deeper** — after each group, the Deep Dive for those verses: Aramaic, history and the three teachers.
- **Analyze the Message** — what does it say and mean? With *Discovering Daniel* open.
- **Compare** — how is it supported elsewhere in the Bible? Every cross reference written out.
- **Execute** — how does this affect my life? Off the page and into the week.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel | JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You | DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions; Command / instruction; Key repeated word; Sin / warning; Promise / blessing; Time / place / contrast

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 3:17–18

If it be so, △ our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the ⟲ furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. ▭ But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”

† Before the Passage

Chapter 2 ended with Nebuchadnezzar on his face before Daniel, confessing “your God is a God of gods” — and with the statue of his dream, in which Babylon was only the head of gold and every kingdom after it was inferior metal until a stone ended them all. Chapter 3 is his answer. He builds a statue of his own, sixty

cubits high and six wide, about ninety feet by nine, and it is gold all the way down. He sets it on the plain of Dura, gathers every official in the empire, and makes the music the cue: fall down and worship, or the furnace. The chapter does not date itself; it is some years after chapter 2, with Daniel absent from the scene and the three friends installed as administrators over the province of Babylon (2:49).

The chapter runs on repetition. “Fall down and worship” and “the furnace of blazing fire” sound like a drumbeat; the list of instruments is read out four times (vv. 5, 7, 10, 15); the list of officials twice; the king’s name and “the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up” over and over. That is deliberate. The writer wants you to feel the machinery — the unanimity, the pressure, the ease of bowing when everyone else is bowing to the same music. Against all of it stand three men who do not argue, do not protest, and do not bow.

Hold one word over the whole chapter: **deliver**. The king asks, “What god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?” (v. 15). The three answer: our God is able to deliver, and He will deliver — “but even if He does not” (vv. 17–18). The king ends by confessing that God “delivered His servants” and that “there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way” (vv. 28–29). The question the king asked in contempt he answers himself in awe. Tsarfati reads the chapter forward to the image of Revelation 13 and the remnant that will not bow; MacArthur presses the “but if not” as the finest statement of faith in the Old Testament; Guzik walks the plain of Dura, the Greek instruments, the fourth man and the smell of smoke. All three agree on the sermon: God did not keep them out of the fire. He met them in it.

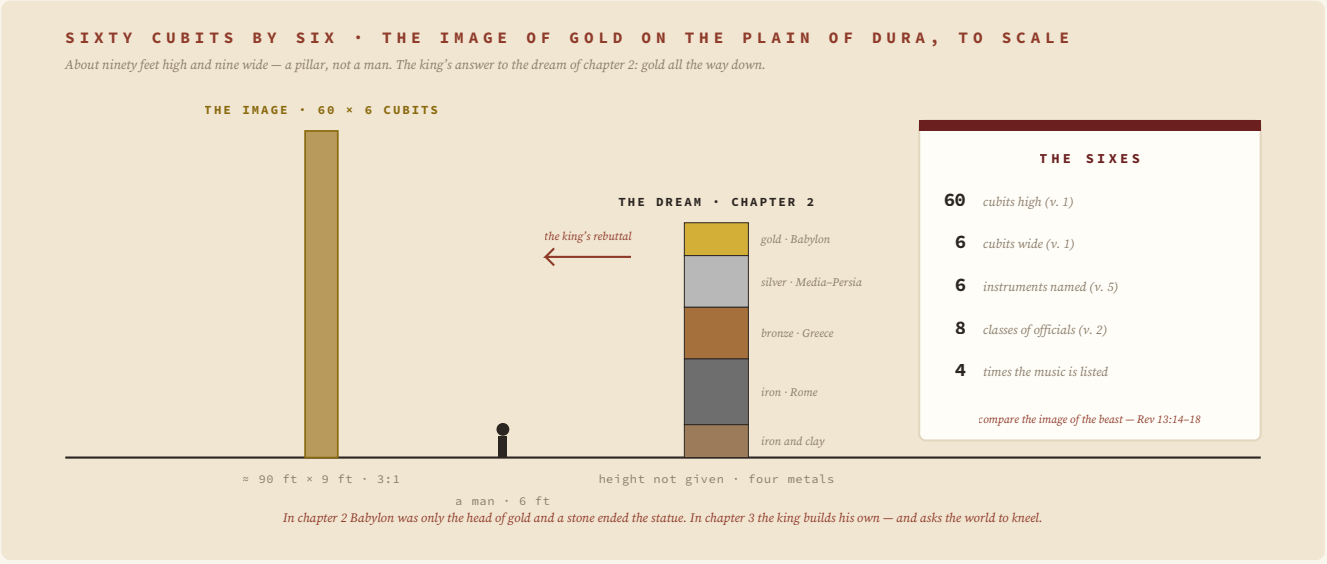


FIGURE 1 · SIXTY CUBITS BY SIX — THE IMAGE OF GOLD TO SCALE, BESIDE A MAN AND THE STATUE OF CHAPTER 2

PART ONE · DISCOVERING DANIEL · LESSON 3

DANIEL 3:1–30 · CAPTURE THE SCENE, WITH THE DEEP DIVE

Faith Under Fire

Nebuchadnezzar builds an image of gold ninety feet high, gathers every official in the empire, and makes the music the cue: fall down and worship, or the furnace. The whole world goes down. Three Jews stay standing, answer the king with the finest statement of faith in the Old Testament, and go into a fire heated seven times hotter — bound. The king counts four men walking loose, and the fire has touched nothing but the ropes.

IN THIS PART

- Capture the Scene — ten questions on Daniel 3, verse by verse, in four groups
- Going Deeper I — *An Image of Gold on the Plain of Dura* (3:1–7), and the machinery of coerced worship
- Going Deeper II — *But Even If He Does Not* (3:8–18), and the three-part answer
- Going Deeper III — *Seven Times Hotter, and a Fourth Man* (3:19–25), and what the fire did and did not do
- Going Deeper IV — *Not Even the Smell of Fire* (3:26–30), and the furnace beside Revelation 13

01 CAPTURE THE SCENE

What do I see? · verses 1–7

Using my Bible, working through Daniel 3 verse by verse.

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 3:17-18 NASB95

If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

1 **Whom did Nebuchadnezzar command to take part in the worship of the gold statue (Daniel 3:2)?** P. 60

Daniel 3:2 · NASB95

2 *Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent word to assemble the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates and all the rulers of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.*

IN MY WORDS

He summoned the entire governing class of the empire—satraps, prefects, governors, counselors, treasurers, judges, magistrates, and all the provincial rulers—so that every level of leadership would be present to bow.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 6:7** The same officials later conspire against Daniel—Babylon's bureaucracy is repeatedly the instrument of coerced worship.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes the summons of every official turned the dedication into a loyalty test rather than a religious ceremony—attendance itself was the point.

CRITICAL THINKING

Nebuchadnezzar did not summon the common people first; he summoned the leaders. Compromise at the top secures compliance everywhere beneath it, which is why the enemy has always aimed at those who set the tone for others.

KEY QUESTION

Who is watching how I bow—and who would follow me if I did?

2 What was the crowd ordered to do when the music started (verses 4-5)?

P. 60

Daniel 3:4-5 · NASB95

4 *Then the herald loudly proclaimed: "To you the command is given, O peoples, nations and men of every language,* 5 *that at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe and all kinds of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up.*

IN MY WORDS

At the sound of the orchestra every person of every nation and language was to fall down and worship the golden image.

CROSS REFERENCE **Revelation 13:15** "and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed."

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

MacArthur calls this state religion in its purest form—an orchestra instead of an argument, and a furnace instead of persuasion; the crowd's obedience was total and instant.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik observes that elaborate, well-produced music has always been power's favorite accomplice—atmosphere doing the work that truth cannot.

CRITICAL THINKING

Notice the mechanism: no debate, no persuasion, just a cue. Manufactured emotion is the cheapest way to move a crowd, and it works precisely because it bypasses the mind. Worship that can be triggered by a downbeat was never worship at all.

KEY QUESTION

What in my life responds automatically to a cue instead of to conviction?

3 What fate would meet anyone who dared to disobey (verse 6)?

P. 60

Daniel 3:6 · NASB95

6 *But whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire."*

IN MY WORDS

Anyone refusing to bow would be thrown immediately into a furnace of blazing fire.

CROSS REFERENCE **Jeremiah 29:22** Two false prophets in Babylon were "roasted in the fire" by Nebuchadnezzar—the threat was no exaggeration.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes the death penalty shows the king treated refusal as treason, not merely as irreligion—worship and citizenship had been fused into one.

CRITICAL THINKING

The word "immediately" matters. There was no appeal, no hearing, no cooling-off period. Tyranny always removes the pause where conscience might get a word in—which is exactly why convictions must be settled long before the moment arrives.

KEY QUESTION

Have I decided what I will not do, before someone makes it costly to refuse?

GOING DEEPER · FROM THE DEEP DIVE

Movement I · An Image of Gold on the Plain of Dura

DANIEL 3:1–7 · Sixty cubits by six, every official in the empire, six instruments — and a furnace for anyone who stays standing

Before the workbook moves on to the accusation, read the first seven verses as the Deep Dive reads them — the Aramaic for *image*, *set up* and *fall down and worship*, and the three teachers on the king's answer to his own dream and on a crowd that bowed because the crowd bowed.

> *"1 Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, the height of which was sixty cubits and its width six cubits; he set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. 2 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent word to assemble the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates and all the rulers of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. 3 Then the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates and all the rulers of the provinces were assembled for the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up."*
>
> DANIEL 3:1–3

צֶלֶם דִּי־דְהַב

TSELEM DI-DEHAV · "AN IMAGE OF GOLD"

Tselem is the same word as the statue of the dream in 2:31. Sixty cubits by six — about ninety feet high and nine wide — probably wood overlaid with gold, perhaps on a pedestal, on the open plain of Dura where the whole empire could see it. The proportions are a pillar, not a man: this is a monument to the king, not a likeness of him. If his kingdom was only the head of gold, he would build one that was gold to the ground.

הֲקִים

HAQEIM · "SET UP"

From *qum*, to raise, establish. "The image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up" is repeated six times in the chapter like a stamp on every sentence. The eight classes of officials (*satraps, prefects, governors, counselors, treasurers, judges, magistrates, rulers of the provinces*) are the whole governing machine of the empire, assembled to bow together on cue. The dedication is a loyalty test wearing the clothes of a worship service.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Tsarfati reads the statue as the king's rebuttal of chapter 2. God had shown him an image with a head of gold and feet of clay and a stone that smashed it; Nebuchadnezzar builds an image that is all gold and asks the world to kneel. For Tsarfati the number six — sixty cubits, six wide, six instruments — is not an accident, and the plain of Dura is a rehearsal for the image of the beast in Revelation 13: a world ruler, one image, one command, one penalty.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

MacArthur notes what the king has done with the revelation he was given. In chapter 2 he confessed the God of gods; in chapter 3 he builds a god. That is the pattern of the unregenerate heart under conviction: it is impressed by God and it still wants a god it can make. He observes that the state is the god here — the officials are summoned, not the priests — and that the fusion of national loyalty with worship is the oldest idolatry there is.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik supplies the dimensions and the setting: about ninety feet high, probably gold-plated wood, on the open plain where the whole empire could gather. He draws the line to every regime since that has made allegiance a religion, and notes the repetition of the lists — the officials, the instruments — as the text's way of making the reader feel the pressure of unanimity. He also notes who is not mentioned: Daniel. Where he was that day, the chapter does not say.

"4 Then the herald loudly proclaimed: "To you the command is given, O peoples, nations and men of every language, 5 that at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe and all kinds of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up. 6 But whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire." 7 Therefore at that time, when all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe and all kinds of music, all the peoples, nations and men of every language fell down and worshiped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up."

DANIEL 3:4–7

תִּפְּלוּן וְתִסְגְּדוּן

TIPPELUN VE-TISGEDUN · "FALL DOWN AND WORSHIP"

Nephal, to fall prostrate; *segid*, to bow in homage — the pair occurs nine times in the chapter. The signal is music: horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe, "and all kinds of music." Critics have pointed to three of the names as Greek loanwords and called the book late; Greek musicians and mercenaries were in the Near East long before Daniel, and instrument names travel with instruments. The penalty is immediate: the *attun*, the kiln, blazing.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Tsarfati stays on the music. Worship made easy, emotional and unanimous — the band plays, everyone drops, and no one has to decide anything. He reads it as the method of every false worship, including the final one: the pressure is not argument but atmosphere. And he notes verse 7: *all* the peoples fell down. On the plain of Dura that day the whole world bowed, and the only ones standing were three Jews.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

"At the moment you hear the sound." MacArthur points out that the decree leaves no space for conscience: the response is to be instant, reflexive, bodily. That is what coerced worship always wants — the knee before the mind. He sets the furnace beside the command: idolatry has always had a penalty for refusal, because an idol cannot win a man's heart and must therefore threaten his body. The true God, by contrast, asks for a living sacrifice offered freely (Romans 12:1).

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik handles the Greek-instrument objection and then makes the pastoral point: the crowd bowed because the crowd bowed. He notes that nothing in verse 7 suggests anyone believed the image was a god; they believed the furnace was a furnace. And he observes that the three men did not stage a protest or make a speech — they simply did not go down, in a crowd where everyone could see them. Spurgeon: "a lighted candle cannot be hid."



FIGURE 2 · THE MACHINERY OF COERCED WORSHIP — THE SUMMONS, THE CUE, THE COMMAND, THE PENALTY, THE CROWD (3:1–7)

01 CAPTURE THE SCENE

continued · verses 8–18

4 Who refused to bow (verse 12)?

P. 61

Daniel 3:12 · NASB95

12 *There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the administration of the province of Babylon, namely Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. These men, O king, have disregarded you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up."*

IN MY WORDS

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego—the three Hebrew administrators Nebuchadnezzar himself had promoted— refused to bow.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 2:49** At Daniel's request the king appointed them over the administration of the province—the very promotion that now made them visible targets.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

MacArthur points out that promotion had made them targets: faithfulness in public office does not shield the believer from envy; it invites it.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Tsarfati marks who is accused—"certain Jews"—a charge religious on its face but aimed at a people, the old script that runs from Babylon through Haman to the last days.

CRITICAL THINKING

Daniel is conspicuously absent from this chapter, likely away on the king's business. God did not arrange for the strongest believer to be standing beside them. Sometimes the test comes when your mentor is not in the room and the faith must be your own.

KEY QUESTION

Would my convictions still stand if the person I lean on spiritually were not there?

5 What was Nebuchadnezzar's response (verses 15-16)?

P. 61

Daniel 3:15 · NASB95

15 *Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery and bagpipe and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, very well. But if you do not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?"*

Daniel 3:16 · NASB95

16 *Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter.*

IN MY WORDS

In rage mixed with mockery he offered them one more chance to bow and then taunted them—"what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?"—to which the three replied that they did not need to give him an answer on the matter at all.

CROSS REFERENCE **2 Kings 18:35** Rabshakeh's identical boast against Jerusalem: "Who among all the gods of the lands have delivered their land from my hand?"

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Tsarfati hears in "what god can deliver you out of my hands?" the boast of every Babylon, first and last—and heaven's answer already written.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik gives the king credit for asking "Is it true?"—it is one thing to take a stand, another to hold it when asked point-blank.

CRITICAL THINKING

The second chance was not mercy; it was pressure. Nebuchadnezzar understood that most people will hold a conviction once but fold when given a graceful way out. The offer to reconsider is often the sharper test.

KEY QUESTION

When I am offered an easy exit from obedience, do I call it wisdom?

6 What did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego say to King Nebuchadnezzar (verses 16-19)?

P. 61

Daniel 3:17-18 · NASB95

17 *If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king.* 18 *But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."*

IN MY WORDS

They said their God was able to deliver them and would deliver them—but that even if He did not, they still would not serve his gods or worship his image.

CROSS REFERENCE **Job 13:15** "Though He slay me, I will hope in Him."—trust that does not depend on the outcome.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

MacArthur calls this the highest expression of faith in the book: they affirm God's power (“our God is able”) without presuming on God's will (“but even if He does not”). Conviction that depends on a guaranteed rescue is not conviction; it is a bargain.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes their answer is remarkable for what it lacks—excuses. They might have said we can do more good alive, or it's only ten minutes—anything serves as an excuse when the heart is bent on compromise.

CRITICAL THINKING

Their theology had two halves and they refused to drop either one. Faith that only says “God is able” collapses when He does not act; faith that only says “but even if He does not” has quietly stopped expecting anything. Whole faith holds both.

KEY QUESTION

Can I pray both halves of that sentence over the trial I am in right now?

GOING DEEPER · FROM THE DEEP DIVE

Movement II · But Even If He Does Not

DANIEL 3:8–18 · An accusation, a second chance, a question asked in contempt — and the finest answer in the Old Testament

Questions 4 to 6 asked who refused, how the king responded, and what the three men said. The Deep Dive adds who the informers were, the Aramaic behind *what god is there* and *but even if He does not*, and the three teachers on an answer in three clauses and the five excuses that were never used.

> *“8 For this reason at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and brought charges against the Jews. 9 They responded and said to Nebuchadnezzar the king: “O king, live forever! 10 You, O king, have made a decree that every man who hears the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, and bagpipe and all kinds of music, is to fall down and worship the golden image. 11 But whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire. 12 There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the administration of the province of Babylon, namely Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. These men, O king, have disregarded you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up.” 13 Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego; then these men were brought before the king. 14 Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up? 15 Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery and bagpipe and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, very well. But if you do not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?””*
>
> DANIEL 3:8–15

אֲכַלוּ קַרְצֵיהוֹן

AKHALU QARTSEIHON · “BROUGHT CHARGES”

Literally “ate the pieces of” the Jews — the Aramaic idiom for slander, the same one used of Daniel’s accusers in 6:24. “Certain Chaldeans”: the class of wise men whose lives Daniel saved in chapter 2, now informing on his friends. The charge is three-fold — they disregard you, they do not serve your gods, they do not worship your image — and it is true.

מַן־הוּא אֱלָהּ

MAN-HU ELAH · “WHAT GOD IS THERE”

The king gives them a second chance — the same music, the same furnace — and then the question that is the hinge of the chapter: “what god is there who can deliver (*shezib*) you out of my hands?” It puts the king above every

god. The chapter is the answer to that question, and the king will give the answer himself (v. 29).

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Tsarfati notes who the informers were — Chaldeans, the men Daniel had saved — and reads their envy as the old story of the Jew in a Gentile court: the foreigner promoted on merit, resented, and reported for his faith. He points to the exactness of the charge: they do not serve your gods. The three were not accused of disloyalty to Babylon; they were accused of loyalty to God. That is still the accusation.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

MacArthur draws attention to the second chance. The king is not cruel at first; he is reasonable — bow now and all is forgiven. That is the most dangerous form the pressure takes, because it sounds like mercy. Then the question, "what god," which MacArthur calls the voice of every tyrant and every secular age: the assumption that there is no power above the one with the furnace. Nebuchadnezzar talks about gods and lives as if he is the final one.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik observes that the king's rage (v. 13) is the rage of a man who has been publicly disobeyed by his own appointees, and that his offer to replay the music is a kind of generosity — he wants them to bow, not to burn. He reads the question of verse 15 as the king's real theology, and notes that it is the same question Pharaoh asked ("Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice?") and Rabshakeh asked at the walls of Jerusalem. God has answered it before.

"16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. 17 If it be so, △ our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. 18 But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.""

DANIEL 3:16-18

לָא־חַשְׁחִין

LA-CHASHCHIN · "WE DO NOT NEED"

"We do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter" is not rudeness; it is settledness. There is nothing to argue because nothing is undecided. Then the answer in three parts: our God *is able* (*yekil*) to deliver — faith in His power; He *will deliver* us out of your hand — one way or another, even death puts them beyond the king; and *but even if He does not* — surrender to His will.

וְהֵן לָא

VE-HEN LA · "BUT EVEN IF HE DOES NOT"

Two Aramaic words — "and if not." The whole chapter turns on them. The three men do not bargain with God for deliverance as the price of obedience; they obey without knowing the outcome. Job said it first: "Though He slay me, I will hope in Him" (Job 13:15). It is the difference between faith that trusts God to do what I want and faith that trusts God.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Tsarfati calls verses 17–18 the creed of the remnant. Israel has said "but even if He does not" in every century since — in Antiochus's Jerusalem, in Rome's, in Europe's — and will say it again when the final image is set up. He notes that the three men do not pray for the king's heart or for a way out; they state what they will not do and leave the rest to God. That is not fatalism. It is the only kind of faith that survives a furnace.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

MacArthur calls this the greatest statement of faith in the Old Testament, and he insists on the order: able, will, but if not. Their confidence in God's power is total; their confidence in a particular outcome is held loosely; their obedience is unconditional. He observes that most of our faith stops at the first clause — we believe God can — and that the third clause is where faith becomes worship: I will serve Him whether or not He serves my expectations.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik lists the excuses they could have used: everyone is doing it; it is only once; we will bow outwardly and keep our hearts right; we can do more good alive than dead; God will forgive us. They used none of them. He traces the courage back to chapter 1 — the men who would not eat the king's food were ready not to bow to the king's image. Faithfulness in small things had prepared them for the furnace (Luke 16:10).



FIGURE 3 · "BUT EVEN IF HE DOES NOT" — ABLE, WILL, BUT IF NOT: THE THREE-PART ANSWER OF 3:17–18

01 CAPTURE THE SCENE

continued · verses 19–25

7 In anger, what did Nebuchadnezzar command be done to the furnace (verse 19)?

P. 62

Daniel 3:19 · NASB95

19 *Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with wrath, and his facial expression was altered toward Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. He answered by giving orders to heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated.*

IN MY WORDS

He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual.

CROSS REFERENCE **Proverbs 16:32** "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city."

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

MacArthur observes the changed countenance tells the story of every tyrant—flattery while you comply, fury the moment you will not; and heating it seven times hotter was pure irrationality, since it only made death quicker.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Tsarfati sees the world's fury against those who will not bow as never rational—and at the end, the dragon's rage grows greatest just before his defeat.

CRITICAL THINKING

Rage always overreaches, and the overreach becomes the evidence. Seven times hotter killed his own soldiers and left the three untouched—so the very intensity meant to erase them became the proof that God had been in the fire.

KEY QUESTION

Where has opposition against me actually enlarged the testimony rather than ended it?

8 What happened to the men who threw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego into the fire (verse 22)?

P. 62

Daniel 3:22 · NASB95

22 *For this reason, because the king's command was urgent and the furnace had been made extremely hot, the flame of the fire slew those men who carried up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego.*

IN MY WORDS

The flames killed the soldiers who carried them up to the furnace door.

CROSS REFERENCE **Esther 7:10** "So they hanged Haman on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai."

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes everything was engineered for a swift, total burning—bound fully clothed, the furnace superheated, the strongest soldiers to carry them—soldiers the flame killed at the door.

CRITICAL THINKING

The same fire that was fatal at the doorway was harmless at the center. Proximity to the furnace did not determine safety; the presence of God did. The safest place on the plain of Dura that day was inside the flames.

KEY QUESTION

Am I measuring safety by my circumstances or by whether God is in them with me?

9 **When the king looked into the furnace, how many men did he see walking in it, and how did he describe one of the men (verse 25)?** P. 62

Daniel 3:25 · NASB95

25 *He said, "Look! I see ☆four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and △the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!"*

IN MY WORDS

He saw four men walking loose and unharmed, and described the fourth as looking "like a son of the gods."

CROSS REFERENCE **Isaiah 43:2** "When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, nor will the flame burn you."

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

MacArthur says the pagan king said more than he knew—"like a son of the gods" gropes at what Scripture unveils elsewhere: this is best understood as the preincarnate Christ, the Angel of the LORD, present in the flame.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Tsarfati stresses that the God of Israel did not watch the furnace from heaven—He entered it; the only things that burned were the ropes.

CRITICAL THINKING

They went in bound and were seen walking free. The fire did not merely fail to harm them—it consumed the one thing that actually held them. God's purpose in the furnace was not damage control; it was liberation.

KEY QUESTION

What has God burned off me in a trial that I could never have removed myself?

GOING DEEPER · FROM THE DEEP DIVE

Movement III · Seven Times Hotter, and a Fourth Man

DANIEL 3:19–25 · A king's face changed, a furnace that killed the strong men — and three men walking loose in the fire with a fourth

The furnace. For each: the text marked, the Aramaic that carries it (*seven times more*, *loosed and walking about*, *a son of the gods*), and the three teachers on a fire that burned only the ropes and a fourth man the king saw before the three did.

> *"19 Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with wrath, and his facial expression was altered toward Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. He answered by giving orders to heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. 20 He commanded certain valiant warriors who were in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego in order to cast them into the furnace of blazing fire. 21 Then these men were tied up in their trousers, their coats, their caps and their other clothes, and were cast into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire. 22 For this reason, because the king's command was urgent and the furnace had been made extremely hot, the flame of the fire slew those men who carried up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. 23 But these three men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, fell into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire still tied up."*
>
> DANIEL 3:19–23

חַד־שִׁבְעָה

CHAD-SHIV'AH · "SEVEN TIMES MORE"

The king's face changes — the same man who fell on his face before Daniel in 2:46 — and he orders the *attun* heated seven times beyond its usual blaze. Anger makes him foolish: a hotter fire does not kill faster, and it kills his own "valiant warriors." The three are bound "in their trousers, their coats, their caps and their other clothes" and fall in *still tied up*. Every detail is there to show there was no escape.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Tsarfati notes that the furnace was not built for this; it was a brick kiln, the ordinary industrial fire of a city built of baked brick, and the king turned it into an instrument of worship-by-terror. He reads the clothed, bound bodies as the text's insistence on the miracle to come: nothing about them was fire-resistant. And he observes that the first casualties were the king's own soldiers — the persecutor's machinery always consumes the persecutor's men first.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

"His facial expression was altered." MacArthur reads the king's rage as the response of an idol to being refused. An idol cannot persuade; it can only burn. He notes that the men went in bound and clothed and that the writer counts the garments, because God is about to inspect them. And he lets the irony stand: the mighty men died of the fire the three were thrown into, and the three did not.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik walks the detail — the valiant warriors, the trousers, coats and caps, the urgency of the command — and notes that the text gives the reader every reason to believe the three are dead at verse 23. Then he points to what the fire did burn: only the ropes. He also mentions the Septuagint's addition, the long song the three sang in the furnace, not in the Hebrew and Aramaic Bible — and compares Paul and Silas singing in the Philippian prison (Acts 16:25).

"[24] Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up in haste; he said to his high officials, "Was it not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire?" They replied to the king, "Certainly, O king." [25] He said, "Look! I see ☆ four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and △ the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!""

DANIEL 3:24-25

שְׁרַיִן מַהְלְכִין

SHERAYIN MAHLEKHIN · "LOOSED AND WALKING ABOUT"

The king stands up in haste. "Was it not three men we cast *bound*?" — and there are four, *loosed* (*sherah*, untied, set free), *walking about*, "without harm" (*chabal*, "there is no injury in them"). The fourth is "like a son of the gods" (*bar-elahin*) — a pagan king's way of saying a divine being; in verse 28 he will call him God's *angel*. Many readers see the Angel of the LORD who met Hagar, Moses and Manoah: a preincarnate appearance of the Son. God did not keep them out of the fire. He met them in it.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Tsarfati reads the fourth man as the Son of God walking with His people in the furnace of the nations — the Angel of the LORD of Genesis and Exodus, the Jesus of Isaiah 43:2: "when you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched." He notes what the fire did and did not do: it loosed them and it did not touch them. For Israel, he says, that is the whole history — bound by the nations, loosed by God, walking in the fire with Him and coming out with the smell of nothing.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

"Four men loosed." MacArthur stops on *loosed*. The only thing the fire consumed was what bound them. That is what God's presence does in the furnace He permits: it does not always end the fire, but it ends the bondage. He takes the fourth as the preincarnate Christ and sets the scene beside Isaiah 43 and Hebrews 11:34 — "quenched the power of fire" — and observes that the king saw Him before the three did. Sometimes the persecutor is the first witness to the presence of Christ with His people.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik is careful about the king's words: "a son of the gods" is a pagan's description, not a creed; but he agrees with the long tradition that reads the fourth as the Son of God, the same figure who appears as the Angel of the LORD across the Old Testament (Genesis 16; Exodus 3; Judges 13). He notes the sequence — the king is astounded, stands, counts, sees — and that the miracle is reported through the eyes of the man who lit the fire.

SEVEN TIMES HOTTER · WHAT THE FIRE DID, AND WHAT IT DID NOT — DANIEL 3:19–27

The text counts the garments going in so the officials can count them coming out. The only thing the fire consumed was what bound them.

WHAT THE FIRE BURNED	WHAT THE FIRE DID NOT TOUCH
the valiant warriors who carried them up *"the flame of the fire slew those men" (v. 22)*	**their bodies** *"the fire had no effect on the bodies of these men" (v. 27)*
the ropes *thrown in "still tied up" (v. 23); seen "loosed" (v. 25)*	**their hair** *"nor was the hair of their head singed" (v. 27)*
the king's question *"what god is there who can deliver?" (v. 15) → v. 29*	**their clothes** *"nor were their trousers damaged" (v. 27)*
	the smell *"nor had the smell of fire even come upon them" (v. 27)*

THE FOURTH MAN · v. 25 — "LIKE A SON OF THE GODS" · v. 28 — "HIS ANGEL"

A pagan king's words for a divine being; the long reading sees the Angel of the LORD — the Son before Bethlehem (Genesis 16; Exodus 3; Judges 13). God did not keep them out of the fire; He met them in it (Isaiah 43:2) — and the first witness to His presence was the man who lit it.

FIGURE 4 · SEVEN TIMES HOTTER — WHAT THE FIRE DID, AND WHAT IT DID NOT (3:19–27)

01 CAPTURE THE SCENE

continued · verses 26–30

10 **What did Nebuchadnezzar say about the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego when he saw that the fire had no power over the three men (verses 28-29)?** P. 63

Daniel 3:28-29 · NASB95

28 *Nebuchadnezzar responded and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, who has sent His angel and delivered His servants who ☆ put their trust in Him, violating the king's command, and yielded up their bodies so as not to serve or worship any god except their own God.* 29 *Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation or tongue that speaks anything offensive against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego shall be torn limb from limb and their houses reduced to a rubbish heap, inasmuch as △ there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way."*

IN MY WORDS

He blessed their God for sending His angel to deliver them, decreed that no one could speak against Him, and confessed that no other god is able to deliver like this.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 4:37** Only in the next chapter does Nebuchadnezzar finally say "I... praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven"—admiration becoming surrender.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

MacArthur says listen carefully: it is still "the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego"—admiration, not conversion. He is not yet the king's God; that surrender waits for chapter 4.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes the new decree—death for insulting this God—is coerced reverence, and the three men neither asked for it nor wanted it; forced worship is no better pointed at heaven than at an idol.

CRITICAL THINKING

This is the loudest praise in the chapter and it came from an unconverted heart. A man can defend God publicly, legislate on His behalf, and promote His people—and still not belong to Him. Enthusiasm about God is not the same as submission to Him.

KEY QUESTION

Do I admire God from a distance, or have I actually surrendered to Him?

GOING DEEPER · FROM THE DEEP DIVE

Movement IV · Not Even the Smell of Fire

DANIEL 3:26–30 · The officials inspect them, the king blesses their God — and still calls Him theirs

The inspection and the confession. The Aramaic for *servants of the Most High God* and *Blessed be the God of*, and the three teachers on a deliverance complete down to the smoke, and on a king who now knows a great deal about God and still does not call Him his own.

> *"26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the furnace of blazing fire; he responded and said, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, come out, you servants of the Most High God, and come here!" Then Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego came out of the midst of the fire. 27 The satraps, the prefects, the governors and the king's high officials gathered around and saw in regard to these men that the fire had no effect on the bodies of these men nor was the hair of their head singed, nor were their trousers damaged, nor had the smell of fire even come upon them."*
>
> DANIEL 3:26–27

עַבְדּוֹהִי דִּי־אֱלָהָא עִלָּאָה

AVDOHI DI-ELAHA ILLA'AH · "SERVANTS OF THE MOST HIGH GOD"

The king who asked "what god" now shouts a title into the furnace: *the Most High God*. The officials — the same crowd that bowed in verse 7 — gather and inspect: no effect on the bodies, not a hair singed, not a trouser damaged, not even the smell of fire. The deliverance is complete down to the smoke. Isaiah 43:2 and Hebrews 11:34 are standing in the plain of Dura.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Tsarfati reads the inspection as God's verdict delivered through the empire's own bureaucracy: the satraps and governors who were summoned to bow are now summoned to examine, and they find nothing. He notes the smell — the one thing that lingers after any fire — as the detail that proves the point: God's deliverance of His people is not approximate. When the fire He permits is over, it leaves no trace He does not intend.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

MacArthur notes the change in the king's vocabulary: "the Most High God" is the language of chapter 4 arriving early. The king does not yet know God, but he knows what he has seen. And the examination by the officials is, for MacArthur, the structure of every testimony: the world inspects the believer who has come through the fire, and what it finds — or does not find — is the sermon. Not even the smell.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik draws out the completeness: hair, clothing, smell. God does nothing by halves. He notes that the men came out when called and not before — they were not trying to escape the fire; they were waiting on the One who was in it with them. And he observes that the furnace, which was meant to make an example of them, did: the whole government of Babylon is standing around three Jews, looking for a burn.

"[28] Nebuchadnezzar responded and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, who has sent His angel and delivered His servants who ☆ put their trust in Him, violating the king's command, and yielded up their bodies so as not to serve or worship any god except their own God. [29] Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation or tongue that speaks anything offensive against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego shall be torn limb from limb and their houses reduced to a rubbish heap, inasmuch as △ there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way." [30] Then the king caused Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego to prosper in the province of Babylon."

DANIEL 3:28–30

בְּרִיךְ אֱלָהֲהוֹן

BERIKH ELAHAHON · "BLESSED BE THE GOD OF"

The confession: blessed be the God *of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego* — still their God, not his. The king now knows a great deal: He sends His angel, He delivers, He is worthy of trust (*rechats*), and He is served by men who "yielded up their bodies" rather than worship another. And he knows "there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way" — his own question of verse 15, answered. But his decree protects God's honor by threatening to tear men limb from limb. He has a chapter still to go.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Tsarfati reads verses 28–30 as the Gentile world's first confession of Israel's God in the book, and as an incomplete one: the king blesses the God of three Jews and makes a law against blasphemy, but he does not bow. That will take chapter 4. He notes the phrase "yielded up their bodies" and sets Romans 12:1 beside it — the living sacrifice — and the promotion in verse 30: the men who would not bow are raised. God's people lose nothing by refusing the image.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

MacArthur hears both the progress and the limit. The king confesses that God delivers, that He is trustworthy, that none can deliver like Him — and still says "their God." Knowing a great deal about God is not the same as knowing Him. He also notes what the king praises: not the miracle only, but the men, "who put their trust in Him" and "yielded up their bodies." What moved a pagan king was not a doctrine; it was three men who would rather burn than bow.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik closes with the king's decree — a law that defends God by violence, which shows how far he still has to go — and with the picture the chapter leaves: a world ruler demanding worship of an image, a faithful remnant preserved through the fire, and Daniel absent, as some read it, a picture of those kept from the hour (Revelation 3:10; 13:14–15). Then the last verse: the three men prosper in Babylon. The furnace was the door to the promotion.

THE FURNACE AND THE END · DANIEL 3 BESIDE REVELATION 13

A picture, not a prophecy — but the same shape: one image, one command, one penalty, and a remnant that will not bow

THE PLAIN OF DURA	DAN 3	THE LAST DAYS
A world ruler sets up an image	3:1	*the beast's image, given breath* **Rev 13:14–15**
All peoples, nations and languages commanded	3:4, 7	*"all who dwell on the earth"* **Rev 13:8, 12**
A cue everyone can hear — the music	3:5	*a mark everyone must carry* **Rev 13:16–17**
Death for whoever will not bow	3:6	*"as many as do not worship … killed"* **Rev 13:15**
A remnant refuses — and is reported	3:12	*"those whose names are written in the book"* **Rev 13:8; 12:11**
Preserved through the fire, not from it	3:25–27	*victorious over the beast and its image* **Rev 15:2**
Daniel absent from the plain	–	*"I will keep you from the hour of testing"* **Rev 3:10**

FIGURE 5 · THE FURNACE AND THE END — DANIEL 3 BESIDE REVELATION 13

PART TWO · DISCOVERING DANIEL · LESSON 3

DANIEL 3 · WHAT IT MEANS, WHERE ELSE IT IS TAUGHT, HOW I LIVE IT

Analyze, Compare, Execute

With the story captured and the Deep Dive read, the workbook turns to meaning: what the statue revealed about the king, the image still to come, the sin that felled Satan, who was invited and why, the commandment behind the refusal, "but if not," the fourth man, why God let them be thrown in, and what He wanted to teach the king — then Isaiah 43, Proverbs 4, the men who compromised, and how to live uncompromised under opposition.

IN THIS PART

- Analyze the Message — nine questions with *Discovering Daniel*: the statue, Revelation 13, Isaiah 14, the guest list, Exodus 20, "but if not," the fourth man, 1 Peter 1, and the lesson for the king
- Compare — Isaiah 43:2; Proverbs 4:23; Adam, Esau, Saul, Solomon, Ananias and Sapphira; Galatians 6:7–8
- Execute — John 15 on the world's hatred, Acts 20 on Paul's willingness to suffer, Matthew 28:20 and Hebrews 13:5, 1 Peter 4:12–14
- Closing Thoughts, and the study helps that close the book

02 ANALYZE THE MESSAGE

What does it say and mean?

Using both my Bible and my copy of Discovering Daniel.

1 **What do you think the creation of the tall statue revealed about Nebuchadnezzar (see page 62 in Discovering Daniel)?** P. 62

Daniel 2:38-39 · NASB95

...you are the head of gold. After you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth.

IN MY WORDS

It revealed his pride—God had told him he was only the head of gold, so he built an image of gold from head to foot, refusing to accept that his kingdom would ever end.

CROSS REFERENCE **Proverbs 16:18** "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling."

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Tsarfati puts it sharply: God had just told the king he was only the head of gold—so Nebuchadnezzar built himself gold from head to foot, defying the God who numbers the days of empires.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik describes it as roughly ninety feet high and only nine feet wide—more a towering, stylized obelisk than a statue, almost certainly wood overlaid with gold: impressive on the outside, hollow within.

CRITICAL THINKING

Nebuchadnezzar did not reject the revelation; he edited it. That is the subtler sin. Outright unbelief is easy to spot, but taking what God said and improving it into something more flattering can look like faith while it functions as rebellion.

KEY QUESTION

Where am I tempted to edit God's Word into a version that flatters me?

2 **According to Revelation 13:15-17, what future figure will also have an image created for the purpose of worship? What will happen to those who refuse to worship the image?** P. 62

Revelation 13:15-17 · NASB95

And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed. And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead, and he provides that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark...

IN MY WORDS

The beast—the Antichrist—will have an image made for worship, and those who refuse will be killed and cut off from buying or selling.

CROSS REFERENCE **Revelation 14:9-11** The warning against worshiping the beast and his image, and the eternal cost of doing so.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Tsarfati reads Daniel 3 as the end of the age in rehearsal—the Antichrist too will raise an image on a plain of this world and command every people, nation, and tongue to worship it on cue, enforced by death.

CRITICAL THINKING

The parallel is nearly exact: a global summons, a single image, music or spectacle as the trigger, and death for refusal—with one addition. Revelation adds economic pressure, which reaches people the furnace never could. Not everyone fears martyrdom; almost everyone fears not being able to buy groceries.

KEY QUESTION

Which would move me faster to compromise—a threat to my life or a threat to my livelihood?

3 What sin caused the fall of Satan himself (see page 63 in Discovering Daniel)? How does Isaiah 14:12-14 describe the way this sin was expressed?

P. 63

Isaiah 14:12-14 · NASB95

How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations! But you said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."

IN MY WORDS

Pride caused Satan's fall, and Isaiah expresses it as five defiant "I will" statements climaxing in "I will make myself like the Most High."

CROSS REFERENCE **Ezekiel 28:17** "Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor."

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

MacArthur ties the demand for worship in Daniel 3 back to its origin: every claim to worship that does not belong to God is the same ancient ambition wearing a new crown.

CRITICAL THINKING

Satan's fall was not a plan to destroy God but a desire to be treated like Him. That is why pride is so difficult to detect in ourselves—it rarely announces itself as rebellion. It shows up as wanting the credit, the last word, the seat at the center.

KEY QUESTION

Where do my own "I will" statements quietly crowd out God's?

4 **Daniel lists the types of people Nebuchadnezzar invited to the statue ceremony (see Daniel 3:2-3). What do you think the king hoped to accomplish by inviting these specific people?** P. 63

Daniel 3:3 · NASB95

3 *Then the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates and all the rulers of the provinces were assembled for the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.*

IN MY WORDS

He wanted to unify a diverse empire under one visible religion by securing the public submission of every official who governed it—binding political loyalty to worship.

CROSS REFERENCE **Genesis 11:4** "Let us make for ourselves a name"—the plain of Shinar, the same ground, the same ambition for a single unified humanity apart from God.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

MacArthur calls it political allegiance fused with worship: if every governor bows, every province follows.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes rulers have always been happy to blend spiritual and national allegiance—from Babylon's plain to the modern state.

CRITICAL THINKING

A conquered empire is held together by fear or by shared identity, and shared worship is the cheapest identity to manufacture. This is why the state so often reaches for religion—not because it believes, but because belief binds people more tightly than law does.

KEY QUESTION

Where does my culture ask me to treat something other than God as non-negotiable?

5 **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were clear in their refusal to bow before the statue. They respectfully disregarded Nebuchadnezzar's authority. They defied his power and any sense of victory he might have over them. Why do you think they were so determined in their conviction?** P. 63

Exodus 20:4-5 · NASB95

You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God...

IN MY WORDS

Because they had already settled the matter with God long before the music played—the first two commandments left them no room to negotiate, and they had practiced obedience in a smaller test back in chapter 1.

CROSS REFERENCE **Acts 5:29** "We must obey God rather than men."

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

MacArthur notes these men had settled the matter long before the furnace was lit—tested first at a dinner table in chapter 1—so they could stand without flinching when the stakes became their lives.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik points out they lodged no protest and staged no demonstration; among thousands of officials they simply refrained, and were discovered.

CRITICAL THINKING

Their courage in chapter 3 was purchased in chapter 1. Nobody rises to the occasion under that kind of pressure—people fall to the level of what they have already decided. The furnace revealed a conviction; it did not create one.

KEY QUESTION

What small obedience am I practicing now that is preparing me for a test I cannot yet see?

6 **When the three Jewish men said "But if not," were they expressing a lack of faith? Explain (see page 69 in Discovering Daniel).** P. 69

Daniel 3:17-18 · NASB95

17 *If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king.* 18 *But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."*

IN MY WORDS

No—it was the opposite: they were expressing faith in God's character rather than faith in a particular outcome, refusing to make their obedience conditional on being rescued.

CROSS REFERENCE **Habakkuk 3:17-18** "Though the fig tree should not blossom… yet I will exult in the LORD."

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

MacArthur says conviction that depends on a guaranteed rescue is not conviction at all; it is a bargain. Obedience was theirs; outcomes were God's.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Tsarfati calls it the faith of a remnant that serves God for who He is, not merely for what He prevents.

CRITICAL THINKING

Faith that requires a guaranteed result is really a transaction with God, and transactions collapse the moment the terms are not met. "But if not" is the sentence that separates worship from negotiation—and it is the only kind of faith that can survive an unanswered prayer.

KEY QUESTION

Is my faith attached to what God can do, or to who God is?

---

7 **When Nebuchadnezzar saw a fourth man in the furnace with the other three, he was likely witnessing a theophany. What is a theophany, and where else in Scripture do we see this (see page 71 in Discovering Daniel)?** P. 71

Daniel 3:25 · NASB95

25 *He said, "Look! I see ☆ four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and △ the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!"*

IN MY WORDS

A theophany is a visible appearance of God to people—often, as here, a christophany, a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ—seen also with Abraham at Mamre, Jacob wrestling at Peniel, Moses at the burning bush, and Joshua before Jericho.

CROSS REFERENCE **Joshua 5:13-15** The Captain of the LORD's host: "Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy."

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

MacArthur says the pagan king said more than he knew—this is best understood as the preincarnate Christ, the Angel of the LORD, present with His servants in the flame.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Tsarfati notes that fourth figure is the same Lord who walked with His people through every exile and will walk Israel through the time of Jacob's trouble—preserved through the fire, not spared from it.

CRITICAL THINKING

In nearly every theophany God shows up at a moment of crisis or commission, not in a season of comfort. The pattern suggests that His nearest presence is often reserved for the place we would least have chosen to stand.

KEY QUESTION

Where have I met God most personally—and was it in ease or in fire?

8 **God didn't prevent Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego from being thrown into the fire. There are times when God allows us to experience trials by fire as well. Why would He do this (see page 72 in Discovering Daniel)?** P. 72

1 Peter 1:6-7 · NASB95

...you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

IN MY WORDS

Because the fire refines faith, displays God's presence and power in a way rescue-from-a-distance never could, and turns His people into a testimony a watching world cannot argue with.

CROSS REFERENCE **James 1:2-4** "the testing of your faith produces endurance... that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

MacArthur observes God often permits the trial to become impossible precisely so that the deliverance will be unmistakably His.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik says the believer's furnaces come in three makes—those men prepare, those Satan prepares, and those God prepares—and all of them end up serving God's purpose.

CRITICAL THINKING

Had God stopped the arrest, the empire would have learned nothing and the three men would have learned less. Deliverance from the fire saves the body; deliverance in the fire reveals the Person. God chose the outcome that gave them more of Himself.

KEY QUESTION

Am I asking God to remove the fire when the greater gift is His presence inside it?

9 **What do you think God wanted to teach Nebuchadnezzar through this fiery furnace incident?** P. 72

Daniel 3:29 · NASB95

29 *Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation or tongue that speaks anything offensive against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego shall be torn limb from limb and their houses reduced to a rubbish heap, inasmuch as △ there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way."*

Daniel 4:37 · NASB95

Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride.

IN MY WORDS

That his power had a ceiling and God's did not—that the God of heaven rules over kings, cannot be commanded, and is worthy of exclusive worship.

CROSS REFERENCE **Psalm 2:10-11** "Now therefore, O kings, show discernment... Worship the LORD with reverence."

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Tsarfati sees the quiet engine of the whole book here: God glorifies His name among the nations through a faithful remnant that will not bow.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

MacArthur notes the lesson had to be repeated—Nebuchadnezzar now knows God is powerful, faithful, and worthy of exclusive worship, yet He is not yet his God.

CRITICAL THINKING

God taught the lesson through three men rather than through a sermon or a sign in the sky. The most persuasive argument available to a proud king was people who would not bend—which means our uncompromised lives are still God's chosen method.

KEY QUESTION

Is my life currently making any argument that would be hard for an unbeliever to dismiss?

03 COMPARE THIS PASSAGE WITH THE REST OF SCRIPTURE

How is it supported elsewhere in the Bible?

Letting Scripture interpret Scripture.

1 Read Isaiah 43:2, then answer the questions below.

P. 73

> Isaiah 43:2 · NASB95
>
> *When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, nor will the flame burn you.*

a. Where did God say He would be during our trials?

> IN MY WORDS
>
> He said He would be with us—not waiting on the far side of the trial, but present in it.

CROSS REFERENCE **Psalm 23:4** "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death... You are with me."

b. In the above passage—or anywhere else in the Bible—does God ever say He will prevent us from experiencing difficult circumstances?

> IN MY WORDS
>
> No—every promise is "through" the waters and "through" the fire; He promises His presence and preservation, never exemption.

CROSS REFERENCE **John 16:33** "In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

c. What are some ways we can benefit from life's trials?

> IN MY WORDS
>
> Trials refine our faith, produce endurance and maturity, break our self-reliance, deepen our knowledge of God, and equip us to comfort others with the comfort we received.

CROSS REFERENCE **2 Corinthians 1:4** "...who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction."

> AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel
>
> Tsarfati notes the three men stood where Israel will one day stand—commanded to bow with no visible way out, trusting the God who said, "When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched."

> CRITICAL THINKING
>
> The prepositions carry the whole doctrine. God never says "over," "around," or "instead of"—He says "through." A faith built on the promise of avoidance is built on a verse that does not exist.

> KEY QUESTION
>
> *Have I been claiming a promise God never made?*

2 **Read Proverbs 4:23. An important aspect of living an uncompromising life is to "keep [your] heart with all diligence." List three or four ways we can guard our hearts.** P. 73

> Proverbs 4:23 · NASB95
> *Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.*

IN MY WORDS

By saturating my mind with Scripture, watching what I let in through my eyes and ears, staying honest and accountable with other believers, and settling my convictions in advance rather than in the moment.

CROSS REFERENCE **Psalm 119:11** "Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You."

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik's pastoral note throughout Daniel 3 is that the stand in public was possible only because the heart had been guarded in private.

CRITICAL THINKING

The verse assumes the heart is not self-maintaining. Left alone it drifts, and it drifts toward whatever it is fed. Guarding is active work—a gate someone has to stand at—not a state you arrive at once and keep.

KEY QUESTION

What am I feeding my heart daily, and what is it producing?

---

3 **Scripture gives many examples of people who gave in to the temptation to compromise. What consequences did the following individuals face by making the wrong choice?** P. 74

a. **Adam (Genesis 3:6, 22-24)**

IN MY WORDS

He gained a moment's knowledge and lost paradise—driven out of Eden, cut off from the tree of life, and bringing death upon the whole human race.

CROSS REFERENCE **Romans 5:12** "through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin..."

b. **Esau (Genesis 25:29-34)**

IN MY WORDS

He traded his birthright for a single meal and later found no place for repentance though he sought it with tears.

CROSS REFERENCE **Hebrews 12:16-17** "that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal."

c. Saul (1 Samuel 15:3, 20-28)

> IN MY WORDS
>
> He obeyed partially, called it obedience, and had the kingdom torn from him—rejected as king because he rejected the word of the LORD.

CROSS REFERENCE **1 Samuel 15:22** "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams."

d. Solomon (1 Kings 11:1-8)

> IN MY WORDS
>
> His foreign wives turned his heart after other gods, and the wisest man alive ended up building high places for idols and losing the kingdom's unity.

CROSS REFERENCE **1 Kings 11:11** "I will surely tear the kingdom from you, and will give it to your servant."

e. Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11)

> IN MY WORDS
>
> They lied to the Holy Spirit about the price of their land for the appearance of generosity, and both fell dead at the apostles' feet.

CROSS REFERENCE **Acts 5:11** "And great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things."

> JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You
>
> MacArthur's warning about tolerated compromise fits every name on this list: what is excused never stays small—it desensitizes the conscience and becomes the seedbed for the failures we swore we would never commit.

> CRITICAL THINKING
>
> Not one of these men set out to ruin his life. Each made an exchange that felt reasonable in the moment—a meal, a wife, a partial obedience, a better reputation. Compromise never presents itself as ruin; it presents itself as a trade.

> KEY QUESTION
>
> *What am I currently trading, and have I actually counted what it costs?*

4 Based on the examples above, what conclusions do you come to about the dangers of compromise? P. 75

> Galatians 6:7-8 · NASB95
>
> *Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.*

IN MY WORDS

Compromise always costs more than it promised, it is never contained to one area, and it dulls the conscience so the next surrender comes easier—which is why the line has to be drawn before the pressure arrives.

CROSS REFERENCE **Song of Solomon 2:15** "Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes that are ruining the vineyards..."

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik's list of excuses is the anatomy of every compromise—we can do more good alive, it's only ten minutes, we're not renouncing God—anything serves as an excuse when the heart is bent on compromise.

CRITICAL THINKING

The three Hebrews had every excuse available to them and used none. That is the contrast the chapter is built on: the same reasoning that ruined Esau and Saul was on offer at Dura, and three men simply refused to pick it up.

KEY QUESTION

Which excuse do I reach for most often—and what would it look like to stop?

04 EXECUTE

How does this affect my life?

Bringing Daniel 3 home to my own walk.

1 **On page 60 of Discovering Daniel, we read, "There are occupational hazards when it comes to following Christ. Chief among them is being despised by the world."** P. 60

John 15:18-19 · NASB95

If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.

a. **What are some of the ways we can be despised for our faith?**

IN MY WORDS

We can be mocked, labeled intolerant or backward, excluded socially, passed over professionally, misrepresented publicly, or—in much of the world—imprisoned and killed.

CROSS REFERENCE **2 Timothy 3:12** "Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

b. What are some other occupational hazards Christians face?

IN MY WORDS

Loneliness when we will not go along, the loss of opportunity for refusing to compromise, weariness in doing good, spiritual attack, and the temptation to quiet ourselves just to keep the peace.

CROSS REFERENCE **Galatians 6:9** "Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary."

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

MacArthur notes faithfulness in public office does not shield the believer from envy; it invites it. They obeyed God and let the consequences be God's business.

CRITICAL THINKING

Being despised is described here as an occupational hazard, not an accident—something built into the job rather than a sign you have done the job badly. That reframes it entirely: opposition is not evidence that something went wrong.

KEY QUESTION

Have I been treating opposition as a failure when Scripture calls it a cost?

2 Read Acts 20:23-24. Why was the apostle Paul willing to suffer "bonds and afflictions"?

P. 61

Acts 20:23-24 · NASB95

...except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.

IN MY WORDS

Because finishing the ministry Christ gave him mattered more to him than his own life—he had already decided the gospel was worth more than his comfort or survival.

CROSS REFERENCE **Philippians 1:21** "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

MacArthur's phrase for the three Hebrews fits Paul exactly: obedience was theirs; outcomes were God's.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Tsarfati's theme of a remnant that serves God for who He is, not for what He prevents, runs straight through Paul's resolve.

CRITICAL THINKING

Paul knew what was coming—the Spirit told him in every city—and went anyway. His courage was not ignorance of the cost but a settled valuation: he had already decided what his life was for, so the threat could not renegotiate it.

KEY QUESTION

What have I decided my life is for, clearly enough that a threat could not change it?

3 **Jesus was with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego in the fiery furnace. What promises can we cling to when we find ourselves in the fiery furnaces of life?** P. 61

Matthew 28:20 · NASB95

...teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Hebrews 13:5 · NASB95

Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you."

a. **Matthew 28:20**

IN MY WORDS

"And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age"—His presence is promised without interruption and without an expiration date.

CROSS REFERENCE **Isaiah 41:10** "Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God."

b. **Hebrews 13:5**

IN MY WORDS

"I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you"—a promise stated so emphatically in the Greek that it rules out abandonment altogether.

CROSS REFERENCE **Deuteronomy 31:6** "The LORD your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you."

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes that whether or not the men recognized who walked with them, He was there—sometimes we sense Jesus in the trial and sometimes we do not, but He is present nonetheless.

CRITICAL THINKING

Both promises are about presence, not rescue. God's answer to the furnace is not a guarantee that it will be cool but a guarantee about who will be standing in it. That is a smaller promise than we want and a far larger one than we realize.

KEY QUESTION

Would His presence alone be enough for me, if the circumstances never changed?

4 Read 1 Peter 4:12-14.

P. 62

1 Peter 4:12-14 · NASB95

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

a. How does Peter urge us to respond to fiery ordeals?

IN MY WORDS

He tells us not to be surprised, as though something strange were happening, but to keep rejoicing because we are sharing in the sufferings of Christ.

CROSS REFERENCE **James 1:2** "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials."

b. What benefits do we receive when we are ridiculed for Christ, according to verse 14?

IN MY WORDS

We are called blessed, and the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon us—God draws nearest at the point of reproach.

CROSS REFERENCE **Matthew 5:11-12** "Blessed are you when people insult you... for your reward in heaven is great."

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Tsarfati's reading of the furnace fits Peter's word exactly: God allows His own to be thrown in—and meets them there.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik reminds us courage is not the absence of intimidation but obedience in the teeth of it.

CRITICAL THINKING

Peter's first instruction is about expectation, not endurance. Much of our suffering in trials is the shock of thinking we should have been exempt. Remove the surprise and the trial is still hard, but it is no longer disorienting.

KEY QUESTION

Am I surprised by the fire—and what does that reveal about what I expected from God?

Closing Thoughts · Lesson 3

Down through the ages, martyrs have stood up to their persecutors to the point of death. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed- nego were prepared to lay down their lives for what they believed — and what strikes me most is that they did it without a promise. They did not know a fourth man would be waiting in the flames. They only knew who God was, and that was enough to walk toward a furnace.

James said it plainly: "Show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works... faith without works is useless" (James 2:18, 20) — and again, "faith without works is dead" (James 2:26). Genuine faith is demonstrative faith. It cannot hide behind the pretense that "my religious beliefs are private," because it always bursts forth into some kind of action — helping, praying, encouraging, speaking the truth when silence would be easier.

Three men refused to bow, and a pagan empire heard a sermon no preacher could have delivered. Nebuchadnezzar would never have said "There is no other god who is able to deliver in this way" (Daniel 3:29) if they had bent their knees with everyone else on the plain of Dura. Their uncompromised stand — not a polished argument — was what reached a king.

"But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

Daniel 3:18

Most of us will not face a literal furnace. But we will face the quieter test — the temptation to stay silent, to blend in, to call compromise wisdom because the cost of standing feels too high. The lesson of Daniel 3 is that the decision is not made at the furnace; it is made long before the music plays. Settle it now. And remember that the fire burned nothing except the ropes — what the world means for our destruction, God uses to set us loose.

STUDY HELPS · CROSS-REFERENCES

The Passage in the Whole Bible

The commandment behind the refusal, the fire God walks in, and the image still to come

> *"You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me,"*
>
> EXODUS 20:4–5

> *"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, Nor will the flame burn you."*
>
> ISAIAH 43:2

> *"Though He slay me, I will hope in Him. Nevertheless I will argue my ways before Him."*
>
> JOB 13:15

> *"Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."*
>
> MATTHEW 10:28

> *"quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight."*
>
> HEBREWS 11:34

> *"Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship."*
>
> ROMANS 12:1

> *"Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you;"*
>
> 1 PETER 4:12

> *"And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed."*
>
> REVELATION 13:15

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Exodus 20 is why they did not bow; Isaiah 43 is why they were not burned; Revelation 13 is why the chapter is not finished. Tsarfati reads them in that order: the second commandment made the refusal necessary, the promise to Israel made the fourth man no surprise, and the image of the beast makes the plain of Dura a rehearsal. He adds 1 Peter 4:12 for the church — the fiery ordeal is not a strange thing — and Hebrews 11:34 as heaven's one-line summary of the chapter.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

Job 13:15 and Matthew 10:28 are the theology of "but even if He does not": hope in God though He slay me, and fear of the One who can destroy the soul rather than the one who can only kill the body. MacArthur ties Romans 12:1 to the king's own phrase — "yielded up their bodies" — and reads the chapter as the Old Testament's picture of the living sacrifice: a body presented to God, in the fire, and found acceptable.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik lines the chain up: the commandment (Exodus 20), the promise (Isaiah 43), the surrender (Job 13), the perspective (Matthew 10), the record (Hebrews 11), the sacrifice (Romans 12), the expectation (1 Peter 4), and the end (Revelation 13). He notes that the furnace is one of the few Old Testament miracles the New Testament names outright, and that it names it as an act of faith, not of fireproofing.

STUDY HELPS · THREE VOICES

At a Glance

Three voices, one chapter

The same chapter, read three ways. Tsarfati listens for Israel, the remnant and the image still to come; MacArthur presses the "but if not" and the living sacrifice; Guzik walks the plain of Dura, the instruments, the ropes and the smoke. Together they keep Daniel 3 from becoming either a Sunday-school flannelgraph or a lecture on civil disobedience.

THE MOMENT	TSARFATI · the times	MACARTHUR · sovereignty	GUZIK · text & history
The image (3:1–7)	The king's rebuttal of chapter 2; sixes; a rehearsal for Revelation 13.	Impressed by God, still wants a god he can make; the state as god.	Ninety feet of gilded wood; the Greek instruments; Daniel absent.
The accusation (3:8–15)	Accused of loyalty to God, not disloyalty to Babylon.	The second chance sounds like mercy; "what god" is every tyrant's theology.	The Chaldeans Daniel saved; Pharaoh and Rabshakeh asked the same.
The answer (3:16–18)	The creed of the remnant in every century.	Able, will, but if not — the greatest statement of faith in the OT.	The five excuses they did not use; chapter 1 prepared them.
The furnace (3:19–23)	A brick kiln turned into an instrument of worship-by-terror.	An idol cannot persuade; it can only burn.	The fire burned only the ropes; the Septuagint's song.
The fourth man (3:24–25)	The Son walking with Israel in the furnace of the nations.	"Loosed" — the presence ends the bondage, not always the fire.	The Angel of the LORD; seen first by the man who lit the fire.
The confession (3:26–30)	The Gentile world's first confession — incomplete until chapter 4.	Knowing about God is not knowing Him; three men moved a king.	Not even the smell; a decree that defends God by violence.

DANIEL 3 · A COMPARATIVE READING

† Key Insights to Carry

- **The statue is the king's answer to the dream.** In chapter 2 Babylon was only the head of gold; in chapter 3 the king builds an image that is gold to the ground and asks the world to kneel. TSARFATI
- ***Deliver* is the spine of the chapter.** "What god is there who can deliver you?" (v. 15) — "our God … is able to deliver" (v. 17) — "no other god … is able to deliver in this way" (v. 29). The king answers his own question. TEXT

The pressure is atmosphere, not argument. Music, a crowd, an instant cue, a furnace: worship made easy, emotional and unanimous. No one on the plain believed the image was a god; they believed the furnace was a furnace. GUZIK

- **"But even if He does not."** Able, will, but if not: total confidence in God's power, loose hold on the outcome, unconditional obedience. Faith that trusts God rather than trusting Him to do what I want. MACARTHUR
- **The fire burned only the ropes.** Bound and clothed they went in; loosed and walking they were seen. God's presence in the furnace He permits ends the bondage before it ends the fire. MACARTHUR
- **God met them in the fire, not outside it.** Isaiah 43:2 in the plain of Dura. The fourth man is seen by the king first — the Angel of the LORD, the Son before Bethlehem. GUZIK
- **Not even the smell.** The officials who bowed in v. 7 inspect in v. 27 and find nothing: hair, clothes, smoke. God's deliverance is complete down to the trace. TEXT
- **The king knew a great deal and still said "their God."** He sends His angel, He delivers, He is worthy of trust (v. 28) — and a decree that defends Him by violence. Chapter 4 is still to come. TSARFATI

† Questions for the Table

1 **The whole empire bowed on cue because the music played and everyone else went down. Where is the music playing in your world right now — the atmosphere that makes going along feel like nothing — and what does standing look like there?**

I will notice the music before I notice my knees; standing is a decision I make before the band plays.

DANIEL 3:4-7

2 **"What god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?" Who or what in your life is asking that question — a boss, a diagnosis, a debt, a fear — and what is your answer?**

I will answer the king's question the way the three did: able, will, but if not.

DANIEL 3:15-18

3 **The three men did not need to give an answer because nothing was undecided. What in your walk is still undecided — still up for negotiation each time the pressure comes — that you need to settle once, now, before the furnace?**

I will settle it before the test so there is nothing to argue in the test.

DANIEL 3:16

4 **"But even if He does not." Is your obedience conditioned on an outcome — healing, a job, a reconciliation — and what would it mean to obey with that outcome left in God's hands?**

I will obey whether or not God does what I am asking; He is worth serving either way.

DANIEL 3:18

5 **The fire burned only the ropes. What has a fire God permitted in your life actually consumed — and what bondage has it loosed that you have not thanked Him for?**

I will look at what the fire took and see what it freed; God was in it with me.

DANIEL 3:24-25

6 **The king blessed "the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego" and still did not call Him his own. Who in your life knows a great deal about your God from watching you — and what would it take for Him to become theirs?**

My life has made someone an admirer of my God; I will pray and speak so they become His worshiper.

DANIEL 3:28-29

❖

The music played and the world went down; three men stayed standing and went into the fire bound. The fire burned the ropes and nothing else, the fourth man walked with them, and the king who asked "what god" blessed Him by name — with not even the smell of smoke on the men who would rather burn than bow.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

Scripture: New American Standard Bible (NASB), © 1960–1995 The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. Workbook questions and page references are from *Discovering Daniel* (Amir Tsarfati, Harvest House); answers are written in the first person to be copied into the workbook. The teacher sections

are the study author's faithful summaries — not verbatim quotations — of Amir Tsarfati (*Discovering Daniel*, Behold Israel), John MacArthur (Grace to You) and David Guzik (Enduring Word) on Daniel 3; consult each author's own work for his exact words. Aramaic from the Masoretic Text. · Smith For Christ · The Complete Study: Daniel 3 · Deep Dive + Discovering Daniel Lesson 3.