

Daniel 3

Read Daniel 3:1-7: In chapter 2, Daniel told King Nebuchadnezzar that he was *the head of gold*. That means that Nebuchadnezzar was the first major world power. His power would be absolute. He was told that there would be a series of world powers who would sequentially replace him. Now, in chapter 3 we see that the King did not embrace his appointed place in history. He refused to limit himself to having a fixed period of time on top. Instead of being limited to being the *head of gold*, he made a 90' tall statue entirely of himself that was all gold. He wanted his kingdom to be the only kingdom. The King was basically saying that his kingdom would be the only world power; and that his kingdom would not be replaced. It is hard to say if this was all of his idea...or if his counselors put him up to it. It appears that this idea was all leading to a trap for Daniel and his friends.

The King was still very insecure. He had everything to lose, and nothing left to gain. It is not all that great on top. He now wanted to confirm absolute allegiance from every kingdom administrator. Everybody is a suspect. He was suffering from paranoia and extreme narcissism.

The King had a musical dedication ceremony. Surely the music was meant to be a notification to bow down; and to also to inspire homage. Everyone had to fall on their face and pay homage to the King. Not only were the people required to acknowledge Nebuchadnezzar as their King. He also required them to worship him as their god. Anytime that a person claims to be a god, he is dealt with severely by the real God.

The musical accompaniment is a common means to lead our thoughts. God designed worship music to maximize the expression and experience. Lucifer was bright and musical; and has commandeered music for his own purposes. Today, we have a lot of catchy beats accompanied by the foulest lyrics.

You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels (tamborine) and pipes Was prepared for you on the day you were created. (Ezekiel 28:13)



A rock concert is not a **traditional worship service**, but it can be a form of worship for some people. Rock concerts often have a feeling of community and togetherness that can be similar to a religious service. For some people, the music and the atmosphere of a rock concert can be a way to connect with a higher power.

Read Daniel 3:8-18: The Chaldean counselors saw the opportunity to destroy Daniel and his friends. Daniel and his friends stood faithfully in the way of the other counselors taking advantage of the King. There was more than one scheme designed to isolate and kill Daniel and his friends. They knew that Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego would not worship the image. The spirit of antichrist does not mean another type of Christ. It means submitting yourself to things other than Christ.

The faithful trio refused to participate in this outrageous act of worshipping a king. This was a life-or-death choice; and they did not flinch. The power was really going to Nebuchadnezzar's head.

Read Daniel 3:19-25: King Nebuchadnezzar went crazy with rage. He could not fathom why these Jews would not worship him. How could they possibly refuse *the great Nebuchadnezzar* and hope to live? He cranked up the heat far above its normal setting to destroy Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego. It got so hot that the guards were killed by its heat.



The problem with absolute, uncontested power is that human beings cannot handle it. They end up living out some kind of make-believe version of themselves. Look at Michael Jackson, Howard Hughes, Hitler, and others who can live apart from the normal checks and balances of society.

Just when it seems like the end of the road for our three friends; God supernaturally intervenes. There were many martyrs in the past who were not rescued from the flames or the sword or the mouth of the lion. The flames and smoke are having no effect on Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego. Their ropes are burned, but they are not. There is a lot of symbolism here. The King of this world will persecute us for our faith. The flames and heat of testing can become intense. Ultimately, the things that bind us on earth will be undone as we walk in faith.

The more purification and trial we go through, the more we can clearly see Jesus; and the more he can be seen in us.

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28)

Read Daniel 3:26-30: The fiery furnace did not harm Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego. Their clothes did not even smell like smoke. The king of the world declared the real God to be uniquely-powerful. This testing also promoted these young men to a higher ranking in the kingdom. It also gave them protection. We might think that we are protecting our interests by going with the flow; but it's God who really protects us.