

"Worship _____ who _____ heaven and earth,
the sea and springs of water."

NOTE: At the same time that a decree is given to worship the image to the beast, God sends a message into all the world that calls people to worship the Creator. The issue of the last days is the same as the issue in Daniel's day, that of worshipping God according to His commandments.



24. Where will those who get the victory over the beast and his image ultimately stand? Revelation 15:2


On the _____ of _____.

NOTE: Just as God had a victorious people in Daniel's day, He will have a victorious people in the end time. Their concern will not be deliverance, but faithfulness to God. They will remain as true to Him as did the three Hebrews. They will serve God even in the face of death.


25. Are you willing to make serving God the chief priority of your life?

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PROPHECY SEMINAR



CONFLICT OVER FALSE WORSHIP

In every chapter of Daniel thus far we have seen the great controversy theme illustrated. In Chapter 1 the issue in the controversy was obedience to God versus obedience to man. In Chapter 2 we are shown that God will ultimately triumph in the great

controversy. In Chapter 3, we are introduced to the other main issue in the book of Daniel over which there is conflict, the issue of worship. Here we have an attempt to impose false worship. We see three Hebrew youths standing firmly for God when the whole world worships falsely. Remember, the stories in the book of Daniel illustrate the crisis that God's people will experience at the close of earth's history. Daniel's

three friends were tempted to worship falsely in ancient Babylon, yet ~r resisted; likewise, God's people in the last days will be commanded to worship falsely, but will refuse. They will have such a solid relationship with God that no one can compel them to worship falsely.

The parallels between Daniel 3 and Revelation 13 are striking. In this lesson, we will examine carefully the story in Daniel 3 and consider a few of the general parallels to Revelation 13. However, in Lesson 24, we will examine in much greater detail the parallels between Daniel 3 and Revelation 13, and how they impact our day.

The events of Daniel 3 occurred several years after those of Chapter 2 when Daniel interpreted King Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the great image and the king acknowledged Daniel's God as a God of gods. Although Chapter 2 ends with Nebuchadnezzar apparently beginning to follow the true God, Chapter 3 provides evidence that he no longer is doing so. Nebuchadnezzar, like many of us, slipped back into his former ways. Yet how patiently God bore with Nebuchadnezzar, until he finally submitted to the true God.

THE GREAT IMAGE SET UP

1. Describe the image that Nebuchadnezzar set up. Daniel 3:1

- a. "An image of _____."
- b. "Whose height was _____ cubits"
- c. "and its width _____ cubits"
- d. "He set it up in the plain _____."

NOTE: In defiance of God, Nebuchadnezzar made an image all of gold to indicate that his kingdom would last forever. This image was the opposite of the image of Daniel 2, which was made up of various metals and indicated a succession of empires. A cubit was about 18 inches, which would make the image about ninety feet high and nine feet wide. It was erected on the plains of Dura and would have been an imposing sight.

REVELATION 13 AND THE IMAGE TO THE BEAST

What happened to the three Hebrews in ancient Babylon is comparable to events that will transpire in the last days. Revelation 13 pictures for us a parallel scene to Daniel 3. Let's notice the similarities:

18. What does the two-horned beast command the people of earth to do? Revelation 13:11,12

"To _____ the first beast."

NOTE: The issue in the last days has to do with worshipping the beast. The command to false worship is a key thought in the books of Daniel and Revelation.

19. After bringing fire down from Heaven and performing other signs, what does this beast declare that the people should make? Revelation 13:13,14

"An _____ to the beast."

NOTE: Once again, in Revelation, an image is erected.

20. What are people asked to do to the image of the beast? Revelation 13:15

21. What will happen to those who refuse to worship the image of the beast? Revelation 13:15

"Cause them to be _____."

22. What other restrictions will be placed upon those who refuse to worship the beast and receive his mark? Revelation 13:16, 17

"That no one may _____ or _____ except one who has the mark."

NOTE: Economic restrictions and finally a death penalty are passed upon those who refuse to worship the image of the beast or receive the mark of the beast. Lessons 10 and 24 will clearly identify the beast and his mark, as well as the image to the beast. In this lesson, we can already see that the issues are identical to Daniel 3. In both chapters, people are commanded to worship an image, and are threatened with death, but they remain faithful to the commandments of God.

23. When the beast calls for people to worship Its image, whom does God ask them to worship? Revelation 14:7

14. How many men did Nebuchadnezzar see in the fire? Daniel 3:25

_____.

NOTE: Although three men were thrown into the fiery furnace, Nebuchadnezzar now saw four men.

15. Who was the fourth one in the fire with the three Hebrews? Daniel 3:25

The _____ of _____.

NOTE: What a beautiful truth! God did not free the three Hebrew youth from going through the fire, but He walked through the fire with them! That's the kind of God we have. We may undergo many trials in our lives, there may be many difficulties, but the assurance of Scripture is that the Son of God walks with us through the fire. In the last days, when God's people go through the terrible trials that will come, they can have the same assurance that the three Hebrews had and know that the Son of God will walk through the fire with them.

16. How did Nebuchadnezzar address Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego when he called them out of the fire? Daniel 3:26

"_____ of the Most High _____."

NOTE: This experience gave Nebuchadnezzar a tremendous revelation of the true God. God patiently worked to win Nebuchadnezzar to Himself. So God works to win every human heart.

17. After seeing this display of God's power, what decree did Nebuchadnezzar make? Daniel 3:27-30(859) [859].

That any people, nation, or language which speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap;

because there is _____ other _____ who can deliver like this."

NOTE: God must have smiled as Nebuchadnezzar made this decree. Surely He was happy that Nebuchadnezzar felt so strongly about Him, but Nebuchadnezzar had much to learn. God does not accept forced worship. Even if the government decrees that everyone should worship God, the only service acceptable to God is that which springs from a heart filled with love. God does not want people to worship Him because the government says so, but only because they have fallen in love with Him.

2. Who were invited to the dedication of the image? Daniel 3:2, 3

"The satraps, the _____, the _____, the _____, the _____, the _____, the _____, and all the _____ of the provinces."

NOTE: Most key leaders in the realm of Babylon were invited to the dedication of this statue. There had recently been a rebellion in Babylon and the king questioned the loyalty of his subjects. The dedication of the image would be an opportunity for everyone in the realm to pledge their loyalty to the government. Not to bow down would be considered treason. Perhaps there were other Jews present as well. But only three stood firm for God.

3. What were all these rulers to do when the music sounded? Daniel 3:3-5

"Fall down and _____ the gold image."

NOTE: Notice that false worship was the issue faced in Daniel 3. The issue was that of worshipping the image.

4. What penalty would be received by those who failed to worship the Image? Daniel 3:6

They "shall be cast immediately into the midst of a _____ fiery _____."

A REFUSAL TO WORSHIP FALSELY

5. What charge did the Chaldean make concerning certain Jews? Daniel 3:7-12

"They do _____ serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up."

NOTE: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego must have stood out very prominently when the entire crowd bowed down at the sound of the music. It would have been very easy to rationalize that they weren't really worshipping the image if they bowed down. This would have shown their loyalty to the king, but they knew that loyalty to God was involved. Therefore, they would not bow down

6. What commandment forbade false worship? Exodus 20:4-6

The _____ commandment: "You shall not make for yourself a _____ image.... You shall not _____"

down to them nor serve them".

NOTE: For the three Hebrews to bow down and worship the golden image would be disobedience to a commandment of God. Notice that the issues of worship and obedience to the commandments of God are both illustrated in this story. Remember that the focal point of Daniel is the last days. Later in this lesson, as we compare this chapter with the book of Revelation, we will see that the time will come in the last days when true worship will be forbidden. People will be commanded to worship contrary to God's commandments, but His people must always be obedient.

7. When Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were brought before King Nebuchadnezzar to answer the charges against them, how did he threaten them? Daniel 3:13-15

"You shall be cast immediately in the midst of a burning fiery _____."

NOTE: Nebuchadnezzar gave the three Hebrews a second chance. He could have had them thrown in at their first refusal to worship.

8. Did the three Hebrews need time to think it over? Daniel 3:16

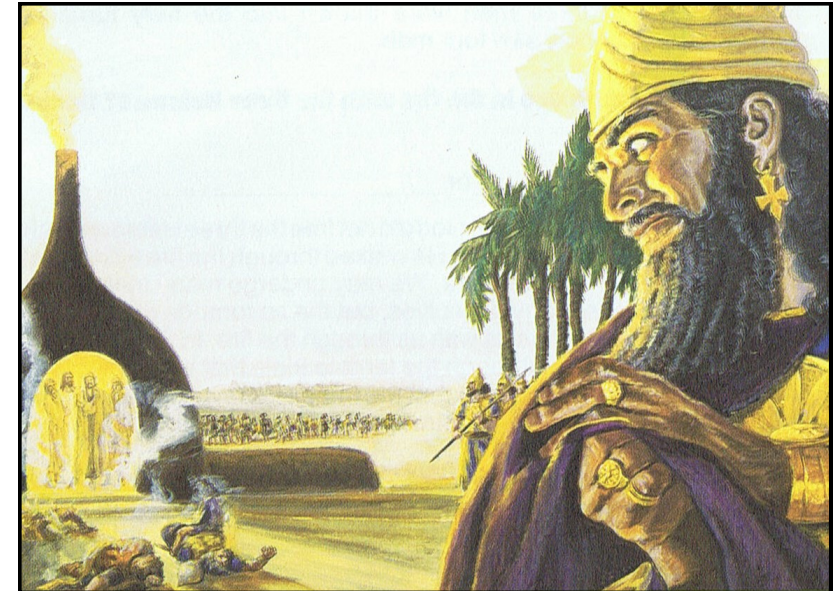
"We have _____ to answer you in this matter."

NOTE: This expression simply means that they did not need a long time to think about it. Before they came to the plain of Dura, they had made the decision that they would not yield, no matter how they were threatened. Nothing could intimidate them to worship falsely. Obedience to God was more important than a display of loyalty to the king that involved false worship.

9. How did the Hebrews respond to Nebuchadnezzar's offer of a second chance? Daniel 3:17, 18

"Our God whom we serve is able to _____ from the burning fiery furnace. ..But if not, . . . _____ do not serve your gods, nor will we _____ the gold image."

NOTE: What a tremendous testimony of faith! This is the key verse in the entire passage. If God delivered them, that would be fine; but even if He didn't, they would still serve Him. Their faithfulness to God did not depend upon their deliverance. Theirs was not a selfish obedience to God, but an obedience that sprang from a principle. So it will be with God's people in the last days. Whether God delivers them from persecution or even certain death is not the key factor. The only thing that really matters is that they love God and are obedient to Him.



THE FIERY FURNACE

10. How did Nebuchadnezzar respond to the Hebrews' defense? Daniel 3:19

He commanded that the furnace be heated seven _____ hotter.

11. What happened to the soldiers who threw Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego into the fiery furnace? Daniel 3:22

They were _____.

12. How were the three Hebrews thrown into the furnace? Daniel 3:23

They "fell down _____ into the midst of the burning fiery furnace".

13. When Nebuchadnezzar looked inside the furnace again, what did he see? Daniel 3:24, 25

They were _____, walking in the midst of the fire, and had no _____.

NOTE: When the Hebrews were thrown into the fiery furnace, the only things destroyed were the ropes that bound them. Rather than harming them, the fire loosed them.