

## A Practical Study of DANIEL

### PART I

#### SESSION #5: Daniel 3:1-12

##### TEXT:

v. 1 King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, ninety feet high and nine feet wide, and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon.

v. 2 He then summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the image he had set up.

v. 3 So the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials assembled for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and they stood before it.

v. 4 Then the herald loudly proclaimed, "This is what you are commanded to do, O peoples, nations and men of every language:

v. 5 As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up.

v. 6 Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace."

v. 7 Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp and all kinds of music, all the peoples, nations and men of every language fell down and worshiped the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

v. 8 At this time some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews.

v. 9 They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever!

v. 10 You have issued a decree, O king, that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music must fall down and worship the image of gold,

v. 11 and that whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace.

v. 12 But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, O king. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up."

## **INTRODUCTION:**

### **Republican or Democrat — Which Are You?**

A woman in a hot air balloon realized she was lost. She lowered altitude and spotted a man in a boat below. She shouted to him, “Excuse me, can you help me? I promised a friend I would meet him an hour ago, but I don’t know where I am!”

The man consulted his portable GPS and replied, “You’re in a hot air balloon approximately 30 feet above sea level. You are 31 degrees, 14.97 minutes north latitude and 100 degrees, 49.09 minutes west longitude.”

She rolled her eyes and said, “You must be a Republican.” “I am,” replied the man. “How did you guess?”

“Well,” answered the balloonist, “everything you told me is technically correct, but I have no idea what to make of your information, and I’m still lost. Frankly, you’ve not been much help to me.”

The man replied and responded, “You must be a Democrat.” “I am,” replied the balloonist. “How did you know?”

“Well,” said the man, “you don’t know where you are, or where you’re going. You’ve risen to where you are due to a large quantity of hot air. You made a promise that you have no idea how to keep, and you expect ME to solve your problems. You’re in EXACTLY the same position you were in before we met, but somehow, now it’s MY fault!”

**(Received via e-mail from Gary Darr, January 22, 2004)**

(If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat by John Ortberg) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright – John Ortberg, 2001.

Garrison Keillor tells a story, called “A Day in the Life of Clarence Bunsen,” about an older man who realizes the years have slipped away and his life has missed something. Clarence goes to see Father Emil at Our Lady of Perpetual Responsibility for some advice. Normally Clarence goes to the Lutheran church, but he wants a second opinion. When that doesn't help, he walks past his old school and climbs the hill overlooking Lake Wobegon, where he and his friends played as kids years ago.

While he is reflecting on his life, Clarence hears some kids coming up the path. For some strange reason he runs ahead of them and climbs an old tree he remembers from childhood. The kids stop right under his tree; they know he's around somewhere but don't think to look up. Clarence knew that if he dropped down on them or even yelled “Ha!” they would jump out of their shoes. He watches them, so full of excitement and life, and thinks to himself,

*I wish I could be like that. I just seem to go through life with my eyes closed and my ears shut. People talk to me, and I don't even hear them. Whole days go by, and I can't remember what happened. The woman I've lived with for thirty-six years, if you asked me to describe her, I'd have to stop and think about it. It's like I've lived half my life waiting for my life to begin, thinking it's somewhere off in the future, and now I'm thinking about death all the time. It's time to live, to wake up and do something.*

And he jumped and yelled, “Hayee!”

Oh, those boys *exploded* out of there, like birds. And he yelled, “Haah!” And then he said, “Ouch! Ouch!”

They came back to where he was sitting and asked, “You all right, Uncle Clarence?”

He replied, “Yes. But go down and tell Mrs. Bunsen to bring the car up to the gravel road. I'll meet her by the mailbox.”

He crawled a hundred yards over to the road. She picked him up and didn't ask what happened . . .

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(When the Cowboys Come to Town! by Stephen Bly) Winchester, ID: Bly Books. Copyright – Stephen Bly, 2000.

## WHEN THE COWBOYS COME TO TOWN!

When the cowboys come to town,  
and the stores board up real tight,  
And the local tough guys decide it's time  
to stay in for the night.

Spurs is hangin' from saddle horns  
on the nags tied to the rail.  
And the boys is feelin' mighty good  
hopin' not to land in jail.

Ever'one singin' loud as he can,  
though none of them's on tune.  
A few is dancin' in the streets  
and howlin' at the moon.

Finally when the bellies are full  
and the money's almost spent,  
With cowboys sittin' on the porch  
wonderin' where it all has went.

Some puncher will clear his throat  
and then a poem he'll recite.  
About a good horse he used to have,  
or a girl that don't treat him right.

It's a rhymin' poem from the heart,  
polished for quite some spell.  
Totally original, reflectin' his thoughts  
as far as anyone can tell.

Some write it when they're happy,  
sometimes it's way too sad.  
Once in a while a gem jumps out,  
most times it's jist plain bad.

It's all written in the head, you know.  
Ain't no tablet in the saddle.  
Don't got time to pontificate much,  
when you're punchin' ornery cattle.

The critics say it ain't no good,  
with educated noses they look down.  
Dismissin' it was a flip of the wrist,  
that is, until the cowboys come to town!

Oh, when the cowboys come to town,  
why it's such a fine sight to see.  
Make sure you stay clear 'til the end  
and hear that cowboy poetry.

p. 3

(Write 'em Cowboy! by Peggy Godfrey) Lake City, CO: Peter Carlyle Elliot Publishing. Copyright – Peggy Godfrey, 1993.

## I Tried

Seven barely-yearlin' bulls  
 Was chasin' Punkin' 'round  
 She didn't "take" on her second calf  
 I'd have to haul her to town.

Ralph and Vogal worried  
 'Bout ol' Punkin's sorry plight  
 She'd stand chin-deep in a muddy ditch  
 Watchin' the yearlin's fight.

I gathered my horse and trailer  
 To see what I could do  
 'Bout getting' her moved to a home corral  
 Away from that seven-bull zoo.

Between ol' Ralph and Vogal  
 Lay a hundred 'n fifty years  
 Of cowboy life and ranchin'—  
 Respected among their peers.

The two of them sat in the truck  
 Watchin' this girlie show  
 While Horse and I crawled in the mud  
 Persuadin' that cow to go.

There's lots of women cowboys  
 Scattered out across the West  
 Darn few of us have ever caught  
 A glimpse of all the rest.

Sometimes I get to "prove myself"  
 And earn my reputation  
 By performin' ranchin' duties  
 For this older generation.

I knew that I had ridden well  
 My efforts they'd endorse  
 Those two old codgers sat there  
 Finally one said, "Damn good horse."

(This Dog'll Really Hunt: An Entertaining and Informative Texas Dictionary by Wallace O. Chariton) Plano, TX: Republic of Texas Press. Copyright – Wallace O. Chariton, 1999.

**Dairy farmer:** owes everything he has to udders (sorry, I just couldn't resist)  
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**Dimwit:**

1. his coil ain't wrapped too tight
2. she took an umbrella to a baby shower
3. would only be charged half price by a mind reader
4. only time he really knows where he is going is when he takes castor oil
5. has the mental range of a windshield wiper
6. you could pull a slow one on him
7. his roof ain't nailed on too tight (or is short a few shingles)
8. ain't no light on in his attic
9. if brains were dynamite he couldn't blow his nose
10. if he knew half of what he thinks he knows he'd be dangerous
11. undertakes vast projects with half vast ideas
12. has to be watered twice a week

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**Divorce:**

1. separate the dasher from the churn
2. show your mate to the gate
3. split the blanket
4. past tense of marriage
5. matrimonial recycling
6. holy deadlock

**Divorced couple:** they took the cure

**Divorced man:**

1. a gone gander that still has to supply corn to the goose
2. deringed himself

**Divorced woman:**

1. a grass widow
2. found out the knot he tied was slipknot
3. drinks doubles but sleeps single
4. born again virgin
5. only support she gets is from her panty hose

pp. 82-83

**(The Book of Cowboy Wisdom: Common Sense and Uncommon Genius From the World of Cowboys compiled and edited by Criswell Freeman) Nashville, TN: Walnut Grove Press. Copyright – Walnut Grove Press, 1997.**

**Longhorns could walk the roughest ground,  
cross the widest deserts, climb the highest  
mountains, swim the wildest rivers, fight off  
the fiercest bands of wolves, endure hunger,  
cold, thirst, and punishment as few beasts  
of the earth have ever shown themselves  
capable of enduring.**

*J. Frank Dobie*

p. 96

**Dad taught me that if  
you think like a cow,  
you won't need  
your rope much.**

*Georgie Sicking*

p. 97

**We felt the beat of hardy life in our veins:  
the glory of work and the joy of living.**

*Theodore Roosevelt*

**The tougher the fight, the more important  
the mental attitude.**

*Michael Landon*

p. 100

In our previous episodes in the life of Daniel, we have had **FOUR TIMES TOGETHER.**

#### **EPISODE #1:**

In 605 B.C. they were deported to Babylon and enrolled in an intensive program to learn the literature and language of the Babylonians. After their three year course, they graduated with flying colors.

#### **EPISODE #2:**

Nebuchadnezzar the king had a dream that troubled him. The brain-trust of Babylon could not give him the dream nor interpret it. He made a decree in anger to execute all the wise men of Babylon. This effected Daniel and his three friends even though they were recent graduates.

#### **EPISODE #3:**

When the time came to execute the men, Daniel asked for some time. As a result of that, he prayed, "God reveal not only the dream but the interpretation thereof." This episode ends with a beautiful statement of praise to the God who has all wisdom and all power.

#### **EPISODE #4:**

Daniel presents the dream and the interpretation thereof before Nebuchadnezzar. As a result of that, he is elevated to a very high position in the Babylonian government and his three friends were also elevated to positions of authority.

We now come to **EPISODE #5.**

We are turning to chapter 3 and we will be looking at verses 1-12.

Gangel titles this section of the Book of Daniel:

### Nebuchadnezzar's Ragtime Band

p. 71

He then has this statement by Robert Louis Stevenson that captures the thought of this third chapter:

**“You cannot run from a weakness;  
you must sometime fight it out or perish;  
and if that be so, why not now and where you stand?”**

Robert Louis Stevenson

p. 72

He then summarizes everything in a nutshell when he says:

*When God chooses to use people, he often puts them through difficult, frustrating, and life-threatening experiences to burn the dross from their lives and refine their character.*

p. 72

**1 Peter 4:12, 13**

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.

**Ironside titles this chapter and then says:**

### THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION—IN TYPE

In that which now claims our attention we shall see how little Nebuchadnezzar had profited by the revelation God had made to him. We have already noticed that when Daniel explained the meaning of the dream, Nebuchadnezzar fell down before the prophet and did him homage. He had many nice things to say to him, and he gave him great rewards; but he was not brought to repentance or humbled in self-judgment before the God who had thus manifested His omniscient power. The king could appreciate the wisdom of Daniel; but he had no heart for the God who had inspired His servant.

p. 45

**J. Vernon McGee says:**

In the first chapter of Daniel heathen customs were judged; in the second chapter heathen philosophy was judged; and in the third chapter heathen pride is judged.

p. 543

**Walvoord says:**

THE ACCOUNT OF THE GOLDEN IMAGE was erected on the plain of Dura records Nebuchadnezzar's reaction to the revelation of chapter 2 in which he was symbolized by the head of gold. The astounding courage and deliverance of Daniel's companions, who refused to worship the image, has inspired the people of God in similar times of trial.

p. 79

**Longman says:**

THE EPISODE BEGINS with the simple statement that Nebuchadnezzar built a golden image on the plain of Dura. The author of Daniel does not inform us whether the image was a god or the king himself? In one sense, this distinction does not matter. Whether deity or the divinized king, the command was to worship and bow down to this statue, to treat it or what it represented as the most important power in the universe. Such a command was impossible for a faithful follower of the true God to obey, and that is the point of the text.

p. 97

**Leupold titles this section:**

**The Three Men in the Fiery Furnace:  
The World Power Cannot Imperil the Safety  
of God's Saints**

p. 132

**He then says:**

The second chapter showed the final outcome of the growth and the success of the world power—the world power must crumble. Yet while its power lasts, must the kingdoms of this world not be feared by God's own because of the harm these enemies can and will do to God's saints? This chapter gives the answer, "No"; He that is with us is greater than he that is with them.

p. 132

**He then says finally:**

Our chapter is, therefore, a straightforward account of a miraculous deliverance that is fully on a par with all the rest of Holy Writ as to form and content and is approved by the New Testament allusion to it, Heb. 11:34: "quenched the power of fire."

p. 134

**Miller says:**

No specific time is given for this incident, and some scholars maintain that it took place long after the events of chap. 2. Yet the position of the chapter in the book, the probability that the king received the idea for the image from the dream in chap. 2, and the likelihood that the image was constructed to test the loyalty of the king's officials to his new administration all appear to support a time nearer the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar's reign.  
p. 107

**He says further:**

Daniel was not present on this occasion, and a number of explanations for his absence have been offered. Lacocque seems to be on the right course in suggesting that 2:49 was intended by the author to explain Daniel's absence in chap. 3. This passage states, "Moreover, at Daniel's request the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego administrators over the province of Babylon, while Daniel himself remained at the royal court" (2:49). Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego administered the affairs of the province, but Daniel's responsibilities required his presence at the palace. With the king and other important officials absent, someone was needed to govern in the city. Thus Daniel was unable to leave Babylon and travel to the plain of Dura for this event. His absence may also have been due to other factors, but it is certain that Daniel would never have bowed to the image.  
p. 108

From a **PROPHETIC POINT OF VIEW**, what has happened with the coming of Nebuchadnezzar to take Judah in exile to Babylon is the beginning of the **TIMES OF THE GENTILES**.

**Swindoll, Walvoord and Pentecost say:**

The "times of the Gentiles" is that period in Israel's history when no Davidic descendant is ruling on David's throne over David's people in the city of Jerusalem. It began with Nebuchadnezzar and it will continue until the return of Christ, when Christ will liberate Israel from her Gentile occupiers.  
pp. 86-87

**Boice titles this chapter:****Faith in the Furnace**

p. 41

**Phillips & Vines title these first twelve verses:****A. They Would Not Bow (3:1-12)**

In this chapter we have the familiar account of the three Hebrew young men who were cast into a fiery furnace because they would not worship the image of gold which the king had erected. This passage not only pulsates with drama but is a thrilling account of courage and faith. Here we have three “profiles in courage.” These young men are immortalized in the halls of the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11. It says, “Through faith [they] . . . quenched the violence of fire.” In Daniel 2, Nebuchadnezzar had acknowledged that the God of heaven is the true God. He seemed to have taken a step in the direction of the Lord, but now we discover that Nebuchadnezzar’s faith was short-lived. In repudiation of everything God had revealed to him, he erected this image of gold in honor of himself.

Daniel 3 is a test of the believer’s worship. We discover here what it means to take a stand for the Lord and refuse to compromise with the gods of this world.

p. 49

**Feinberg says:**

The next four chapters of the book of Daniel are in sharp contrast to the first two. Whereas chapter 2 was distinctly prophetic in character, chapters 3 through 6 appear to be entirely historical in nature. We should bear in mind, however, that even historical passages of the Word of God can have a deeper meaning than meets the eye.

Thus, in Daniel 3-6, although the content of these chapters is historical, their significance is prophetic.

p. 43

Campbell titles the chapter and then says:

### **Bow or Burn!**

A country preacher determined to use the stirring story of this chapter as an illustration in his Sunday sermon. To his dismay he found that he had difficulty remembering the names of the three Hebrew youths, so he wrote them on a card which he inserted in the inside pocket of his suitcoat. At the appropriate time in his message he paused, “Now you remember the story of the three Hebrew children . . .” and pulling his coat open he continued, “Hart, Shaffner & Marx!” Hebrew children no doubt, but the wrong ones!

While the names may be forgotten easily, the incident described in this chapter cannot. In fact, it is one of the most familiar of Bible stories along with the narrative of Daniel’s brief incarceration in the lions’ den.

The central characters of the chapter are Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Daniel is not included, and the three friends do not appear in the book after this event. In chapter 1 they are portrayed, with Daniel, as young men of strong convictions. That thought is developed as they, apart from Daniel, are subjected to similar pressures to compromise their convictions and conform to a pagan culture and religion. Their story is told with grand simplicity: they are tested, charged, arraigned, convicted, preserved, and honored.

p. 29

Wiersbe titles the chapter and then goes on to say:

### ***Faith and the Fiery Trail***

The devil tempts us to *destroy* our faith, but God tests us to *develop* our faith, because a faith that can’t be tested can’t be trusted. False faith withers in times of trial, but true faith takes deeper root, grows, and brings glory to God. This explains why God permitted the three Hebrew men to be tested and then thrown into the fiery furnace. The Apostle Peter must have been well acquainted with the Book of Daniel because he used the metaphor of the “fiery trial” when he warned his readers of the persecutions about to come to the church (1 Peter 1:7; 4:12).

The experience of these three men helps us examine our own faith and determine whether we have the kind of authentic faith that can be tested and bring glory to God.

p. 37

**Wiersbe says further:**

We don't know how much time elapsed between the night Nebuchadnezzar dreamed about the metallic image (Dan. 2) and the day he commanded the people to fall down before the golden image that he had made. Some students believe that the event described in Daniel 3 might have occurred twenty years after the promotion of Daniel and his friends, about the time Jerusalem was finally destroyed (586 B.C.).  
pp. 37-38

***The Bible Knowledge Commentary* titles chapter 3:**

*The image of Nebuchadnezzar (chap. 3)*

THE ERECTION OF THE IMAGE (3:1-7)  
p. 1337

**Blair says:**

Here is another proof of the fact that God never forsakes those who make Him supreme in their lives.  
p. 55

**Fyall titles the chapter:**

p. 46

**With God in the flames**

Wiersbe summarizes Daniel 3 by saying:

This event involves three kinds of people, all of whom are still in our world.

**Conformers** (1-7). Nebuchadnezzar was not content to be the “head of gold” (2:38); he wanted to be represented by a whole image of gold! The people were happy to conform to his desires as long as he spared their lives and gave them what they needed.

**Informers** (8-12). These were some of the Chaldeans whose lives Daniel and his friends had saved. Unsaved people do not always appreciate what believers do for them. These men wanted only to win the king’s favor and get the high offices he had given to the three Jews (2:49).

p. 561

He speaks finally of the transformers in verses 13-30—Romans 12:1, 2 which we will consider in our next episode.

Gaebelein says:

Nebuchadnezzar had heard from Daniel’s lips, “Thou art this head of gold.” The poor king became puffed up and in the pride of his heart attempted to unify the religious worship of his vast empire. He had an immense statue of gold made, the image of a man, no doubt, and he set it up in the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. It was idolatry and the deification of man. Idolatry and the deification of the man are then the first moral characteristics mentioned which are to prevail during the times of the Gentiles. The times of the Gentiles produce a religion, which is opposed to the God of heaven.

p. 42

Chafer says:

Daniel sees the entire period of the “times of the Gentiles” extending from the captivity, through 483 years to the cross, and on beyond to the dateless coming of the “Ancient of Days” and the setting up of a kingdom by the God of Heaven which shall never be destroyed. “It shall break in pieces and consume all other kingdoms and it shall stand for ever” . . .

p. 109

**Feinberg, speaking of the Davidic covenant, says:**

Every word of the covenant or contract is vital. Three outstanding features mark the covenant. First of all, it is promised of God. No human agency thought out this particular plan and no human hand instituted it. God was the moving Personality here.

Second, the throne is an unconditional gift. Nowhere in the wording of the promise is there a condition attached to the establishment of Davidic sovereignty or the Davidic throne. There is a warning that sin in David's line would be visited with punishment, but it would not impair the throne rights to David and his descendants. Third, it is eternal in duration. All human thrones are for a time. They arise in time and will pass in the course of time. This throne alone is of eternal duration. It will have no end; it will go on into eternity.

p. 192

**Goldingay titles chapter 3:**

**God Vindicates His Power Where Three  
Jews Choose Burning Rather Than  
Apostasy (3:1-30)**

p. 63

**Walvoord says:**

In response to the revelation in Daniel 2 that Nebuchadnezzar would be the head of gold, Nebuchadnezzar ordered the building of an image entirely of gold. No doubt, this served to reflect his thinking that he did not want anyone to succeed him.

Strictly speaking, Daniel 3 is not prophecy as it does not anticipate a specific future, but the events of the chapter to some extent support the general idea of God restoring and saving His people.

As recorded in Daniel 3, Nebuchadnezzar set up an image near Babylon that was plated with gold, 90 feet high and 9 feet wide. The image itself was probably built on a platform which raised its height. At the sound of the trumpet everyone was commanded to bow down to the image (vv. 4-6). In the Babylonian religion the power of the emperor was part of their worship of the Babylonian gods, and the two concepts were intertwined.

While the whole multitude bowed down at the sound of the music, Daniel's three companions, whose Babylonian names were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, stood erect and did not bow down to the image. The king's followers noted this and report it to Nebuchadnezzar.  
pp. 219-20

**Dyer helps us when he says:**

IF WE READ THE BIBLE, WE KNOW THAT BABYLON fell to the invading Medo-Persians. If we read the newspapers, we know that Saddam Hussein is trying to restore the glory of ancient Babylon. But whatever happened to Babylon during the intervening twenty-five hundred years? Did the city of man continue its war against the city of God? Or was it completely destroyed, apparently never to rise again?

**What Happened to Babylon?**

If our tale of two cities ended when Judah fell, it would seem as though the city of man had triumphed over the city of God. But the same prideful rebellion that caused confusion at Babel also brought about the fall of Babylon's kings. Babylon was like a haughty princess, tossing her head and proclaiming, "I did it my way."

Babylon occupied the world's center stage for only about two generations. The city rose to fame in 612 B.C. when Babylonian armies destroyed the city of Ninevah, and Babylon supplanted Assyria as the dominant power in the Middle East. Less than a century later, in 539 B.C., Babylon was conquered by Medo-Persia and gradually slipped back into obscurity.  
pp. 121-2

**Jeremiah says:**

Nebuchadnezzar was a vocal witness of his faith in the Lord, but when we hear about him in the third chapter of Daniel, we're not too impressed. According to the Septuagint's (the oldest Greek version of the Old Testament) account of this passage, there were somewhere between sixteen and twenty years between the end of chapter two and the beginning of chapter three. So Nebuchadnezzar had plenty of time to rethink his impulsive commitment to the Lord and revive his own egomania.

p. 72

**Dyer helps us to become contemporary in our prophetic views when he gives a little section on the:****LESSONS FROM SEPTEMBER 11**

I see four lessons that have pushed their way to the forefront since September 11. Each is unique, yet they are all interwoven. Each is not terribly significant when seen in isolation, but viewed together they paint a picture that is remarkably similar to a portrait painted in God's Word of the time that precedes Christ's return to earth.

*Lesson 1: People Adapt to Changing Realities*

The first lesson is that people quickly adapt to new realities when their present reality is shattered. A dramatic example of this occurred in Amherst, Massachusetts. On Monday evening, September 10, the Select Board of Amherst voted four to one to prevent twenty-nine American flags from flying downtown for an extended period of time. They limited the time when the flags could be flown to six holiday periods. Why? Because many in this politically correct, liberal college town felt that flying the flag made the town look "too American." A professor from the University of Massachusetts addressed the Select Board and declared that, "The flag is a symbol of tyranny and fear and destruction and terrorism."

The next day the terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C., took place. As the horror of those attacks unfolded, a group of individuals, including some from the Amherst Department of Public Works, located the flags, took them downtown, and reattached them to the light poles. The *Daily Hampshire Gazette* quoted one of the men who had been involved in the meeting the evening of September 10 . . . and who had helped put the flags back up. He said, "It's strange how one day can make a difference." What was politically correct in Amherst on September 10 was politically incorrect the next day. Amazing, isn't it? Events can dramatically

change over the course of a single day . . . and people will adapt to these new realities.

*Lesson 2: People Will Unite to Face a Common Threat*

The second lesson that surfaced since September 11 is that people will unite to face a common fear or a common foe. Before September 11, flags were out of fashion; after September 11, they were out of stock because so many people wanted to purchase them to show their pride in the United States. Red, white, and blue became the colors of choice . . . even for M&M candy! “God Bless America” and “The Star Spangled Banner” took on new meaning as they rang out across the steps of the Capitol . . . and at sporting events and patriotic gatherings across the country. A nation that was fractured and divided following the presidential election became, at least on the surface, very united once again. Things can change very rapidly.

*Lesson 3: People Will Give Up Freedom to Gain Security*

A third lesson that has surfaced since September 11 is that people will give up freedom to gain security. Congress enacted legislation following the terrorist attacks to enhance security and expand the government’s ability to root out terrorists. But those same laws could be used against citizens who are not terrorists. Anyone who had flown in an airplane since September 11 has experienced longer lines, the presence of armed military personnel, and the inconvenience of random searches. Yet few complain, because these restrictions are seen as the only way to guarantee passenger safety. Americans demand their freedom until their personal safety is threatened. And then, for the sake of security, most will willingly give up some of their freedom.

*Lesson 4: People Want Strong Leaders in Times of Crisis*

The fourth lesson to surface since September 11 is that people want—and will follow—a strong leader in times of crisis. On November 12, 2001, an article appeared in the *Chicago Tribune* with detailed information on who really won the election for president in Florida . . . the previous November! Amazingly, few even cared. The issue that had gripped America for months—and that had cast a shadow over the first eight months of George Bush’s presidency—no longer mattered. After September 11 America united solidly behind its president. In times of crisis people want, and will follow, a leader who stands up and takes responsibility; and President Bush rose to that challenge.

pp. 13-16

Jeremiah makes reference to one of Charles Wesley's hymns:

Charles Wesley took Isaiah's prayer and John's statement and wrote a great hymn that is seldom sung in our churches today.

Lo, He comes with clouds descending,  
 Once for favored sinners slain;  
 Thousand thousand saints attending,  
 Swell the triumph of his train.  
 Alleluia! Alleluia!  
 God appears on earth to reign.

Now redemption, long expected,  
 See in solemn pomp appear.  
 All His saints by men rejected,  
 Now shall meet Him in the air:  
 Alleluia! Alleluia!  
 See the day of God appear.

Yea, Amen! let us all adore Thee,  
 High on Thine eternal throne;  
 Saviour, take the pow'r and glory,  
 Claim the kingdom for Thine own:  
 O, come quickly, O come quickly!  
 Everlasting God, come down.

p. 69

v. 1 King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, ninety feet high and nine feet wide, and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon.

Peterson paraphrases verse 1:

King Nebuchadnezzar built a gold statue, ninety feet high and nine feet thick. He set it up on the Dura plain in the province of Babylon.  
p. 1585

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says:

The effect of the revelation given to **Nebuchadnezzar** about his significant role in Gentile history (2:37-38) is discerned from his response in the events recorded in chapter 3. Identified as the head of gold (2:38), Nebuchadnezzar then caused **an image of gold** to be erected! (3:1) When he erected this image is not known. It had to follow the events recorded in chapter 2 because Daniel's three companions were in a position of authority (3:12) to which they had been appointed (2:49).  
p. 1337

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says further:

The Septuagint adds in 3:1 that this event occurred in Nebuchadnezzar's 18<sup>th</sup> year (587), one year before the fall of Jerusalem (cf. 2 Kings 25:8). Since the final destruction of Jerusalem was the culmination of Nebuchadnezzar's conquests, that inference may well be true. However, a consideration of Daniel 3 seems to indicate that the events recorded there took place nearer the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar's long reign. The events associated with the king's erecting the image suggest that he wanted to unify his empire and consolidate his authority as ruler. The image was to become the unifying center of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom.  
p. 1337

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says still further:

The Aramaic word translated “image” . . . is related to the Hebrew word for image . . . A general term, it allows for the image to have been in the human form (perhaps like the statue the king saw in his dream), though it does not require it. Perhaps sometime earlier Nebuchadnezzar had seen an Egyptian obelisk, on which were recorded exploits of one of the pharaohs, and wanted to record his own conquests that way. The dimensions of the image would be fitting for an obelisk, for it was **90 feet high** (about the height of a present-day eight-story building) and only **9 feet wide**. This 10-to-1 ratio of height to width does not fit an image in human form, for it would be too slender. However, the Babylonians often distorted the human figure in constructing their images. Or perhaps the image was in proper human proportions but was set on a pedestal to make it more imposing.

Regardless of the image’s form, it was an awesome sight (cf. 2:31), both because of its height and because of the gold of which it was constructed. The size and weight of the image seem to preclude that the image was of solid gold. It must have been overlaid with gold. Without doubt the use of gold in this image was inspired by Daniel’s interpretation of the king’s dream (2:32, 38).

The image was **set up . . . on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon**. Dura was a common name in Mesopotamia for any place that was enclosed by mountains or a wall. “The province of Babylon” (cf. 2:48) seems to require a location close to the city of Babylon itself from which Nebuchadnezzar ruled his kingdom. Archeologists have uncovered a large square made of brick some six miles southeast of Babylon, which may have been the base for this image. Since this base is in the center of a wide plain, the image’s height would have been impressive. Also its proximity to Babylon would have served as a suitable rallying point for the king’s officials. pp. 1337-8

**Daniel 2:37, 38**

You, O king, are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory; in your hands he has placed mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. You are that head of gold.

**Daniel 2:49**

Moreover, at Daniel's request the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego administrators over the province of Babylon, while Daniel himself remained at the royal court.

**Gowan says:**

Having been told in verse 1 that king Nebuchadnezzar made the image, we are then reminded five times in the first seven verses that it is the statue that *he* had set up. We are not told what it represented; so opinions differ as to whether it was his image or that of a god.  
p. 65

**Gaebelein says:**

He had an immense statue of gold made, the image of a man, no doubt, and he set it up in the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. It was idolatry and the deification of man. Idolatry and the deification of man are then the first moral characteristics mentioned which are to prevail during the times of the Gentiles. The times of the Gentiles produce a religion which is opposed to the God of heaven. The image was sixty cubits high and six broad. Seven is the divine number and six is the number of man. Sixty cubits and six reminds us of that familiar passage in the Book of Revelation, where we have the number of a man given, that mysterious number "Six hundred three-score and six," that is 666. The number image then represents man, but the climax of man was not yet reached. However, the beginning foreshadows the end of the times of the Gentiles. That end is described in chapter [13] of Revelation.  
pp. 16-17

**Revelation 13:18**

Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.

**Berrigan says:**

The statue, we are informed straight-faced, is of enormous size. It is also badly, even hallucinatorially proportioned: “ninety feet by nine.” Is there a conscious irony here? Does the royal pomposity not see how this form appears as the bizarre, larger-than-life sign of a demented self-regard, a morally grotesque ego?

It may fairly be taken, though left unmentioned, that the image operates on many levels. It is an image of a god otherwise unknown, not even named. It is also, as suggested above, an image of the king himself.

p. 55

**Showers says:**

Sometime after Daniel had interpreted the king’s dream, Nebuchadnezzar had a huge image made on the plain of Dura. The image probably was human in form. It stood approximately ninety feet high and was nine feet wide. No doubt the height included a large base on which the image stood. Years ago an archaeologist named Oppert discovered large mounds called the mounds of Dura some twelve miles south, southeast of Hillah. One mound was a brick structure forty-five feet long on each side and twenty feet high. Oppert claimed that it had the appearance of a pedestal of a huge image—possibly the image of Daniel 3.

Nebuchadnezzar probably built this image to represent the world power that he had built and to honor the Babylonian gods whom he thought had given him his power. No doubt he got the idea for his image from the image in the dream of chapter 2. However, whereas only the head of the image in the dream was made of gold, Nebuchadnezzar had this image made entirely of gold. This was an expression of rebellion against God’s revelation. Through this image of gold the king was saying: “I don’t care what the God of heaven has said. My kingdom of Babylon will not fall to another Gentile kingdom. It will rule throughout the times of the Gentiles.”

pp. 29-30

**Haskell says:**

So he made an image of gold, patterning it as closely as possible after the image revealed to him in his dream, at the same time gratifying his own pride, for the entire figure was gold. There was no trace of the other kingdoms which were represented by the silver, the brass, the iron, and the clay in the dream. On the plain of Dura it stood, rising at least one hundred feet above the surrounding country, and visible for miles in every direction.  
pp. 39-40

**Lange says:**

The Heb. text does not state *when* the image was made. According to the Septuagint and Theodotion, who are followed by the Syriac hexaplar version, it was prepared . . . hence at about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem . . .  
p. 91

**He says further:**

The impression of Jehovah's power and greatness which he had formerly received in consequence of Daniel's interpretation of his dream, appears therefore to have been long obliterated.  
p. 91

**Keil & Delitzsch say that the image that it:**

. . . is properly *an image in human likeness* . . . and excludes the idea of a mere pillar or an obelisk, for which . . . would have been the appropriate word. Yet from the use of the word . . . it is not by any means to be concluded that the image was in all respects perfectly in human form. As to the upper part—the head, countenance, arms, breast—it may have been in the form of the man, and the lower part may have been formed like a pillar. This would be altogether in accordance with the Babylonian art, which delighted in grotesque, gigantic forms . . . The measure, in height threescore cubits, in breadth six cubits, is easily explained, since in the human figure the length is to be breadth in the proportion of about six to one.  
p. 118

**Smith says:**

There is a conjecture extant that this image had some reference to the dream of the king as described in the previous chapter, it having been erected only twenty-three years subsequently, according to the marginal chronology. In that dream the head was of gold, representing Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom. That was succeeded by metals of inferior quality, denoting a succession of kingdoms. Nebuchadnezzar was doubtless quite gratified that his kingdom should be represented by the gold; but that it should never be succeeded by another kingdom was not so pleasing. Hence, instead of having simply the head of his image of gold, he made it all of gold, to denote that the gold of the head should extend through the entire image; or, in other words, that his kingdom should not give way to another kingdom, but be perpetual.

p. 92

**Patrick & Lowth say:**

*Nebuchadnezzar—made an image* This image was set up probably in honour of Bel, whom Nebuchadnezzar worshipped as his tutelary deity . . .

p. 649

**Campbell says:**

The image was erected in the “plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon” (3:1). The word *Dura* is still common in the Mesopotamian region and simply means “walled place.” Just six miles south of ancient Babylon is a place called by this name where archeologists have identified a large brick construction, 45 feet square and 20 feet high, as the base or pedestal for the image.

The dimensions of the image are impressive. It was 60 cubits (90 feet) high (the famed Colossus of Rhodes was 70 cubits high). The breadth of the image was six cubits (nine feet). While such proportions would yield a rather grotesque figure, that may well have been the original intent.

p. 30

**Campbell says further:**

Impressed at first with the magnitude and scope of what Daniel revealed, the king was content. But as he thought about the inferior kingdoms which were to succeed his own, he reacted vigorously. One writer reconstructs the scene: “In the next 30 days, while the construction of the golden image was in progress, the evil spirit of pride and rebellion in the heart of Nebuchadnezzar seemed to grow apace. More and more obsessed did he become with the determination not only to exalt himself but even to deify himself. The image was to be at the same time an object of worship and a symbolical declaration of the perpetuity of the kingdom of Babylon and a denial of the word that had come from the Revealer of secrets that “another kingdom shall arise after thee” . . .  
pp. 30-31

**Feinberg says:**

In chapter 2, Nebuchadnezzar had worshiped the wisdom of God, as it had been revealed through Daniel. However, he did not profit from the experience as much as he could have, for he failed to repent. Instead, as this chapter opens we find that he has instituted the grossest form of idolatry, and on a grand scale.  
p. 44

**He says further:**

The image was doubtless one of Nebuchadnezzar himself. Since Daniel had told the king that, in the vision of the great statue, he was represented by the head of gold, Nebuchadnezzar had his statue made entirely of gold so as to boast of the splendor of his empire. In this way he turned his God-given authority to exalting himself and to insulting the God who made him.  
p. 44

**Phillips & Vines say:**

a. *Deification of Nebuchadnezzar.* Nebuchadnezzar was an able general who reigned forty years and never lost a battle. Now, God said to him through Daniel that he was the golden head of the image he had seen in his dream. Like so many world rulers, he was not satisfied to be just the head. He wanted to be the entire image. Nebuchadnezzar could have claimed: “*Mine* is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever.”

So, out on the plain of Dura, away from the gods of the city and the temples dedicated to other gods, Nebuchadnezzar constructed this huge image to himself. It was a tangible contradiction of what God had revealed to him—that he would have a magnificent kingdom, but it would pass away and be replaced by other empires. Nebuchadnezzar made the common mistake of thinking he could go contrary to God’s word. He had the idea he could mandate history for himself. So the image seems to have been constructed as an act of deification of Nebuchadnezzar.

pp. 49-50

**They say further:**

In the construction of this image, however, even unknown to the king and the builders, there is a revelation by God of man’s total failure. The image had the number six stamped upon it. It was sixty cubits high and six cubits wide. The number six in the Bible is the number of man. It was on the sixth day that God created man. Six is the number of man’s failure. Man never quite gets there. Six comes short of seven, the number of divine perfection. Man is always a little bit short.

The image in the Old Testament is a preview of one revealed in the New Testament. Revelation 13 predicts that at the end time the antichrist will construct an image. It will be an image to Mr. Trinity of Failure himself, the man whose mystical number is 666.

p. 50

**Boice says:**

As we read this interpretation it does not seem to be at all threatening. Kingdoms do succeed other kingdoms, and (we believe) the kingdom of Christ will surpass them all.

But this is not the way Nebuchadnezzar must have seen it. After Daniel had revealed the dream and its meaning to Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar praised Daniel's God, saying, "Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery" (Dan. 2:47). But when he got to thinking about it later, Nebuchadnezzar was not at all pleased. He must have said to himself, "Wouldn't it be nice if more of that statue were gold than just the head? The head represents me, and I'm glad that I'm the head and not a toe, for example. But it would really be nice if I were not just the head but the whole statue. Why should my kingdom be succeeded by other kingdoms? Why shouldn't this great Babylon that I have build last forever?" So Nebuchadnezzar built a statue that represented his will for the future. It was *all* of gold. In this way he defied God and said in effect, "I will not allow the God of Daniel to set my kingdom aside. My rule will endure."

At this point we begin to understand why this is not a humorous story and why it is actually another chapter in what we have already seen to be the theme of this book: Whose god is God? Who rules history? It is why this matter of bowing down to the statue was more than just a question of bowing down or not bowing down to an idol—though it certainly was that. It was a matter of bowing before the will or rebelling against the will of God.  
pp. 42-43

**Miller says:**

Archer suggests that Nebuchadnezzar used gold in constructing this image because the golden head of the dream statue had represented him.  
p. 109

**He then says further:**

Large statues constructed by kings of ancient times were not uncommon. For example, the Great Sphinx in Egypt (240 ft. long by 66 ft. high) with its lion body and human head was constructed about 2500 B.C. and still casts its sightless glare over the desert sands. Rameses II and other pharaohs built large statues of themselves and placed them throughout Egypt. Additional examples of huge statues are the Colossus of Rhodes (ca. 300 B.C.), which stood 105 feet tall, and the great Statue of Zeus (forty ft. high) at Olympia, Greece (fifth century B.C.). According to the Greek historian Herodotus, there was a statue of Bel (Marduk) in Babylon (at least as early as the time of Cyrus) made of solid gold that stood eighteen feet high. With all of the wealth and manpower available to him, Nebuchadnezzar was fully able to construct the image described here.  
p. 109

**Miller, speaking of the base, continues by saying:**

Evidence for such a base may have been discovered by the French archaeologist Oppert, who located the remains of a brick structure (ca. forty-five ft. square and twenty ft. high) twelve miles southwest of Hillah (about four miles south of ancient Babylon), which he believed formed the pedestal of this colossal image. A base probably was involved, although it also is possible that the statue was deliberately given a grotesque appearance in order to frighten and intimidate Nebuchadnezzar's subjects.  
p. 110

**Leupold says:**

The question arises very naturally, “What did this image represent?” Suppositions range from Nebuchadnezzar himself or one of his gods, particularly Bel or Marduk, to the symbol of the world power or “the symbol of allegiance to the empire.” Though much may be said for each of these suggestions, we feel that the second last has most in its favor—“the symbol of the world power established by Nebuchadnezzar” (*Keil*).  
p. 135

**He says further:**

The fact that the image was made of gold may, indeed, have been the result of a remembrance on the king’s part of what his own dream image had conveyed (2:36): “thou art the head of gold.” We are at once confronted with the question: “Had Nebuchadnezzar forgotten the rest of the revelation that chapter two reports, in particular the claims of the true God as they had come home to him as a result of Daniel’s interpretation?”  
p. 135

**He says finally:**

This leads the majority of commentators to assume that the term . . . is elastic enough to allow for an image that was provided with a proportionately tall pedestal. Many suggest 24 cubits of pedestal and 36 cubits of image proper in order to secure a human figure atop the pedestal in the proportion of 6:1.  
pp. 136-7

**Walvoord says:**

The erection of the golden image by Nebuchadnezzar is clearly subsequent to the events of chapter 2 since Daniel 3:12, referring to the appointment of Daniel’s companions over the affairs of the province of Babylon, and Daniel 3:30 imply that the event was subsequent to Daniel 2:49. The exact date of the erection of the image, however, is debated.  
p. 80

**Walvoord says further:**

The consensus of conservative scholarship is that the most probable location is a mound located six miles southeast of Babylon consisting of a large square of brick construction which would have ideally served as a base for such an image as Nebuchadnezzar erected. Montgomery earlier had come to the same conclusion based on the findings of Oppert. Its proximity to Babylon would make it convenient and yet its location in a valley plain would make its height impressive. The fact that a specific name is given to the location, which implies an intimate knowledge of Babylon in the sixth century B.C., as Young points out, “is in reality an evidence of genuineness in that it seems to presuppose some knowledge of Babylonian geography.” pp. 81-82

**J. Vernon McGee says:**

Some scholars think that Nebuchadnezzar constructed this image in memory of his father, Nabopolassar. Others are equally convinced that he made it to Bel, the pagan god of Babylon. It is more likely that he made it of himself. Daniel had declared that Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold in the image of his dream. Instead of humbling himself before God, the dream caused Nebuchadnezzar to be filled with excessive pride, and he made an entire image of gold to represent the kingdom he had built. p. 543

**He says further:**

What did Nebuchadnezzar really have in mind in making this image? We can observe here three things: (1) The making of this image shows the rebellion of Nebuchadnezzar against the God of heaven who had given him world dominion. Instead of gratitude, this is a definite act of rebellion. (2) This also shows his vaunted pride in making an image which evidently was self-deification. The Roman emperors also attempted this later on. (3) Obviously, Nebuchadnezzar was seeking a unifying principle to weld together the tribes and tongues and peoples of his kingdom into one great totalitarian government. In other words, he was attempting to institute a world religion. This was nothing in the world but a repetition of the tower of Babel—a forming of one religion for the world. p. 544

**Ironside says:**

What is emphasized here is that Nebuchadnezzar is lifted up with pride, and he determines to make a great image (probably a replica of the one he had seen in his dream), and call upon all men to bow to it. It was really to set forth the power and glory of *man*; for it pictured Gentile dominion in independence of God.

pp. 46-47

**Gangel says:**

Daniel 3 contains no prophecies, but this simple and well-known narrative of faith has challenged millions for millennia. Christian martyrs by the thousands have been burned at the stake over the centuries, and this is the first record of servants of God thrown into fire as an execution. Perhaps the writer of Hebrews had them in mind when he spoke about heroes of faith who “quenched the fury of the flames” and then after his list of suffering servants he wrote, “these were all commanded for their faith” (Heb. 11:34, 39).

p. 74

**He says further:**

We already know everyone who appears in the chapter, although we are a bit surprised at Nebuchadnezzar’s reversion to pagan idolatry and brutality after his “testimony” in 2:47. Daniel’s name does not even appear in the chapter, and commentators have speculated numerous reasons for its absence. He may have been ill; his office may have excluded him from the demands of the king on this occasion; or he might simply have been out of town on business of state.

p. 74

**Gangel says further:**

An **image** (most likely goldplated rather solid gold) of this enormity could have been seen from at least fifteen miles away from any direction as it rose above the flat sun-baked Mesopotamian plain. Likely the height included the base, since a ten-to-one ration of height and width would have presented a very slender king.

p. 75

**Gangel then says:**

The word for “image” here is *tseIm*, which appears in several Semitic languages and normally means “a likeness of some living thing.” As we know from the Greeks and Romans, kingdoms of the ancient world were fond of statues, and this may well have been a reproduction of the likeness of Nebuchadnezzar himself. The very existence of this type of structure provokes a sense of awe such as many Americans feel when they stand before the Jefferson or Lincoln memorials.

p. 75

**Wiersbe says:**

There wasn't enough gold in his entire kingdom to make a solid image ninety feet high and nine feet wide, so the image was probably made of wood overlaid with gold . . . But it must have been an awesome sight to see this golden image standing on the plain at Dura, a location perhaps six miles from the city of Babylon. (“Dura” simply means “a walled-in place,” and there were several sites with that name in ancient Babylon.) Also in the area was a furnace into which people would be thrown if they refused to fall down before the image and acknowledge the sovereignty of King Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar planned to unify his kingdom by means of religion and fear. The alternatives were to fall down before the image and worship or be thrown into the furnace and be burned to death.

p. 38

**Jeremiah says:**

The king ordered his head masons, designers, and gold embossers to erect a statue in his image. He had become so impressed with the dream he had that he must have reasoned, *If I am the head of gold, why not be the whole body?* This statue was not like the ones we see pigeon-blessed in the middle of a public park; it was a colossal, grotesque, shining monstrosity. The Scripture says it was sixty cubits high and six cubits wide. That's ninety feet tall! It was also unbalanced (just as the king's mind). The ratio of the image was ten-to-one, which means that it was a skinny, skinny man. The average body ratio of a person today is five-to-one. All that gold, shimmering in the sun, could have been seen for miles away.

p. 73

**Statue of Adam Crumbles**

In autumn 2002, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, a priceless 15th century marble statue of Adam toppled and shattered while no one was in the room. Although vandalism was initially suspected, curators determined that the life-sized Venetian sculpture "buckled of its own accord" said *Time* magazine.

"It will take a great deal of time and skill, but the piece can be restored," the museum's director said.

*Citation:* submitted by Bill White, Paramount, California;  
"Museum to mend shattered statue," BBC News (10-10-02)

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(The Purity Principle by Randy Alcorn) Sisters, OR: Multnomah. Copyright –  
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The prophet Jonah, in the digestive tract of a great fish beneath the Mediterranean Sea, made this observation: “Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs” (Jonah 2:8).

An idol is something more than a grotesque statue with big lips and a ruby in its navel. It’s a God-substitute. It’s something—anything—that we value higher than God. In order to cling to such an idol, we make a trade.

Our sexual behavior reveals who or what rules our lives (see Romans 1:18-29). Sexual sin is idolatry because it puts our desires in the place of God.

p. 12

(Rumors of Another World by Philip Yancey) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.  
Copyright – SCCT, 2003.

Behind the corpse in the reservoir, behind the ghost on the links,  
Behind the lady who dances and the man who madly drinks,  
Under the look of fatigue, the attack of migraine and the sigh  
There is always another story, there is more than meets the eye.

W. H. Auden

p. 27

At its core, sin assumes a relationship between a Creator who sets the rules and free humans who break them. A reductionistic world has little place for a Creator, and little place for individual souls who are morally accountable. We like to negotiate our own rules and set our own punishments, and for more people the fusty category of sin does not apply. Instead we substitute euphemisms such as “addicted,” “inappropriate behavior,” “emotionally impaired,” or “suffering from an affective disorder.”

p. 118

What I do *matters*. More, what I do matters to God, who created this world and set the rules we disregard at our peril. Somehow, I must keep that conviction in the foreground of my life.

p. 124

**(The Life You've Always Wanted by John Ortberg) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright – John Ortberg, 1997, 2002.**

I want to be, in the words of Garrison Keillor, named “Sun-God, King of America, Idol of Millions, Bringer of Fire, The Great Haji, Thun-Dar the Boy Giant.”

p. 12

**(Into the Depths of God: Where Eyes See the Invisible, Ears Hear the Inaudible, and Minds Conceive the Inconceivable by Calvin Miller) Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany House. Copyright – Calvin Miller, 2000.**

Materialism often takes over at the same rate at which our spirituality decays. I have noticed that as people grow older, the sparkle they once had in their eyes begins to die. Sometimes their zeal also dies and they start hoarding cash for the “golden years.” They quit trusting God and start stashing goods. Gone are the easy-giving days of first faith.

p. 40

**(Money, Possessions and Eternity by Randy C. Alcorn) Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House. Copyright – Randy C. Alcorn, 1989.**

Philip Yancey perfectly expresses my own dilemma when it comes to money:

Many Christians have one issue that haunts them and never falls silent: for some, it involves sexual identity; for others, a permanent battle against doubt. For me, the issue is money. It hangs over me, keeping me off balance, restless, uncomfortable, nervous.

I feel pulled in opposite directions over the money issue. Sometimes I want to sell all that I own, join a Christian commune, and live out my days in intentional poverty. At other times, I want to rid myself of guilt and enjoy the fruits of our nation's prosperity. Mostly, I wish I did not have to think about money at all. But I must somehow come to terms with the Bible's very strong statements about money.<sup>1</sup>

1. Philips Yancey, *Money* (Portland: Multnomah Press, 1985), 3.

p. 32

**(Holy Ambition: What It Takes To Make a Difference For God by Chip Ingram) Chicago, IL: Moody Press. Copyright – Chip Ingram, 2002.**

Jesus was emphatic and the Scripture is emphatic on this great truth:

*WHERE GOD'S AGENDA IS CHAMPIONED,  
GOD'S RESOURCES ARE CHANNELED.*

Nehemiah championed God's cause, and God's resources were channeled toward his endeavor. When God can find a man or woman, a church or group, or a student who says, "God, I will champion Your cause. I will trust that the vision You have given me is part of Your plan. It's Your will and agenda, not mine," God's resources and money will flow. God supports the visions He gives. But you don't get to see it happen until you step out, until you champion God's agenda.  
pp. 121-22

**(God's Little Daily Devotional: 365 Days of Inspiration To Lift Your Spirit & Bring Peace to Your Soul by Honor Books) Tulsa, OK: Honor Books. Copyright – Honor Books, Inc., 1997.**

Jenny Lind was known as "The Swedish Nightingale" during her very successful career as an operatic singer. She became one of the wealthiest artists of her time, yet she left the stage at her peak and never returned.

Countless people speculated as to the reason for her leaving, and most people wondered how she could give up so much applause, fame, and money. However, she was content to live in privacy in a home by the sea.

One day a friend found her on the beach, her Bible on her knees, looking out into the glorious glow of a sunset. As they talked, the friend asked, "Madame, how is it that you ever came to abandon the stage at the height of your success?"

She answered quietly, "When every day it made me think less of this (laying a finger on her Bible) and nothing at all of that (pointing at the sunset), what else could I do?"  
p. 181

v. 2 He then summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the image he had set up.

Peterson paraphrases verse 2:

He then ordered all the important leaders in the province, everybody who was anybody, to the dedication ceremony of the statue.  
p. 1585

He lists SEVEN of the CATEGORIES of officials and then uses the all inclusive term for CATEGORY EIGHT:

“ALL THE OTHER PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS.”

You have the words “SET IT UP” used SIX TIMES:

1. verse 1—“and set it up on the plain of Dura,”
2. verse 2—“HE HAD SET UP,”
3. verse 3—“NEBUCHADNEZZAR HAD SET UP,”
4. verse 5—“NEBUCHADNEZZAR HAS SET UP,”
5. verse 7—“NEBUCHADNEZZAR HAD SET UP,” and finally
6. verse 12—“YOU HAVE SET UP.”

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says:

Nebuchadnezzar **summoned** eight classes of officials **to the dedication of the image.**  
p. 1338

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says further:

This may suggest that the image was intended to symbolize the empire and its unity under Nebuchadnezzar's authority. The officers referred to in verse 2 are listed again in verse 3 and four of them in verse 27, thus emphasizing the political implications of this incident.

p. 1338

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says further:

The **satraps** were chief representatives of the king, the **prefects** were military commanders, and the **governors** were civil administrators. The **advisers** were counselors to those in governmental authority. The **treasurers** administered the funds of the kingdom, the **judges** were administrators of the law, and the **magistrates** passed judgment in keeping with the law. The **other provincial officials** were probably subordinates of the satraps. This list of officers probably included all who served in any official capacity under **Nebuchadnezzar**.

p. 1338

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says finally:

To see so many officials stand before the image in Dura in Nebuchadnezzar's presence to swear their allegiance to him must have been impressive.

p. 1338

**Phillips & Vines say:**

Imagine what it was like on the plain of Dura. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of leaders were gathered there, all in their official robes and military uniforms. What a sight it must have been. They were being interviewed on "Good Morning, Babylon!" They were waiting to have their picture taken with the king.

p. 51

**Gangel says:**

In wording this kind of edict today, we might say, “Everyone on the federal payroll must show up.” There were no options; no one was excluded.  
p. 75

**Wiersbe says:**

Eight different officers are especially named (Dan. 3:2-3) and they would represent the people left back home. *Princes* (satraps?) were the chief administrative officers in the provinces, while *governors* were probably their assistants (or perhaps military commanders). *Captains* ruled over the smaller districts in the provinces, and *judges* were their advisers. *Treasurers* served as do treasurers today, and *counselors* were experts in the law. *Sheriffs* were local judges and magistrates, and *rulers* were the miscellaneous officials in the province. Every level of authority was represented and all were expected to be present.  
pp. 38-39

**Jeremiah says:**

A guest list, consisting of the cream of Babylonian society, was prepared. “He then summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the image he had set up” (Dan. 3:2). Everyone accepted. It was an example of peer pressure at the highest level. The only one of the officials who was absent was Daniel, and he had probably been sent on a mission by the king. That seemingly insignificant detail has its purpose in God’s ultimate plan.  
p. 73

v. 3 So the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials assembled for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and they stood before it.

**Peterson paraphrases verse 3:**

They all came for the dedication, all the important people, and took their places before the statue that Nebuchadnezzar had erected.  
p. 1585

**Patrick & Lowth say:**

*And they stood before the image*] They made their personal appearance, and showed themselves ready to perform the worship required of them.  
p. 649

**Blair says:**

Nebuchadnezzar's image was an attempt on the part of the king to establish man-worship as opposed to the worship of the true God. One would have thought that, after Daniel's interpretation of the dream vision, Nebuchadnezzar would have given deference to the Lord Jehovah. But though he exalted Daniel and the three Hebrew boys out of respect to their God, he gave no thought to his own personal need of the Lord. In fact, sixteen years transpired between chapters 2 and 3 of Daniel, yet the king sought to deify man, another evidence of the pride of his heart. At the same time, he attempted to establish a world religion, causing everyone to worship alike.  
p. 57

**Longman says:**

As Fewell states it, “through repetition, the narrator creates a scenario in which conformity is normative, disobedience is unthinkable.” The various categories of people in the list are political officials from around the empire, which may signal that this was Nebuchadnezzar’s attempt to solidify control over the diverse elements of his vast empire.

p. 98

**Miller says:**

Nebuchadnezzar’s officials stood before the image awaiting orders . . . The air was charged as the host of people (probably several hundred) from all over the empire stared at the colossal structure, wondering exactly what would happen next.

p. 112

**J. Vernon McGee says:**

The sight of the image of gold on the plain of Dura was very impressive—as impressive as an Atlas missile set up on the launching pad at Cape Canaveral, Florida. It must have made a tremendous appeal to the eye.

p. 544

**Gangel says:**

It seems hardly accidental that the gold-plated image (common in ancient times) took something of the character of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream., thereby representing both the king and his empire.

p. 75

v. 4 Then the herald loudly proclaimed, “This is what you are commanded to do. O peoples, nations and men of every language:

**Peterson paraphrases verse 4:**

A herald then proclaimed in a loud voice: “Attention, everyone! Every race, color, and creed, listen!  
p. 1585

**Feinberg says:**

It is under these circumstances that idolatry is introduced by the first ruler of the “times of the Gentiles.” Rather than recognize his responsibility, Nebuchadnezzar rejects any hint of submission to the God of heaven. Idolatry is spiritual suicide; an idol is nothing in the world, but it is sponsored by demonic activity.

We have said that these historical passages are prophetic as well; this is a case in point. This chapter reveals that just as the “times of the Gentiles” began with idolatry, so they will end. Refer here to Revelation 13:3-8, where the world worships the beast in the last days.  
pp. 44-45

**Keil & Delitzsch say:**

When all the great officers of state were assembled, a herald proclaimed that as soon as the sound of the music was heard, all who were present should, no pain of death by being cast into the fire, fall down before the image and offer homage to it; which they all did as soon as the signal was given.  
p. 121

**Keil & Delitzsch say further:**

The proclamation of the herald refers not only to the officers who were summoned to the festival, but to all who were present, since besides the officers there was certainly present a great crowd of people from all parts of the kingdom, as M. Geier has rightly remarked, so that the assembly consisted of persons of various races and languages.

p. 122

**Berrigan says:**

In the eyes of Daniel something more than a rampageous royal ego is at work here. Through its image, the empire is rendered demonic. Which is to say, a powerful political, military, economic (religious?) entity is raised to proclaim absolute dominion over life and death.

We have here an event, the Bible suggests, that is a constant of imperial history. In a parallel passage in Revelation, an otherwise unnamed tyrant issues a summons similar to that of Nebuchadnezzar: worship the Beasts, or perish . . . A running thread binds one testament to another, and the behavior of an early empire with a later one. Are not all such entities genetically related? In attempting to seize the prerogatives of God, the empires are remarkably, lethally consistent. Or so the imagery and teaching would have us ponder.

pp. 56-57

**He says further:**

In stark contrast to Daniel's community, all levels of dignity in the realm are promptly inducted into worship of the massive image. Rank and protocol are fastidiously observed, a charade of pomp, power, and prestige is mounted. The scene, reminiscent of later spectacles, is designed to bedazzle and stupefy and subdue, to bring to heel even mettlesome spirits. All are summoned.

The procession advances; it is as though the scribe were holding his breath in awe (or perhaps stifling with difficulty his derisive laughter): "princes, governors, lieutenant governors, commissioners, treasurers, judges, magistrates, and all other officials of the provinces."

p. 57

**Parker says:**

Think what happened here! The people were commanded to worship. That is an impossibility. The highest life lies beyond human command, though the word “human” be qualified and enriched by the word “royal.” This king is making a fool of himself: he has supposed that because he can do much he can do more. He fails where all imperfect education fails; he cannot be content to live within his limits: he must try the risky delights of trespass. Suppose we command some one to love, can it be done? Let consciousness reply. Command the child to love some one appointed to teach and direct it; the child does not understand the imperative direction; the child will either love or not love, without any decree being issued from the royal court. Suppose it should be said to us by the monarch of the day, “Worship!” What would our reply be? The reply would be, It is philosophically impossible to obey such a command. Worship does not lie within human directions, rules, stipulations, and military threatenings or social penalties. Worship is a condition of the soul, it is an instinct of the life, it belongs to the interior nature, and can only be spoken to by one voice with authority, and that is the voice of God.  
p. 380

**Phillips & Vines say:**

Next a herald, the paid announcer of the king cried aloud. He was probably the king’s chaplain, on his payroll, an apostate preacher. His job was to say what the king wanted said.  
p. 51

**Jeremiah says:**

When the mass of humanity was gathered on the Plain of Dura, shading their eyes from the reflection of the beating desert sun on the golden image, the king gave orders to his paid preacher, a herald with a loud voice. As all false gods have their pulpiteers, the king had this fellow who told the crowd what he was paid to say. He announced that when the orchestra played, everybody had to hit the ground. Worship or burn were the options.  
pp. 74-75

(The Life You've Always Wanted by John Ortberg) Grand Rapids, MI:  
Zondervan. Copyright – John Ortberg, 1997, 2002.

Woe to those weak and timid souls who are divided  
between God and their world! They want and they do not  
want. They are torn by desire and remorse at the same  
time. . . . They have a horror of evil and a shame of good.  
They have the pains of virtue without tasting its sweet  
consolations. O how wretched they are.

FRANÇOIS FENELON

Purity of heart is to will one thing.

SØREN KIERKEGAARD

p. 173

v. 5 As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up.

**Peterson paraphrases verse 5:**

When you hear the band strike up—all the trumpets and trombones, the tubas and baritones, the drums and cymbals—fall to your knees and worship the gold statue that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up.  
p. 1585

The “herald” mentions **FIVE INSTRUMENTS** then another all-encompassing category, **“ALL KINDS OF MUSIC.”**

In response, these **“peoples, nations and men of every language”** must do **TWO THINGS.** They must:

1. **“FALL DOWN”** and
2. **“WORSHIP THE IMAGE OF GOLD THAT KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR HAS SET UP.”**

***The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says:**

In demanding that these officials **fall down** before **the image of gold . . . Nebuchadnezzar** was demanding a public display of recognition and submission to his absolute authority in the kingdom.

The fact that the officials were commanded not only to fall down before the image, but also to **worship** it, indicates that the image had religious as well as political significance. Since no specific god is mentioned, it may be inferred that Nebuchadnezzar was not honoring one of the gods of Babylon, but rather was instituting a new form of religious worship with this image as the center.  
p. 1338

***The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says further:**

Nebuchadnezzar purposed to establish a unified government and also a unified religion. The king constituted himself as both head of state and head of religion. All who served under him were to recognize both his political and religious authority.

The officials summoned by Nebuchadnezzar to assemble in the plains of Dura had not been told why they were called. When they were all assembled, the king's **herald** then announced that the officials were to recognize Nebuchadnezzar's political and religious power. The herald addressed the officials as **peoples, nations, and men of every language** . . . apparently considering the officials as representatives of the peoples over whom they ruled.

Elaborate preparations in the construction of the image of gold made the occasion aesthetically appealing. To this was added musical accompaniment to make the occasion emotionally moving. The orchestra included wind instruments (the **horn** and **pipes** . . .), a reed instrument (the **flute**), and stringed instruments (**zither, lyre, harp**). Some critics argue that since the names of some of these instruments were Greek, the book was written later, in the time of the Grecian Empire. But communication between Greece and the Near East had been carried on for years before the Greek conquest by Alexander . . .

p. 1338

**Parker says:**

If he had set up the image which we have gazed upon, that would have been bad enough, if meant to be an idol and to elicit the service of adoration; but Nebuchadnezzar proceeds further, and makes music an ally of his evil work. That would not be worth commenting upon if it did not hold within it suggestions that touch all human experience, and flow through all the channels and currents of time and action. Get wrong in your idea of worship, and everything falls down before it.

p. 382

**Keil & Delitzsch say:**

The great delight of the Babylonians in music and stringed instruments appears from Isa. [14] 11 and Ps. [137] 3, and is confirmed by the testimony of Herod.

p. 122

**Psalm 137:1-4**

By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept  
 when we remembered Zion.  
 There on the poplars  
 we hung our harps,  
 for there our captors asked us for songs,  
 our tormentors demanded songs of joy;  
 they said, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"  
 How can we sing the songs of the Lord  
 while in a foreign land?

**J. Vernon McGee says:**

Notice the different instruments in this orchestra: the cornet—that's a wind instrument; the flute—a wind instrument; the harp—a stringed instrument; the sackbut—a trombone, or perhaps a high-stringed instrument; the psaltery—a stringed instrument like the harp; and the dulcimer—a drum with strings above which was played with a stick. Then, it says, "and all kinds of music," which means there were instruments and types of music that are not listed.  
 p. 544

**Goldingay says:**

As in many cultures, music draws attention to state and religious processions and ceremonials . . . The band probably comprises two wind and three string instruments . . . None are used in Israelite worship; most are foreign terms for instruments used in secular contexts. They thus imply a double judgment on the alien, pagan nature of the ceremony Nebuchadnezzar is inaugurating.  
 p. 70

Gaebelein says:

The civil power tried to force this universal religion upon the people. The great governors, judges, captains, and rulers had to appear for the dedication of the image. But then the whole thing had a religious aspect. Listen, after looking at this great awe-inspiring image of gold—to the sweetest music. The cornet, the flute, the harp, the sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer and all kinds of music sounds forth. No doubt the Chaldean priests approached chanting some sweet Babylonian song. Why all this? To stir up the religious emotions and aid in this way the worship of an idol.  
p. 43

(What Ticks God Off: The Ways We Irritate God & What We Can Do About It by Bruce Bickel & Stan Jantz) Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group / Thomas Nelson. Copyright – Bruce Bickel & Stan Jantz, 2001.

## GOD IS TICKED OFF BY OUR INFIDELITY TOWARD HIM

Would you be hurt, offended, and outraged if your spouse cheated on you? Of course! Well, God has similar emotions when we are unfaithful and let our affections wander away from Him.

It is terrible that our society has become accustomed to marital infidelity, but it is even more tragic that Christians have become oblivious to their own spiritual infidelity. God won't put up with it for long. If we don't turn back to Him on our own, He may bring circumstances upon us that will force us to reconsider.

Spiritual infidelity is nothing new. Throughout human history, God has been jilted and His love has been spurned. When it happened with the nation of Israel eight centuries before the birth of Christ, God used the prophet Hosea to confront the Jews with their unfaithfulness. But it wasn't enough for Hosea to just pontificate about God's sorrow, pain, and anger. To ensure that Hosea understood how God grieved over Israel's spiritual adultery, God put Hosea in a prime-time reality show that had all of Israel talking.

p. 2

(What Ticks God Off: The Ways We Irritate God & What We Can Do About It  
by Bruce Bickel & Stan Jantz) Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group /  
Thomas Nelson. Copyright – Bruce Bickel & Stan Jantz, 2001.

**Stage 1:** Your focus on God is *distracted* by something that appeals to you. You know you shouldn't allow your attention to be taken away from God, but it seems harmless (and you'll only do it for a moment).

**Stage 2:** Your energies are *diverted* away from God. You spend your time and resources on something that actually interferes with the relationship between you and God.

**Stage 3:** You might not intend to offend God, but your actions reveal an intentional rebellion against Him. You might be able to maintain a facade of spirituality, but your relationship with God has *deteriorated* due to your defiance.

**Stage 4:** For a while, Gomer would sneak out of the house to meet with other men. But then there came a point when she had not even a shred of feeling for Hosea. She moved out. She *deserted* him entirely. That's the final stage that occurs if you continue to give your affections to other people and things instead of to God.  
pp. 10-11

## GOLDEN GODS

God had seized the attention of Pharaoh and the Egyptians with a series of plagues. Now they were dying to be rid of their Hebrew slaves. But God didn't want the Israelites to leave Egypt empty-handed. After all, they had 400 years of wages due them. So they asked their former masters for articles of silver, gold, and clothing, and they got them. Exodus 12:36 says that the Israelites "plundered the Egyptians."

It wasn't long, however, until God's people fell into idolatry. They used their gold to make a golden calf, which they worshiped while Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving the law (32:1-4).

This tragic experience highlights the tension that Christians are required to maintain in relation to their possessions. There is much in our society that we may enjoy, but material things can also pose grave dangers when we use them unwisely. Os Guinness says that we are "free to utilize" but "forbidden to idolize." We are "strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Hebrews 11:13), and we must not become so enamored with "the treasures in Egypt" (v.26) that we grow complacent and forget our true calling.

Are we using our material blessings to serve the Lord— or have we become slaves to them? —Haddon Robinson

*I have an old nature that noisily clamors  
To satisfy empty desire;  
But God in His goodness has sent me a Helper  
Who whispers, "Your calling is higher." —Gustafson*

**Gold can be a helpful servant  
but a cruel master.**

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Sunday, January 25, 2004)

v. 6 **Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.”**

**Peterson paraphrases verse 6:**

Anyone who does not kneel and worship shall be thrown immediately into a roaring furnace.”  
pp. 1585-6

***The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says:**

Failure to comply to the command to worship the image was penalized by sudden death, being **thrown into a blazing furnace**. The severity of the penalty indicates that submission on the part of every official was obligatory.  
p. 1338

**Goldingay says:**

Commentators usually assume that the furnace (v 6) was metal and beehive-shaped with an opening on the top into which the men were thrown, and a door at the side through which the inside could be seen. Baldwin envisages a tunnel-shaped brick furnace . . . The burning of criminals is referred to occasionally throughout the Babylonian, Persian, and Greek periods . . .  
p. 70

**Patrick & Lowth say:**

Burning offenders alive was a punishment used among the Babylonians . . .  
p. 649

**Smith says:**

The dedication of this image was made a great occasion. The chief men of all the kingdom were gathered together; so much pains and expense will men undergo in sustaining idolatrous and heathen systems of worship. So it is and ever has been. Alas, that those who have the true religion should be so far outdone in these respects by the upholders of the false and counterfeit! The worship was accompanied with music; and whoso should fail to participate therein was threatened with a fiery furnace. Such are ever the strongest motives to impel men in any direction,—pleasure on the one hand, pain on the other.

p. 95

**Haskell says:**

While it was in harmony with worldly government, it was not, however, according to the principle of the heavenly government. Hence it is, that again, in the person of the Babylonian king, Satan is challenging the government of God. When Lucifer and his angels refused to bow before the throne of God, the Father would not then destroy them. They should live until death should come as a result of the course they pursued. The Babylonian king, however, threatened utter destruction to all who refused to worship his golden image. The motive power in the heavenly government is love; human power when exercised becomes tyranny. All tyranny is a repetition of the Babylonian principles.

p. 41

**Miller says:**

The awful penalty for disobeying the king's order was now announced. Anyone who would not worship the image would be hurled immediately into "a blazing furnace" and burned to death. As a graphic object lesson, the fire in the furnace already was ablaze, smoke billowing out of its top, Nebuchadnezzar daring anyone to defy his power and authority. Jeremiah 29:22 also records that Nebuchadnezzar burned to death two men named Zedekiah and Ahab.

Nebuchadnezzar probably chose this means of punishment not only because it was a horrifying way to die but because it was convenient. A huge kiln would necessarily have been available to smelt metal for the gold plating and for manufacturing the bricks to construct the base and possibly the inner parts of the statue itself. Archer describes the structure as follows: "Judging from bas-reliefs, it would seem the Mesopotamian smelting furnaces tended to be like an old-fashioned glass milk-bottle in shape, with a large opening for the insertion of the ore to be smelted and a small aperture at ground level for the admission of wood and charcoal to furnish the heat." Baldwin reports that the temperatures in these kilns could reach as high as 1000 degrees centigrade (i.e., about 1800 degrees fahrenheit). One can only imagine the fear that engulfed the crowd as the flames leaped from the top of the furnace and the smoke billowed forth.

p. 115

**Gangel says:**

All of a sudden punishment for defying the king's edict became instant immolation. This contrasts with chapter 2 where the Chaldean faculty was threatened with having their bodies "cut into pieces" and their "houses turned into piles of rubble" (2:5). Furthermore, it would happen **immediately**. There seems to be little evidence that this was a standard form of execution in ancient Babylon and might well have been some hideous instant whim of the king or one of his lackeys.

p. 76

(Strength For Today by John F. MacArthur) Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books /  
Good News. Copyright – John F. MacArthur, 1997.

Renowned eighteenth-century theologian Jonathan Edwards said the following about the effect of the Fall on man:

*Sin, like some powerful astringent, contracted his soul to the very small dimensions of selfishness; and God was forsaken, and fellow-creatures forsaken, and man retired within himself, and became totally governed by narrow and selfish principles and feelings. Self-love became absolute master of his soul, and the more noble and spiritual principles of his being took wings and flew away.*

(November 13)

v. 7 Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp and all kinds of music, all the peoples, nations and men of every language fell down and worshiped the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

Peterson paraphrases verse 7:

The band started to play, a huge band equipped with all the musical instruments of Babylon, and everyone—every race, color, and creed—fell to their knees and worshiped the gold statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

p. 1586

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says:

Overwhelmed by the king's command, the awesomeness of the image, and the sound of the **music**, the assembled officials **fell down and worshiped the image of gold**. In this way the officials and the peoples they represented recognized the political and religious authority of **Nebuchadnezzar**.

p. 1338

Patrick & Lowth say:

Paying divine honours to the images of deified men was a piece of worship generally practised among the Chaldeans, as well as other heathens

...

p. 649

**Campbell says:**

Finally, the herald spoke, delivering the edict of the king, which was to bow at the sound of the music or burn. Shortly after, the royal orchestra began to play! The great multitude fell quickly on their faces (3:7). But there were three who did not bow, three who courageously remained standing. There may have been some about them who urgently cried, “Get down! Didn’t you hear the music? Get down or you’re dead!” But to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, it was revolting to think of bowing to any graven image for any reason. They remained on their feet, three lonely figures among the great mass of compliant Babylonian officials. Their strong faith, their unwillingness to go along with the crowd regardless of the penalty, has been a challenge to the people of God from that day to this.

p. 31

**Phillips & Vines calls this verse:**

*A Pathetic Ordeal* (3:7). Then the king’s herald added, “To help you make up your minds, the king has a burning fiery furnace ready for dissenters.” Could the people see this furnace, see the flames leaping out of it and hear the flames crackling? If so, it really helped them make up their minds. So the music began to play and people fell to the ground by the thousands. That is, all but three.

p. 52

**Jeremiah says:**

The band played and the crowd, someone has estimated there were as many as three hundred thousand people from all of the vast empire, hit the dust. All of them, that is, but three. Can you [imagine] how they stuck out when thousands and thousands of people were on the ground and they were standing?

p. 75

v. 8 At this time some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews.

Peterson paraphrases verse 8:

Just then, some Babylonian fortunetellers stepped up and accused the Jews.

p. 1586

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* titles these remaining verses:

THE ACCUSATION AGAINST THE JEWS (3:8-12).

p. 1338

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* then says:

No indication is given of the size of the multitude that assembled on this occasion. But because it included all the kingdom's officials . . . it must have been huge. **Some** court advisers (**astrologers** . . .) were quick to bring an accusation against **the Jews**. The word translated **denounced** is strong, meaning "to tear in pieces." The accusation was severe, intended to destroy the accused. The accusers were evidently motivated by jealousy for they referred to the fact that **Nebuchadnezzar** had set **some Jews . . . over the affairs of the province of Babylon . . .**

pp. 138-9

**Parker says:**

Jealousy can be very astute. Envy has little tricks and ways that easily take upon them the guise and semblance of perfect innocence. “There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon.” This is a stroke at the king himself; this is a suggestion that Jews, colonists or captives, ought not to have been put into high office. All state functions and state pay should be in the hands of the people of the country. Still these Chaldeans accept the situation, and remind the king that he himself is responsible for the elevation of the men who have disobeyed him. There are many ways of stabbing a man; and guilt is never so guilty as when it tries to be mealy-mouthed and mock-pious. These Chaldeans suppressed themselves, controlled their feelings, and spoke with a consciousness of injury borne with ineffable dignity; but in reality they cast the king himself into a burning fiery furnace. There are many furnaces, and many ways into them, and many ways of drawing men into their awful heat. These ways are known in the family:—the sweetly bitter little speeches that are made to one another by members of Christian households; the prayers that have stings in them; the benedictions that are all teeth: yet what meekness, what self-suppression, what beautiful self-control! Yet all the while the devil is trying to get his way, and to suggest what he dare not express in words; realising the words of the poet, “willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike.”

pp. 383-4

**Berrigan says:**

The motive of the adversaries, one can judge, is envy (Dan 3:8). Feet have been stepped on, aspirants thrust to one side. And outsiders, exiles, of no account, have been granted high powers and prerogatives. And now, O king, behold the ultimate arrogance. The same beneficiaries have dared spurn your royal will!

p. 58

**Lucas says:**

‘Chaldeans’ here probably has its ‘professional’ meaning rather than being an ethnic term. Their motivation seems to be professional envy, as is quite obviously the case in ch. 6.

p. 90

**Showers says:**

The pressure upon them was great, and they had to make their decision quickly.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego made the right decision. They chose in favor of God. When the signal was given, all the pagans of the kingdom fell down and worshiped the image, but the three Jewish young men continued to stand. Once again they refused to sacrifice the truth of God on the altar of expediency.

p. 31

**Miller says:**

In all likelihood “astrologers” is correct, and the accusation reflects jealousy on the part of certain wise men (cf. chap. 6). Daniel and his three friends had received leadership positions in this group, and some of the native Babylonian astrologers resented it. At the first opportunity they attempted to rid themselves of these foreign intruders.

“Denounced” is literally “ate the pieces of,” a phrase suggesting severe hatred and bitter language. “Chewed them out” might be a comparable English idiom, though not as harsh. These astrologers expressed great hostility toward “the Jews.” Although personal jealousy was likely the primary motive for the astrologers’ animosity, anti-Semitism may have been involved.

p. 116

Wiersbe titles these remaining verses and then says:

*The hearts of the three Jewish men (Dan. 3:8-12).* But there were three men in that great crowd who stood tall when everybody else bowed low. Their faith was in the true and living God and in the Word that He had spoken to their people. Knowing the history of the Jewish people, they were confident that the Lord was in control and they had nothing to fear. The Prophet Isaiah had written, “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you” (Isa. 43:1-2, NKJV). Faith means obeying God regardless of the feelings within us, the circumstances around us, or the consequences before us.  
p. 40

Gangel says:

The **astrologers** of our text again became the spokesmen for their fellow faculty members (2:4), of which the three Jewish young men were a part. They **denounced the Jews**, an Aramaic expression which indicates slander or accusation, and (somewhat repetitiously it would seem) review for the king the whole edict story. If Daniel wasn't there, how did he know exactly what they said? Several plausible answers may play a role in our understanding of the matter. These words may have been spoken in the presence of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; the king may have reviewed the entire affair after it happened; and the Holy Spirit brought to Daniel's mind exactly the words which appear on the page of the original text.  
p. 76

**Campbell says:**

No time was lost in reporting to Nebuchadnezzar the Hebrew youths' disobedience of his decree. Perhaps motivated by a despicable jealousy, the Chaldeans "ate the pieces of the Jews"—a vivid idiom meaning to slander or denounce another.

What a terrible vice is jealousy or envy! It has been called "the jaundice of the soul," and has been responsible for many crimes—the murder of Abel, the mistreatment and selling of Joseph into slavery, the hatred and pursuit of David by Saul, and even the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. "For envy they had delivered Him" (Matt. 27:18). But envy only hurts the one who indulges in it. John Chrysostom, the great biblical expositor of early Antioch, said, "As a moth gnaws a garment, so does envy consume a man."  
p. 32

**Jeremiah says:**

Now the plot begins to thicken. The astrologers came out and bowed before Nebuchadnezzar, reminding him that he had ordered everyone to bow down. Perhaps King Neb had bad eyesight. How could he help but notice that there were three traitors who paid no attention to the order?

Solomon said, "Jealousy . . . burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame" (Song of Songs 8:6), and the Chaldean crowd wanted to smell the seared flesh of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.  
p. 76

**(Waking the Dead: The Glory of a Heart Fully Alive by John Eldredge)  
Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson. Copyright – John Eldredge, 2003.**

To live in ignorance of spiritual warfare is the most naive and dangerous thing a person can do. It's like skipping through the worst part of town, late at night, waving your wallet above your head. It's like walking into an al-Qaida training camp, wearing an "I love the United States" T-shirt. It's like swimming with great white sharks, dressed as a wounded sea lion and smeared with blood. And let me tell you something: you don't escape spiritual warfare simply because you choose not to believe it exists or because you refuse to fight it.  
p. 152

**v. 9 They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “O king, live forever!”**

These “astrologers” come just like they did back in Daniel 2 before Nebuchadnezzar. Here they are saying to King Nebuchadnezzar:

**“O KING, LIVE FOREVER!”**

**Peterson paraphrases verse 9:**

They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “Love live the king!  
p. 1586

v. 10 You have issued a decree, O king, that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music must fall down and worship the image of gold.

Peterson paraphrases verse 9:

They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “Love live the king!  
p. 1586

Peterson paraphrases verse 10:

You gave strict orders, O king, that when the big band started playing, everyone had to fall tot heir knees and worship the gold statue,  
p. 1586

Here they are very specific to **REPEAT THE EDICT** so it makes a real impact on the king when they give him the secret about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

v. 11 and that whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace.

Peterson paraphrases verse 11:

and whoever did not go to their knees and worship it had to be pitched into a roaring furnace.

p. 1586

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says:

The jealousy evidently sprang from the king's recognition of the unusual ability of these men (1:20). Subjugated peoples, such as the Jewish captives, were normally relegated to positions of servitude, not elevated to authority in a realm. So the high positions of "some Jews" were resented.

The counselors evidently sought to curry favor from the **king** by contrasting the three Jews' refusal to bow to **the image** with their own **worship** of it. Interestingly they accused Daniel's three friends—**Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego**—but not Daniel. Since Daniel was appointed to a higher office (2:48) he may not have been required to attend . . . or perhaps he may have been elsewhere in the empire carrying out his duties. Or maybe the astrologers did not dare accuse Daniel, who was present but like the other three did not bow. Whatever the reason for his not being mentioned, Daniel's dedication to his God and submission to the Law certainly precluded his bowing before the image.

p. 1339

**Smith says:**

These Chaldeans who accused the Jews were probably the sect of philosophers who went by that name, and who were still smarting under the chagrin of their ignominious failure in respect to their interpretation of the king's dream of chapter 2. They were eager to seize upon any pretext to accuse the Jews before the king, and either disgrace or destroy them. They worked upon the king's prejudice by strong insinuations of their ingratitude: Thou hast set them over the affairs of Babylon, and yet they have disregarded thee. Where Daniel was upon this occasion, is not known. He was probably absent on some business of the empire, the importance of which demanded his presence. But why should Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, since they knew they could not worship the image, be present on the occasion? Was it not because they were willing to comply with the king's requirements as far as they could without compromising their religious principles? The king required them to be present. With this requirement they could comply, and they did. He required them to worship the image. This their religion forbade, and this they therefore refused to do.

p. 96

v. 12 But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, O king. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up.”

Now they call them “JEWS” to make a real point that these are people who have been carried into a Babylon as a result of the defeat of Judah. Now they accuse him by saying:

“SOME JEWS WHOM YOU HAVE SET OVER THE AFFAIRS OF THE PROVINCE OF BABYLON.”

Then they mention their NAMES:

“SHADRACH, MESHACH AND ABEDNEGO.”

They are guilty of THREE CHARGES:

1. “[THEY] PAY NO ATTENTION TO YOU, O KING,”
2. “THEY NEITHER SERVE YOUR GODS,” and
3. “NOR WORSHIP THE IMAGE OF GOLD YOU HAVE SET UP.”

**Peterson paraphrases verse 12:**

Well, there are some Jews here—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—whom you have placed in high positions in the province of Babylon. These men are ignoring you, O king. They don’t respect your gods and they won’t worship the gold statue you set up.”

p. 1586

**Lucas observes:**

The accusation against the Jews, ‘They have not honoured your gods’, highlights the dilemma of the Diaspora Jew who wished to get involved in the social and political life of a pagan city. Centuries later, Apion was still asking the question, ‘If the Jews be citizens of Alexandria, who do they not worship the same gods as the Alexandrians?’  
p. 90

**Longman says:**

INDEED, WHEN VERSE 7 reports that everyone worshiped the image, it is probably giving Nebuchadnezzar’s perspective. As his eyes scanned the plain of Dura, he apparently saw only the large crowd obeying his command to prostrate themselves before his golden statue. His contentment was shattered, however, by the report he received from a contingent of astrologers, who accused “some Jews” (v. 12) of disobedience to the king’s direct command in spite of the threatened penalty of a horrible death.

We should note that this is an accusation by *some* astrologers against *some* Jews. It is not a class action against a whole people. Indeed, many aspects of this story leave us with various questions. What about the other Jewish people? Were any others present? Did they conform? And, most provocatively, where was Daniel?  
p. 99

**Blair says:**

Now the question arises, what has happened to Daniel? There is no mention of him at all in this chapter. It would seem that for some good reason he was not present at the dedication of the image. Had he been there, there would have been no doubt about it, he too would have stood with the three Hebrew boys. Probably he was in another part of the empire, occupied in important business for the state.

It was not easy for the three Hebrews to take the stand they did. It would have been much more convenient to bow to the image. They could have believed the truth in their hearts even though they gave outward respect to Nebuchadnezzar’s image. They could have, that is true. But they had convictions and one cannot ignore his convictions without wounding his conscience.  
p. 61

**Walvoord says:**

The form of the accusation is almost a rebuke to the king himself. It is clear that the Chaldeans had deep-seated resentment against the Jews and felt the king had made a serious mistake in trusting these foreigners with such high offices. They remind the king that these men are Jews, different in race and culture from the Babylonians. The king had set them over the affairs of the province of Babylon, the most important province in the empire and the key to political security for the entire realm. The personal loyalty of such officers should be beyond question; but, as the Chaldeans point out, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had not shown any regard for the king himself.

The second accusation that they do not serve Nebuchadnezzar's gods is more than merely a religious difference. The whole concept of political loyalty, of which the worship of the image was an expression, is bound up in the idea that Nebuchadnezzar's gods have favored him and given him victory. To challenge Nebuchadnezzar's gods, therefore, is to challenge Nebuchadnezzar himself and to raise a question as to the political integrity of the three men accused. As proof of their suspicions, they charge Daniel's three companions with not worshiping the golden image. The arguments were calculated to arouse the anger of Nebuchadnezzar and to bring about the downfall of these three men with the possibility that the Chaldeans themselves might be given greater authority in political affairs.  
pp. 86-87

**Boice asks the question:**

Why did they say this? Why did they accuse these from among their own number? I think it is not at all hard to discover the reason for their actions as jealousy and resentment toward those who had been part of the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's earlier dream, which they themselves had been unable to discern. It was the same motivation that causes coworkers to slander or gossip about each other when they should be building one another up. It is the thing that causes unpleasantness in schools or sibling rivalry.

The convictions of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego provided their enemy coworkers with an opportunity to accuse them of treason, and this is what they did, phrasing their remarks in such a manner as to work Nebuchadnezzar into the greatest possible agitation.

p. 43

**Gowan says:**

The accusation is threefold, concluding with disrespect of the image and adding refusal to serve Nebuchadnezzar's gods, suggesting the image did represent a deity (v. 12). The accusation begins with the issue that motivates Nebuchadnezzar throughout the whole story: "These pay no heed to you" (with a remarkable play on the words used of issuing the decree in v. 10, evident only in Aramaic). The accusers can be sure Nebuchadnezzar will react to that.

p. 67

**Miller says:**

Once more the astrologers emphasized that these disrespectful and treasonous men were “Jews.” Since there appears to have been no reason to point out their nationality, the designation seems to reflect a resentment toward the Jewish people and toward their religious practices that caused them to act so very differently from the rest of the world. Such anti-Semitism is ultimately satanic in origin, as Whitcomb explains: “Satan knew that through this divinely chosen people would come the Messiah of Israel and the Savior of all mankind . . .

The king was reminded that he had given these Jews positions of authority in his administration (“some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon”). Either the astrologers were stressing the magnitude of the Jews’ rebellion (even though the king himself had graciously given them positions, they were unappreciative and insubordinate) or they were issuing a veiled assault on the king’s judgment—Nebuchadnezzar had made a mistake in assigning these foreigners positions over native Babylonians.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are now named as the guilty parties, and three charges are brought against them: (1) they paid no attention to the king (and his commands), (2) they did not serve the king’s gods, and (3) they refused to worship the golden statue the king himself had set up. The penalty for such actions was death.  
p. 117

**Wiersbe says:**

True faith isn’t frightened by threats, impressed by crowds, or swayed by superstitious ceremonies. True faith obeys the Lord and trusts Him to work out the consequences. These three Jewish men know the law of God—“You shall have no other gods before Me . . . You shall not bow down to them nor serve them” (Ex. 20:3, 5, NKJV). Once the Lord has spoken on a matter, the matter is settled and there’s no room for discussion or need for compromise. To bow before the image even once, no matter what excuse they might give, would have destroyed their witness and broken their fellowship with God. The tense of the Greek verb in Matthew 4:9 indicates that Satan asked Jesus to worship him only one time, and the Savior refused. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would not bow down to the golden image even once because it would lead to serving Nebuchadnezzar’s false gods for the rest of their lives.

p. 41

**Campbell says:**

Three charges were made against the Jews: (1) they showed no regard or respect for the king; (2) they did not serve the king's gods; and (3) they did not worship the king's image. The first charge was false but the others demonstrably true. All three were intended to arouse the king's anger and even to accomplish the downfall of these insubordinate Jews and their replacement by their accusers.

p. 32

**Gangel says:**

In an early evidence of anti-Semitism, the Chaldeans leveled three accusations against the Jews:

- They held no regard for the king himself.
- They did not serve the king's gods.
- They failed to **worship the image of gold**.

Furthermore, the words **whom you have set up over the affairs of the province of Babylon** indicate some deep resentment and even open criticism of the king himself. Since in ancient cultures the worship of a variety of deities (religion) was so bound up with the affairs of state (politics), refusal to bow down became, in effect, an act of treason. The separation of the gods from the king may support the idea that this statue was designed for the direct worship of Nebuchadnezzar, not just the general worship of the gods of Babylon.

p. 77

**He says finally:**

Therefore, the three young heroes were simply obeying Old Testament law: "You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me" . . .

p. 77

**Peterson paraphrases verses 12:**

Well, there are some Jews here—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—whom you have placed in high positions in the province of Babylon. These men are ignoring you, O king. They don't respect your gods and they won't worship the gold statue you set up.”

p. 1586

**Proverbs 4:25-27 (NLT)**

Look straight ahead, and fix your eyes on what lies before you. Mark out a straight path for your feet; then stick to the path and stay safe. Don't get sidetracked; keep your feet from following evil.

Our three heroes have certainly done that in this episode of the life of Daniel.

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: How quickly pride can rise up in our hearts and get our focus off of the Lord and on ourselves.

LESSON #2: Pride causes Nebuchadnezzar to think that he is invincible.

LESSON #3: The summons that was given to all of the officials was for the dedication of the image mentioned both in verses 2 & 3. The real purpose was so that all of them could “fall down and worship the image” (verse 5).

LESSON #4: Music is used here to stir their emotions and cause them to respond to this command to “fall down and worship” (verse 5).

LESSON #5: The “blazing furnace” reminds us of the lake of fire that will be the destiny of all those who do not have a relationship with Jesus Christ.

LESSON #6: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego have the courage to stand when everybody else is falling on their face and worshipping the image.

LESSON #7: Daniel had the courage to stand for his convictions with regard to dietary requirements in Daniel 1 and God granted his request.

LESSON #8: Daniel’s example probably really encouraged Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in this courageous stand they have made in our passage today.

LESSON #9: Jealousy sure can blind you with regard to the real issues involved here.

LESSON #10: These astrologers have forgotten that they are alive today because of Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and Daniel's prayers and interpretation of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar.

LESSON #11: Jealousy fills your heart with murder and resentment.

LESSON #12: Jealousy fills your heart with selfishness. These astrologers would like to have these three men out of the way so that they can have their positions in the government.

(The Purity Principle by Randy Alcorn) Sisters, OR: Multnomah. Copyright –  
Eternal Perspective Ministries, 2003.

Scripture provides us with multiple motivations for obeying God. Love is one. But the Bible clearly supplies us with two other motives that appeal directly to our self-interest: fear of God and hope of reward.  
p. 18

The fear of God is a profound respect for His holiness, which includes a fear of the consequences of disobeying Him. Weighing these consequences can motivate us to purity.

We can also argue for purity because God is by nature a Rewarder (see Hebrews 11:6), and He will surely reward us for making choices that please Him. Obedience to His will and His way forms the underlying lattice for that rarest and most wonderful human condition—*joy*.  
pp. 18-19

(How Great Thou Art: A Daily Devotional by Steve Halliday & William Travis) Sisters, OR: Multnomah. Copyright – Steve Halliday & William Travis, 1999.

One day many years ago a distinguished man was unable to proceed in his journey because of a fierce storm. That night he was groaning in great mental distress and found himself unable to sleep. His pious servant said, “Master, do you not believe that God governed this world very well before you came into it?”

“Yes,” was the reply.

“And do you not believe that He will govern it very well after you leave it?”

“I have no doubt of it,” he answered.

“Then, master, can you not believe that He will govern it all right while you are in it?”

To this the man did not reply, but shortly afterwards turned over and went to sleep.

Happy as they who enjoy a firm trust in God and His controlling providence! In great peace shall they possess their souls. Their best Friend sits at the helm of affairs and guides in such a way that all things shall work for their good.

ROBERT BOYD

(October 16)

**(The Problem of Life With God: Living With a Perfect God in an Imperfect World by Tommy Nelson) Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman. Copyright – Tommy Nelson, 2002.**

In *The Hiding Place*, Corrie Ten Boom gives a wonderful example of this truth. She and her sister Betsy were being held in a concentration camp. Betsy said that they still had to trust God and thank Him for everything.

We're talking hard-core Christianity. Everything about the camp was awful—being in the middle of a war, being separated from family, and watching other prisoners die. But day in and day out, the things Corrie hated above everything else were the lice that bit her in bed. It was miserable. She couldn't get away from them. It was impossible to get a good night's sleep.

One time when Corrie and Betsy were thanking God for everything, Betsy interrupted Corrie at the end of her prayer and said, "And the bedbugs, Corrie—thank God for those lice." Corrie thought her sister was crazy, but she thanked God for bedbugs by faith.

After they had been at the camp a few days, they started a Bible study in their barracks—an unauthorized activity that would've provoked the guards. But the guards never came into their barracks to break up the study or order them to quit. They always wondered why.

Later Corrie learned it was because the guards were afraid of catching the lice.

It turned out that the shield of God around Corrie and Betsy Ten Boom was a bedbug. Do you see how God seeks what passes by? Only God could use a bedbug!

Again, these are Solomon's four platforms: *God is wise; God is mysterious; enjoy today; and rest in the sovereignty of God.*  
pp. 56-57

### Jeremiah said:

William Barclay, one of the great historic commentators on the Scripture, relates a fable in which three of the devil's apprentices were coming to this earth to finish up their apprenticeships. They were talking to Satan, the chief of devils, about their plans to tempt and ruin man. The first devil said, "I know what I'll do. I'll tell them there is no God."

Satan said, "That won't delude anybody. They *know* there is a God."

The second one said, "I'll tell them there is no hell."

"You will deceive no one that way," Satan replied, "because men know deep down in their hearts that there is a place called hell and a punishment for sin."

The third said, "I know what I'll do. I'll tell them there is no hurry."

And Satan said, "You will ruin men by the thousands. The most dangerous of all delusions is that there is plenty of time."

In the mideighties I was working on a project about the book of Revelation, called *Before It's Too Late*. I came across a story about a time when the Pacific Northwest of the United States was witnessing a cataclysm unlike anything our nation had seen for generations.

Old Harry was a stubborn man. He had become a legend in the Pacific Northwest. Though he was warned repeatedly that his life was in jeopardy, he just laughed. Red flags and danger signs are often ignored, and Harry, well, he was just a picture of that kind of a person. He lived at the foot of a quiet mountain.

At least, she had been quiet for 123 years. Sometimes she stirred to spit cinder and ash or drool lava from her cavernous crater. Occasionally she looked down steep snow fields and rumbled a muted threat to the people who explored the lush forest and mountain meadows below. Some thought Bigfoot, the legendary giant beast, stalked her slopes. But Mount Saint Helens was seething inside, ready to unleash her force upon unbelieving admirers. She was awesome and mysterious, but only threatening to the few who understood her power.

March 1980, an earthquake measuring 4.1 on the Richter scale registered near Mount Saint Helens in southwestern Washington state. Forest rangers were advised of possible dangers from avalanches which could trap skiers or climbers. Most folks were unconcerned. The mountain setting was tranquil as people anticipated a time of renewal. The earth was singing with new warmth.

Then on March 27 a ranger heard what he thought was a sonic boom. The mountain had erupted. Scientists rushed to assess the explosive potential of the mountain. They painted a frightening scenario of future destruction. People listened, but many could not comprehend a disaster of such magnitude. Old Harry probably read the news stories while he ate a solitary breakfast and fed scraps to his sixteen cats. "Nobody knows more

about this mountain than Harry, and it don't dare blow up on him," he bragged.

Days and week passed. Some became impatient with the geologists' negative reports. People would lose their concern of anything ever happening and wanted to get back to business as usual. Everybody heard the geologists say what they wanted to hear them say. The weren't really listening to them at all.

When sheriffs' deputies ordered all residents on the shores of Spirit Lake at the base of the mountain to leave for safety, Harry said, "I'm having a hell of a time living my life alone. I'm king of all I survey. I've got plenty of whiskey. I've got food for fifteen years, and I'm sitting high on the hog." Sunday morning, May 18, 1980, the mountain exploded and hurled pulverized rock and ash almost fourteen miles high. The force of the blast flattened trees, uprooting and smashing them like millions of dominoes spreading out from the crater. Steam, ash, and gases spouted from the incinerated vegetation. Mud flocs flooded the rivers and transformed the beautiful mountain lands into a ghastly, charred landscape. The mountain's vengeance was five hundred times greater than the nuclear bomb that leveled Hiroshima.

The warnings were over. There was no longer any time to run. No one ever saw Harry again.

pp. 93-95

**(A Savior Worth Having by E. V. Hill) Chicago, IL: Moody Press. Copyright – E. V. Hill, 2002.**

When you choose a savior you want to know he is going to survive you. If he isn't, what are you going to do when he is dead? We need somebody who is going to be here when the world is on fire. We need someone who is everlasting, who is in total charge. We need a God who has been charged in the fire. We need a God who knows all about and can heal our wounded spirit. We need somebody who has been in the grave and who has conquered death. We need somebody who is now alive, that we can pray to and who will answer our prayers.

p. 51

**(The God I Love by Joni Eareckson Tada) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.  
Copyright – Joni Eareckson Tada, 2003.**

The God Ken and I were growing to love more and more was a paradox. He kept closing doors so we would find the open window. And always, the window had a much, much better view.  
p. 291

**(Surrender: The Heart God Controls by Nancy Leigh DeMoss) Chicago, IL:  
Moody. Copyright – Nancy Leigh DeMoss, 2003.**

You don't want to surrender to God's control? You won't bow to His will in relation to your marriage, your morals, your attitudes, your tongue, your eating habits, your spending habits, or the way you spend your time? Then count on it—the very points on which you refuse to surrender will become “enemies” that rule over you—lust, greed, possessions, food, sloth, immorality, anger, etc.  
p. 43

### Facing God's Court Should be Our Biggest Concern

Hanging out at a bagel shop one day I asked a couple of non-Christian friends, "What's the most important thing I can pray for you?"

The woman was taken back. "Health, I guess," she said.

"Health? That's not the most important thing," I said. "Sooner or later your health is going to go, no matter who prays for you. There must be something more important than that."

She was stumped. "What's more important than that?"

"What about your relationship with God?"

"I never thought about that."

Then her husband said, "You mean God is going to haul us into court or something?"

Now I was surprised. "Yeah," I said, "I guess you could say that."

*Citation:* Lee Eclov, Vernon Hills, Illinois

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## WHEN WE SEE CHRIST

Oft times the day seems long, our trials hard to bear,  
 We're tempted to complain, to murmur and despair;  
 But Christ will soon appear to catch His bride away,  
 All tears forever over in God's eternal day.

### *Chorus:*

It will be worth it all when we see Jesus,  
 Life's trials will seem so small when we see Christ;  
 One glimpse of His dear face all sorrow will erase,  
 So bravely run the race till we see Christ

Sometimes the sky looks dark with not a ray of light,  
 We're tossed and driven on, no human help in sight;  
 But there is One in heav'n who knows our deepest care,  
 Let Jesus solve your problem just go to Him in pray'r.

### *Chorus*

Life's day will soon be o'er, all storms forever past,  
 We'll cross the great divide to glory, safe at last;  
 We'll share the joys of heav'n—a harp, a home, a crown,  
 The tempter will be banished, we'll lay our burden down.

### *Chorus*

("When We See Christ" by Esther Kerr Rusthoi. *The New Church Hymnal*, Lexicon Music, Inc., 1976. #481. Copyright 1941. Renewal 1969 by Howard Rusthoi. Assigned to Singspiration, Inc.)