

**October 28**

**Scriptures:** Read Daniel 3 & 4

**Key Verse:** ‘How great are His signs, and how mighty His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion is from generation to generation.’  
(Daniel 4:3)

### **Overview**

With chapter three we come to the well known story of the three heroes of faith—Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego (Heb. 11:33). What wonderful examples of consecration and faith in God, even when their lives were at stake. Nebuchadnezzar was astonished that anyone would disobey his authoritative word, especially when he had their lives in his hands. Yet the Hebrew men knew of a higher authority in whose hands their lives really were. After Nebuchadnezzar had conquered so many nations, believing that he had overcome their gods, he doubted that any God could save them (3:15b), but God’s servants knew their God was able. We do not read of Daniel in this chapter (possibly he was away on official business), but certainly he, like his friends, would not have bowed down (Dan. 6).

It is amazing how God allowed them to go through the fire rather than saving them beforehand, just as God sometimes allows us to go through trials. God had several reasons. In their going through the fire, He put Satan (who moved the king) to shame, and thus it would be a witness to all that God is in control and He is all-powerful. It would have been so easy for the men to compromise and find justification in bowing down to the idol, as did many Jews, but even when a second chance was offered to them, they did not bow. Therefore, they were used by God to display His power. They experienced His presence (the fourth man in the fire), His power (in not being burned), and His providence (in seeing the situation turn out for good).

Yet another reason God allowed them to be thrown into the fire was to test their faith. After this experience they came out closer to God, having more strength, purity and freedom (only their chains were burned off). The major reason for this event, however, was that God’s name might be glorified, and indeed it was! The ancient Greek version of the Old Testament tells us that this event occurred about the same time that Jerusalem fell. God wanted the nations to know that He was indeed all-powerful. If He so desired, He who was Lord over the fire could have easily prevented His city of Jerusalem from burning at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, but instead He purposed to bring about Jerusalem’s destruction in order to punish His apostate people. Through this incident, which resulted in the king’s decree, all the nations were to know that the God of Israel is the true and mighty God.

Chapter four shows the absolute power of God and His authority over all things, which King Nebuchadnezzar came to realize after the Lord supernaturally humiliated him because of his pride (4:17; cf. Ezek. 17:24). Once the Lord had restored him, he wrote a proclamation of what God had done for him (recorded in chapter 4; cf. Ps. 66:16). Nebuchadnezzar had seen the power of God on many occasions (e.g. Daniel’s interpretation of his two dreams, and the three heroes of faith), and yet he did not learn the lessons God tried to teach him through these miracles (cf. Job 33:14-30). God gave him the dream of the cut down tree to serve as a warning, and again only

Daniel, upon whom was the Spirit of God, was able to interpret it. Even after Nebuchadnezzar heard the warning and Daniel's compassionate plea (4:27), he did not heed it.

Nebuchadnezzar's lengthy proclamation in chapter four goes on to tell us that the dream came to fulfillment one year later, as he was enjoying his beautiful and majestic palace. Nebuchadnezzar's grand building projects made Babylon "the golden city", the most beautiful city on earth at that time. His fabulous and flourishing gardens, built in honour of his wife Saramis, are listed today among the seven wonders of the ancient world. Pride swelled up in his heart when he attributed everything to himself. In so doing, he asserted his independence and denied God (cf. Mk. 7:21-23; 1 Pet. 5:5; Mat. 23:12; Ps. 31:23; Prov. 6:16-17; 8:13; 11:2; 16:18).

Stricken with insanity, the great and mighty Nebuchadnezzar, king of kings, became like an animal for seven years, and the dream, just as Daniel had interpreted it, was fulfilled (4:28-33). During this time, Daniel likely played a leading role in the kingdom. When God finally restored Nebuchadnezzar's mind, he recognized who is higher than himself (4:35; cf. Job 9:12; Isa. 40:15-17; Ps. 103:19), repented of his pride, and made a decision to change. Therefore, God also restored to him his kingdom and blessed him in even a greater way than before (4:36). Although, he was a Gentile king over a heathen nation, he came to understand three important facts about God (4:37): (1) all His works are true, (2) all His ways are just (cf. Rev. 15:3) and, (3) He will humble those who walk in pride (e.g. Acts 12:21-23).

## **Prayer**

Lord, we purpose to humble ourselves before You and not be like Nebuchadnezzar, who was so full of pride that You had to humble him. Help us to develop our faith and trust in You, that we may be effective witnesses of Your power.