

Daniel 3:3-7

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Nebuchadnezzar unveils his statue of gold to his sub-rulers. When music plays, everyone is commanded to bow and worship the statue. Anyone who breaks this law will be burned alive in a furnace.

At Nebuchadnezzar's word, the leaders and facilitators of his government attend the *dedication* of the golden statue. The entire ruling class was *assembled* to witness the unveiling of this 90-foot-tall image. Nebuchadnezzar did not merely wish for them to see this impressive feat of architecture; he summoned his rulers to force them into worship under threat of death. Once there, the full scope of Nebuchadnezzar's purpose is revealed.

The satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates and all the rulers of the provinces stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up, the 90-foot-tall golden statue, when the herald of the king proclaims to them what the statue means. They are ordered to bow down to the statue when music is played. This music comes from a large band of musicians playing the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, and bagpipe. These are wind and string instruments, loud and resonant when played together. The passage also says all kinds of music, to imply many other instruments. The point is that Nebuchadnezzar ordered an orchestra to play for his golden image, to cue his subjects. Once the music plays, the command...O people...you are to fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up.

Despite Nebuchadnezzar's power—his status as king over the world's greatest empire at the time, his military capabilities, his wealth—here he is using fear as a motivator. The command is simple: obey him—or die. His herald continues: *whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire.*

In the event that a 90-foot-tall golden statue built by the world's greatest king accompanied by the royal orchestra does not motivate worship of the statue, Nebuchadnezzar ensures enforcement. He will incinerate anyone who refuses

to worship his creation *immediately*. It is by threatening lives that he receives the praise he desires from other men.

Predictably, the audience obeys this perilous command. Once the music plays, *all the peoples, nations and men of every language fell down and worshiped the golden image*. The following passages will reveal that three persons resisted worshipping idols of gold and man. The threat of death motivated all the rulers under Nebuchadnezzar, except for Meshach, Shadrach, and Abed-nego. They serve a King who not only can deal out death, but is also the author of life.

Biblical Text:

³Then the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates and all the rulers of the provinces were assembled for the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. ⁴Then the herald loudly proclaimed: "To you the command is given, O peoples, nations and *men of every language*, ⁵that at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe and all kinds of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up. ⁶But whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire."⁷Therefore at that time, when all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe and all kinds of music, all the peoples, nations and *men of every language fell down and worshiped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.*