

# Rapture Prequels

## DANIEL

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, first raided Jerusalem in 605BC. He took away with him some of the foremost citizens. Among them were four teenagers - Daniel and his three friends known by us by their Babylonian names, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego.

The boys were selected for service in the royal court. Daniel excelled and over time rose to a position second only to Nebuchadnezzar.

We're in a great place to discover a rapture prequel for the following reasons:

1. Daniel has more to say about the Tribulation and the Antichrist than any other Old Testament book.
2. Daniel 11 includes a greater number of prophecies already fulfilled than any other single chapter in the Bible.

As the book opens, in chapter one, Daniel and his posse are being groomed for service in Babylon. Trouble is, the food they are provided violates Jewish dietary laws. They ask to be excused from eating the prohibited foods and instead be given a meager vegetarian diet. Their handlers fear retribution from Nebuchadnezzar if the boys deteriorate but they convince them to try the diet for ten days. After the trial period they are healthier than all the other trainees.

In chapter two Nebuchadnezzar has a dream. He asks his wise men to interpret the dream. But to see if they were truly wise, he refused to tell them the dream! It seems unfair, but Daniel steps up and says his God can reveal the dream and its meaning. It gains him an audience with the king.

In the dream the king had seen a statue with a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, legs of iron, and feet of iron

mingled with clay. A stone cut by supernatural means struck the feet, toppling the image.

Daniel gave the interpretation. The head of gold was Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon. After his kingdom fell, an inferior kingdom of silver would arise - the Medo-Persian Empire. Just as the statues arms of silver were joined by the chest of silver, so the Medes and Persians had been joined by Cyrus to defeat Babylon.

Next would come the bronze kingdom, Greece. The fourth kingdom, represented by the iron legs, was Rome. This kingdom would eventually exist as ten toes, or ten kingdoms, in an attempt to rule the world.

During the reign of that finally kingdom God would come and establish His kingdom. This is one of the reasons we talk about a future revived Roman Empire existing in the last days before the return of Jesus to establish the Millennial Kingdom.

Nebuchadnezzar was so impressed that he elevated Daniel to his high position in the government. Nebuchadnezzar gave a verbal acknowledgment that Daniel's God was the true King over all earthly rulers.

His new respect for God did not last long!

Daniel 3:1 Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its width six cubits. He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.

Daniel 3:2 And King Nebuchadnezzar sent word to gather together the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

Daniel 3:3 So the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered together for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

Daniel 3:4 Then a herald cried aloud: "To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages,

Daniel 3:5 that at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up;

Daniel 3:6 and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."

God told Nebuchadnezzar he was the head of gold. That wasn't good enough for the king. He made a statue of himself entirely of gold.

This was a problem for the Jewish boys!

Daniel 3:7 So at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the horn, flute, harp, and lyre, in symphony with all kinds of music, all the people, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the gold image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

Daniel 3:8 Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and accused the Jews.

Daniel 3:9 They spoke and said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever!

Daniel 3:10 You, O king, have made a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the gold image;

Daniel 3:11 and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

Daniel 3:12 There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up."

Daniel 3:13 Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. So they brought these men before the king.

Daniel 3:14 Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up?

Daniel 3:15 Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, good! But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?"

Nonbelievers have such short memories! The God who would deliver them was the one who had told him his dream as well as the interpretation. He was the God who Nebuchadnezzar had acknowledged just a few verses earlier.

Daniel 3:16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter.

Daniel 3:17 If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king.

Daniel 3:18 But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."

Some of the greatest insight into suffering in the will of God, and walking by faith, is in this response. Study it; make it a part of your own theology of suffering.

Daniel 3:19 Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. He spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated.

Daniel 3:20 And he commanded certain mighty men of valor who were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, and cast them into the burning fiery furnace.

Daniel 3:21 Then these men were bound in their coats, their trousers, their turbans, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

Daniel 3:22 Therefore, because the king's command was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego.

Daniel 3:23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

Daniel 3:24 Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king."

Daniel 3:25 "Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

Daniel 3:26 Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace and spoke, saying, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here." Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire.

Daniel 3:27 And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king's counselors gathered together, and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them.

Daniel 3:28 Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God!

Daniel 3:29 Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this."

Daniel 3:30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the province of Babylon.

The fourth man in the furnace was an Old Testament appearance of Jesus Christ. He walked with them through their fiery trial.

Looking at the types we would say that Nebuchadnezzar and his statue are typical of the future Antichrist and the false image he has set-up of himself in the Jewish Temple. The exact mid-point of the Great Tribulation is his demand that everyone worship his image.

It is at that mid-point that tremendous persecution is focused upon the children of Israel. It is an event called the abomination of desolation. It's when Jesus said that, if you were in Israel, you should flee for your very lives out into the wilderness. It'll be rough!

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego are thus typical of the Jews who must bow or face the fiery persecution of the Antichrist. We know from the Book of the Revelation that many Jews will be kept safe through the fiery trial until the return of Jesus.

So that brings us to Daniel. He is conspicuously absent in chapter three. Where was he?

There aren't a lot of possibilities. It comes down to two main ones:

1. Daniel isn't mentioned because he backslid and bowed down.
2. Daniel, as second to Nebuchadnezzar, was away on state business in a time when travel took months to accomplish.

No one believes for a moment that Daniel bowed! He is one of the truest, purest, unblemished character in the Bible.

No, he did not bow. He was gone.

***Daniel is yet another rapture prequel!*** He represents the church, absent from the earth while the Antichrist unleashes his reign of terror upon the Jews.