

We're going to start in Daniel, chapter three. The whole book of Daniel is lessons from past history for living in prophetic times. And we're certainly living in prophetic times. Anyone who has their eyes open, anyone who knows anything about Bible prophecy, is able to see—with no escape—that we're living in the very last days of the Church Age.

---

*The whole book of Daniel is lessons from past history for living in prophetic times.*

---

Let's read the first seven verses and then let's look at what God will do to reach a soul to bring them into the family of God.

*“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. 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. 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. Then a herald cried aloud: ‘To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages ... 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 the King Nebuchadnezzar has set up; and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.’ So at that time, when all the people heard the sound of 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 3:1–7*

## What will God do to Reach a Soul?

As we'll see, moving on from verse 8, there were three who disobeyed. And that, of course, was the three friends of Daniel. But at this point, before we get into looking at these verses, note the seven points that we have about the lengths to which God will go to reach a soul and save that soul:

- 1) First, He brought Daniel and his company to his attention in chapter one. You'll remember that they were put to the test of not eating the king's food, not drinking the king's wine. The main reason for that was not because there was anything wrong with the food or the wine, but the fact that it was always offered to a false god before it was brought to them. We see Paul dealing with that same subject in passages like Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8 and 9, and so forth. That's chapter one.
- 2) Secondly, he gave Nebuchadnezzar a problem that seemed to have no solution in the dream that none of his wise men could interpret. God puts obstacles in front of people and allows affliction in the lives of people to wake them up to their need. You know, it's very easy to be arrogant when everything is going well; most people who come to faith in Christ, come

to faith in Christ because of some problem or pressure or trial that they're going through. So, he's got this problem; none of his wise men can solve the problem.

- 3) The dream was then told and interpreted by Daniel with the prayer-backing of his three faithful friends. Once again, Daniel comes to the attention of Nebuchadnezzar. It's like every time he has a problem, this guy solves it, and God is directing his attention to someone who has the ultimate solution to life—that is faith in the True and the Living God.
- 4) In chapter three, God is going to allow the arrogance of Nebuchadnezzar to bring the friends of Daniel to the forefront by their act of civil disobedience. We'll see that as we go through to verse 12 in this chapter. The question is always asked, "Where was Daniel?" The simple answer is, we don't know. But it does seem that God allowed this to happen because Daniel has kind of been in the forefront and gotten a lot of attention. This chapter shows us that his three friends were not just tagging along on his coattails; they had a faith of their own. They had stability of their own. They were able to make decisions on their own and to take a stand that they knew was right.
- 5) In a fit of rage, Nebuchadnezzar commands the three to be cast into the superheated flame. This only serves to reveal God's power to protect them, as well as giving Nebuchadnezzar a brief glimpse of the Lord Jesus with them in the fire. We'll see that from verses 13–30. So why does God keep working in this way with Nebuchadnezzar? Because Nebuchadnezzar was the king of the greatest kingdom the world has ever known. We talk about great kingdoms—most people don't know how vast the kingdom of Genghis Khan was. It was huge, but it was not as big as Nebuchadnezzar's. Once Nebuchadnezzar is finally broken and humbled, and it's going to take a lot because he's pretty hardened, we're going to see in chapter four that it takes seven years of living like a wild animal to finally humble him and break him. But that's going to finally do it and he is not only going to come to faith, but he's also going to write a testimonial about how God finally reached him that would be sent out into all the provinces, once again, reaching all the way from India to Africa. Millions and millions of people of various languages are there. And this proclamation went out to them all. He's going to be used to reach many, many people.
- 6) Finally, proving that "*pride goes ... before the fall,*" as we're told in Proverbs 16:18, he strikes Nebuchadnezzar with a beastly insanity right at the very point of his boast about his own greatness. This would come up in chapter four. This was even foretold by his dream and Daniel's interpretation. Still, he remained arrogant. Daniel told him that if he humbled himself, he would be able to escape all these things. But of course, he was too arrogant. He was reminded six times that "*The Most High rules in the kingdom of men.*" You have the references there in Daniel 2:21, 37; 4:17, 25–26, 32. If someone is told over and over and over, one of two things is going to have to happen: either there's going to have to come a point of humility and a breakthrough of light into the darkness, or there's going to be a sealing of the conscience of that person beyond the point of no return.

- 7) Daniel made it clear that Nebuchadnezzar could avoid all this by simply humbling himself before God in Daniel 4:37. But it took seven years of imposed humiliation. Pride is a difficult thing to break. We're going to study in a few moments the Doctrine of Pride, which is really the Doctrine of Arrogance.

The Bible uses the word "*pride*," or I should say the translators use the word "*pride*," but "pride" really is not a good word to translate the idea—the concept that we have in Scripture. It is actually "arrogance." Pride can be a good thing, you know, pride in one's appearance, for example, not being slovenly, pride in one's family, pride in one's nation, pride in good things, pride in what God has done for us and given us in the Scripture. Those are good things. So, the word "arrogance" really has a negative connotation in all cases, and it's a much better translation. So, what do we see? In verses 1–7, we're going to see that arrogance is the natural condition of the unbeliever. Arrogance is what must be broken before a person can come to Christ. The one-word summary in answer to the question, "Why does God allow so much suffering in the world?" is "humility." Suffering is designed to teach us that we are not smart enough, we are not strong enough, we are not big enough to deal with life on our own.

The golden image that we read about in verses 1–3, no doubt resulted from Daniel's interpretation of his dream in chapter two. Remember, he saw the great image: the head was made of gold, the chest and arms of silver, bronze in the waist and the thighs, and then the legs are iron. Finally, the feet—iron mixed with clay. And in the interpretation, Daniel said, "You are the head of gold." He also said, "God has given you your kingdom." Look back to Daniel 2:36 and 37, "*This is the dream ... we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. You, O king, are a king of kings.*" Now, that could go to your head. "*For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory.*" He took one part of it to boost his ego; he ignored the other part and, ultimately, of course, he'll pay the price.

But from the interpretation of the head of gold, apparently, as we move now into chapter three, he says, "Well, I'll just build a big image made of gold." Based on the measurements that we have here, it would have been 90 feet high and 9 feet thick. Now that's disproportionate, but we don't know how large the base was. Archeologists have found a massive base near where ancient Babylon used to sit, and they surmise that it may have been the base. So that would have added quite a bit to the height of this image that was on the plain of Dura. "*Dura*" is a word that simply means "a plain or a valley." So, they were in a plain or a valley where this great image had been set up.

He then calls all the people. Here a list of the eight different groups:

- 1) The Satraps or chief officials under the king,
- 2) The Administrators were prefects, military commanders,
- 3) Governors were civil administrators,
- 4) Counselors were advisers to the various authorities, treasurers, financial administrators,
- 5) Judges were legal administrators,
- 6) Magistrates were those who carried out the laws, and
- 7) Other officials would include subordinate and local officials from various areas.

So, the image is going to be inaugurated. They gather together all these people. The symphony is there. I call it "Nebuchadnezzar's Ragtime Band. Five different kinds of instruments are named.

Mainly, these are wind and stringed instruments. But it goes on to say, *“in symphony with all kinds of music,”* so there could have been many, many more. I think in the King James Version, one of them is actually called “bagpipes.” Here’s where the problem comes in for the friends of Daniel—to simply bow to the image. If the image, for example, represented Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom, to simply bow to the image would not be a problem. And why is that? Because it was common custom to bow before royalty. As a matter of fact, in the story of David and Abigail (1 Samuel 25:23), what did she do as soon as she came to David? It says she bowed herself to the ground. That was the typical response when entering into the presence of royalty. The problem was that the command was not just to bow to the image, to show respect to the image, it was to worship the image. That’s where the problem came in. So that was the command, and, of course, these three are going to disobey.

Let’s go ahead and read on because I don’t want to leave you hanging with what happens here. Daniel 3:8, *“Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and accused the Jews. They spoke and said to king Nebuchadnezzar, ‘O king live forever! You, O king, have made a decree that everyone who hears the sound ... and whoever does not fall down, and worship shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshack, 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.’”* And of course, we all know what happens: Nebuchadnezzar flies into a rage—he tells them, “I’m going to give you one more chance.” And their response is, “It isn’t going to happen.”

Look at 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. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us.’”* I want you to see their orientation here. It’s very important. *“Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of your hand.”* “He is able” and “He will.” But there’s a difference in those two things: He is able to deliver us out of it, but He will, ultimately, whether He does that or not, whether He allows us to be burned alive—*“He will deliver us out of your hand.”*

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.”* And of course, this leads to Nebuchadnezzar ordering that the fire be built up seven times—made as absolutely hot as possible. And the flame of the fire kills the men that tried to throw the three Hebrews in. Then, of course, you remember that Nebuchadnezzar, as he went near the mouth of the burning furnace, what does he see? He sees the three walking around in the midst of a fire, and there’s a fourth man in the fire. The fourth man we know is the Lord Jesus Christ. God gave him a vision of the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ some 500–600 years before Christ came on the earth. Once again, people say, “Well, why doesn’t God give that to everyone?” Some people wouldn’t respond if God appeared and stood right in front of Him. They say, “It’s a hallucination.” They say, you know, “I have indigestion; I’m dreaming.” Whatever.

Anyone who can hear the offer of the Gospel and the message that, apart from Christ, their eternity is the Lake of Fire and harden their heart and say, “I don’t believe it,” there is nothing that will reach that person. It is impossible. We must realize that because sometimes we think, “Oh, if I just maybe make a better argument; if somehow I can just come across a little more loving,” or whatever tactic

you might want to try to use to get to a person—no argument will reach an unreachable person. No argument can break through a heart that is totally hardened to things of God. And that's when we must realize that some people only God can reach and some people, He goes to great extents to reach, and others He allows to go their way because nothing He did would get through to them anyway.

## Arrogance

So, this brings us to the Doctrine of Arrogance. This is a very important doctrine because it's one of the main issues that we deal with in dealing with the human condition. These seven points, I think, lay out the issue clearly:

- 1) It was arrogance over his beauty and his position that caused Lucifer to fail and to become Satan. You know, in the beginning, the most beautiful creature that God ever created was named Lucifer. Lucifer means “light bearer.” He was a bearer of the light of God. He reflected the glory of God. But his beauty was so great, he became arrogant over his beauty, and that was the basis of his fall. You can see that in Isaiah 14:12–15, and in Ezekiel 28:14–19.
- 2) Those in positions of spiritual authority (includes pastors, evangelists, and leaders), are warned against pride as “*the snare of the devil.*” What brought him down he will use to try to bring us down. Pride is the snare of the devil, as stated in 1 Timothy 3:6.
- 3) The categories of “*the lust of the flesh*” fall into three ascending groups. You'll remember this from 1 John 2:16, “*the lust of the flesh*” is the most basic. That is, the desire for gratification. It could be sexual gratification; it can be comfort gratification; it can be even food gratification and become a “*lust of the flesh.*” And then, “*the lust of the eyes.*” This is the coveting. This is, “I want what I see. I want what that person has. I want more than is mine,” and so on. And then the ultimate is called “*the pride of life.*” This is the essential arrogance that is the basic function of human sin nature. The natural mentality of human sin nature is a mentality of arrogance, and it is the desire to exalt self.
- 4) Pride, which is the mental sin of arrogance, is listed by Jesus as one of the things from within that defiles one's life. We are not defiled by what we eat, by what we drink. Jesus said, “There is nothing that can go into the mouth of a man that defiles him.” Now, it may make you sick, it may not be good for you, but it is not spiritual defilement. It is what comes out of the mouth that defiles the person. We read this in Mark 7:21–23.
- 5) Pride is listed first in the seven things that are an abomination to God found in Proverbs 6:16–19. In Proverbs 6, we have the seven deadly sins, the first of which is pride. Pride being, of course, arrogance.
- 6) Pride or arrogance inevitably leads to shame and defeat. It will always, ultimately lead to shame and defeat (Proverbs 11:2; Proverbs 16:18). I don't know how many times we see

athletes, how many times we see politicians—we see people making great boasts. Inevitably, they end up ashamed. It becomes a cause of shame and defeat.

- 7) The only cure for pride and arrogance is genuine humility. Do you know the best way to learn humility? Being humbled. Now there are times when we learn to humble ourselves, and that's a wonderful thing. But we probably have learned that by being humbled by circumstances. Enforced humility is when God brings us into circumstances or situations that we can't handle.

---

*Humility is a great strength. Arrogance is a great weakness.*

---

How many has he brought Nebuchadnezzar through? Here's the greatest king on the earth, and what happens? He keeps having dreams that keep him awake at night. He becomes an insomniac. Even his wise man can't tell him what the dreams are or what they mean, and he's a mental wreck. But of course, it's going to get worse for him because he's going to end up like an animal. In ancient records, there is actually a king in Babylonia who became like a wild animal and spent seven years living as a wild animal. How about that? Isn't that interesting? Not that we need that as reinforcement, but it never hurts. The only cure is genuine humility (we see this also in 2 Chronicles 32:26 and James 4:7-10).

Humility is a great strength. Arrogance is a great weakness, and it happens around us all the time. You watch a humble person, and you watch the people who mock them—the people who make fun of them, the people that maybe go out of their way to make life miserable for them, and you watch the strength of that humble person to just bear up, to just be patient. Then you watch what ultimately happens to the arrogant. Pride truly goes before the fall because pride is weak. It is weak by its very nature.

## The Devil's Religion

Along with the Doctrine of Arrogance, we should consider the Doctrine of the Devil's Religion. I adapted some of this from R.B. Thieme's book, *Daniel Chapter Three*. I've added extra verses and I've changed a few things, but to give credit where credit's due, I adapted the following from that book. We begin by recognizing that the devil, in attempting to be his own god, can only imitate the true things of God. He has no originality, so He imitates God. He counterfeits God, but He puts in a devilish twist. So, these are things the devil uses that the Bible talks about:

- 1) **A counterfeit gospel.** Paul talks about this in 2 Corinthians 11:3–4 and Galatians 1:8–9. You hear a false gospel all the time. You want to hear a false gospel? “God has to regenerate you before you can believe.” That's a false gospel. That is nowhere stated in Scripture. As a matter of fact, the opposite is stated. A false gospel can say, “Unless you're baptized, you cannot be saved.” That's a false gospel. Other false gospels will say that “You have to repent and give up your sins before you can believe in Jesus Christ.” Do you know that nobody in all of history has ever done that? I mean, you can repent all you want is an unbeliever. You're not going to be able to give up your sins. As long as you're “in the flesh,” as long as you are

unregenerate, you are a slave. Paul talks in Ephesians chapter two about three things we were without Christ: 1) we were spiritually dead, 2) we were spiritually enslaved, and 3) we were children of wrath. That's the first three verses of Ephesians chapter two, and there was absolutely nothing that we could do. So, all of our effort to remake ourselves, to improve ourselves, if I could give up my sins before coming to Christ, why would I need to come to Him? I've already solved my problem, haven't I? I need Him because I can't give up my sins. That's why we call Him "a Savior." That's why we call Him "a Deliverer." We come to him in humility, saying, "I am weak, I am helpless, I am hopeless, and You are the only One that can make a difference in my life." That's humility coming to the truth. So, we have a false gospel that Paul talks about.

- 2) Then, we have **counterfeit ministers**. Paul talks about them in 2 Corinthians 11:13–14. They look good, and they appear good—some of them practice really hard to look good. But how do you tell a false minister? Well, he has a false message. His message is wrong and possibly his whole way of life is wrong as well.
- 3) Satan comes up with **counterfeit doctrines**. Paul talks about them in 1 Timothy 4:1–3. He calls them "*doctrines of demons*." They originate in the kingdom of Satan. Colossians chapter two talks about it a lot in verses 8, 16, and 21–23. Some people will use philosophy, for example. They'll use asceticism, they'll use giving up things—you know, "*taste not, touch not*"—all kinds of rules, regulations, and everything else. Paul says these are false doctrines.
- 4) There's a **counterfeit communion**. In 1 Corinthians 10:20–21, Paul reminds us that we cannot partake of the Lord's Table and the table of demons. "*The table of demons*," essentially, as he was talking to Corinthian people, had to do with participating in the worship services of the temple that sat on the Acropolis there in Corinth and it involved idol worship and immorality. They had over a thousand prostitutes in that temple. It involved making sacrifices to idols, and he calls it "the communion table of demons."
- 5) There's a **counterfeit righteousness** that the devil has come up with in Matthew 19:16–22 and Matthew 23:27–28. This is what Jesus constantly rebuked the Scribes and the Pharisees for. They had a religion that made them look good to men and, as he said, they were like "*whitewashed tombstones*." Inside, they were filled with nothing but death, nothing but corruption. But they looked very good, and they prided themselves on being more righteous than anyone else.
- 6) The devil comes up with a **counterfeit spirituality**. He talks about this in Galatians 3:2–3. You'll remember Paul boasting about his former life or talking about the former boast that he had. In Philippians 3:4–6, he was "*a Hebrew of the Hebrews*." He was "*circumcised the eighth day*." He was "*of the tribe of Benjamin*." He could go on and on—he could talk about all of his "great spiritual accomplishments." And it meant absolutely nothing. It was a false spirituality (2 Corinthians 10:12). Remember, Hebrews 6:1 talks about "*repentance from dead works*?" What were those "*dead works*?" They were the attempts of Jews to be saved

by keeping the Law. Why were they called “*dead works*?” Because there was no life in them, and they could not give life to the people who were following that system. So, we have counterfeit spirituality.

- 7) **Counterfeit power.** We read in 2 Thessalonians 2:3–10 that when the Antichrist comes on the scene (by the way, I believe he's already here. I believe that's why the whole world within the last few years has fallen in lockstep with each other—it's going to take some wars and upheaval and shocking things to bring him to the point where he's going to come out in the open), he is going to display powers that anyone who has rejected Christ are going to fall on their face before him. They're going to say he's a miracle worker—he can do all these wonderful things and he will. It says he comes with all of the lying power of Satan. If the devil could give two priests in Egypt the power to throw their staff to the ground and have it turn into a serpent, what kind of power do you think he's going to give the greatest counterfeit of Christ that he could ever bring into the world? It's going to be stunning. I believe all the UFOs (they don't even call them UFOs anymore. Now they call them UAPs or something like that), all of this is leading up to the revelation of this super man who's going to lead many people into the Lake of Fire. Counterfeit.
  
- 8) **Counterfeit gods** (1 Corinthians 10:20–21; 2 Thessalonians 2:3–4). All of these counterfeits have one thing in common, and this is why we study these two doctrines together. They appeal to the natural arrogance of the sin nature. They appeal to our natural arrogance. You know, if I can say I decided to give up all the sinful things that I was doing so that I could come to Christ as a clean man, it sounds great. The only problem with it is that it's false, it can't be done. Or, when I came to Christ, I devoted myself to serve and suffer and so on and so on. And suddenly, it's no longer Christ who's getting the glory, the glory is all going to the man. It appeals to the arrogance of mankind. “How do you know you're going to Heaven?” “Because I live a godly life.” Who gets the credit for that? You can say that it's thanks to God, but really the credit is gone to you for what you've done.

Believe it or not, our greatest resource in the days ahead are going to be the things that we have learned and the fellowship that we have developed. That's worth more than anything.