

**Daniel 2:34-35 NKJV** You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. (35) Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. **And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.**

We all agree that the Stone is Messiah. The controversy (there must always be a controversy in Biblical interpretation), is **when does the stone come? Or, did the stone already come?**

There are several views:

1. The **amillennial** view
  - a. The 1000 year reign in Revelation 20 is symbolic
  - b. This symbolic millennia has already begun and is the current church age
  - c. Amillennialism holds that Christ's reign during the millennium is spiritual in nature
  - d. Christ will return in final judgment and establish a permanent reign in the period of the new heaven and new earth.
  - e. Many of these folks believe that the Book of Revelation was fulfilled in 70AD.
  - f. Roman Catholics are in this camp; RC Sproul (who is also a Preterist) and one source has J.I. Packer as well)
2. **Post**millennial View – The kingdom was established in the 1<sup>st</sup> century thru the preaching of the Gospel. He empowers the church by the Spirit and commands them go in to all the world.
  - a. Those who hold this view believe that eventually the vast majority of peoples will be saved
  - b. Increasing gospel success will gradually produce a time in history prior to Christ's return in which faith, righteousness, peace, and prosperity will prevail in the affairs of men and of nations. This will last 1000 years.
  - c. After an extensive era of such conditions Jesus Christ will return visibly, bodily, and gloriously, to end history with the general resurrection and the final judgment after which the eternal order follows.
  - d. Calvin and Wesley were 2 well known postmillennialists.
3. **Pre**millennial view - Jesus' physical return to earth will occur prior to the inauguration of the Millennium. It is based upon a literal interpretation of [Revelation 20:1-6](#).
  - a. believes in an earthly millennial reign of Christ as well as a **rapture** of the faithful
    - i. the **rapture** is pre-tribulational, that is, **before** (dispensational) the Great Tribulation. This view sees a distinction between the church and Israel
    - ii. the rapture is **after** (historic) the Great Tribulation preceding the Millennium. This view sees no radical theological distinction between Israel and the Church which may be another way of saying 'replacement' theology.

The stone for the amillennials or the postmillennials has already come, that is, the Kingdom of Christ was established at his first coming. Essentially, He will not return until He is ready to establish the New Heaven and New Earth. People who hold these views tend to gravitate to emphases on social justice and "making the world a better place to live" so that Christ will want to return.

The stone for the premillennials has not yet come. It will come at His second coming and it will not be pretty, in that, according to Daniel, the existing "kingdoms" will be destroyed, and all vestiges of the prior historical kingdoms will be also. Then the millennial reign (1000 years) will begin. The period of destruction is the Great Tribulation. The premillennials disagree on the timing of the rapture. But, don't pass by the fact that this 'stone' was able to destroy, to turn to wind-blown dust, every kingdom of the present and the past! That one stone was that powerful!

Calvary Chapel churches, assuming they adhere to the distinctives as outlined by Chuck Smith, are premillennial and pretribulational. I personally believe the same; however, I am not opposed to teaching the others because I have confidence in the Scriptures that support it AND I believe it best describes our relationship with our Bridegroom, Jesus.

Chapter 3 is basically an historical account of the loyalty of 3 Jewish boys who were on fire for their God and because of that, Nebuchadnezzar once again saw that their God was not one among many but the One above all so-called 'gods'.

**(Daniel 3:1 NKJV)** 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.

First, this image was 90 feet tall and had a 9 foot base. Most believe that per the prevailing custom of the times, it was not pure gold but wood overlaid with gold!

Second, **was** it a ninety foot statue of himself? Or to his father? Or to Bel? AND, was it a statue at all or some obelisk?

Since it does not exist, no one knows. But, according to Easton's Bible Dictionary, the "plain of Dura" is a

plain near Babylon in which Nebuchadnezzar set up a golden image. The place still retains its ancient name. On one of its many mounds the pedestal of what must have been a colossal statue has been found. It has been supposed to be that of the golden image.

The issue has been raised as to the timing of these events. There is no time marker such as "In the fourth year of the king...". Some believe that this took place shortly after the 'Dream Incident' in chapter 2. Some believe it took place much later and of course, some don't believe it ever actually happened. To these latter folks I would say "into what size box have you put the God of all creation?"

Some see the final verses of chapter 2 as a reason to believe a later date:

**Daniel 2:46-47 NKJV** Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face, prostrate before Daniel, and commanded that they should present an offering and incense to him.

**(47)** The king answered Daniel, and said, "Truly your God *is* the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret."

But, to whom did the king fall? He fell before Daniel, a man to whom he wanted to offer a sacrifice and incense. Not to the "God of gods" as he put it. I think he was still thinking that this "Hebrew" God was just better than the others but of the same basic nature...just another pagan god.

So, given that information, I believe that the King ordered the statue based on himself being the "gold head" of the image in his dream. Some even suggest that he may have had second thoughts of the Gold Head being destroyed with the others, so he created this statue as a symbol of what he believed would be an everlasting kingdom.

**(Daniel 3:2 NKJV)** 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.

Everyone who was anyone in the kingdom was invited to the unveiling. Some attempt to define each of these but that's somewhat tedious. I think we can understand them to be officials of all ranks in the kingdom.

(Daniel 3:3 NKJV) 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.

The list is repeated because it's trying to build up tension in the reader: Was everyone there? It says that they all came but...

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

Sounds like a full-blown orchestra but many don't know what the exact instruments were.

But the point is: Hear the Music then bow down to worship the gold image.

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

And of course, there are always consequences for disobedience! Where did this furnace come from? Most believe that it was created to purify the gold used for the overlay.

(Daniel 3:7 NKJV) 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.

"the people, nations, and languages" – all those who were there **represented** all the peoples who were captured and assimilated into the Babylonian empire!

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

These are probably the of the priestly class of men in the King's court. Obviously, they were jealous of the Jews who were successful and were part of the King's inner circle of leaders.

(Daniel 3:9 NKJV) They spoke and said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever! (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; (11) and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

Remember the decree you just wrote a little while ago?

The king replied "Duh!" but somehow that got lost in the copying of the parchments.

(Daniel 3:12 NKJV) 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."

Ah, now they get to the point: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego did not bow down! Also interesting, they used their Hebrew names – I suppose to ensure that it was very clear that these were Jews!

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

The king is uncharacteristically kind. He gives them the chance to deny the charges. But, he's also no fool. He orders them to bow down when the music is played again.

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

WOW!!!

God is ABLE;  
God is WILLING

But even if we're wrong about His willingness, we will never serve pagan gods, nor will we worship that gold monstrosity you erected.

WOW!!!

(Daniel 3:19 NKJV) 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.

Even the expression of his face changed when he realized how resolute these three boys were. These were boys he admired and gave them prestigious jobs in his government. And, they were friends of Daniel...WAIT!!!!

Where's Daniel?

Nobody knows. And it's useless to speculate.

(Daniel 3:20 NKJV) 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. (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 NKJV) 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**.

Oops!

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

`they' fell into the burning ring of fire  
`they' fell down down down into the deepest fire  
And it burns burns burns the ring of fire the ring of fire  
The ring of fire

(Daniel 3:24 NKJV) 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."

Uh oh! Something's amiss here!

(Daniel 3:25 NKJV) "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.**"

This is disappointing. There's no "a" or "the" in the original Hebrew or Chaldean. And, according to the Hebrew bibles I checked, the word for "god" is singular and not "Elohim" which is plural.

Here's a sample of the 30 translations I researched:

a divine being  
a god  
a son of God  
a son of the gods  
an angel  
the son of a god  
the Son of God

What do you think?

There was a promise given many years before:

**Isaiah 43:1-2 NKJV** But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called *you* by your name; You *are* Mine. (2) 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.**

(Daniel 3:26 NKJV) 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.

Obviously, something miraculous did happen. There was a fourth person in the furnace with the men. He not only loosened their bonds but protected them from the fire.

Once again, the Most High God demonstrated His presence and power to save even those who were tossed into the furnace of affliction. These men were steadfast in their belief, faith and loyalty to Him. Did He have to? No. But even if...was their faith.

**(Daniel 3:27 NKJV)** 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.

Just like our God! He gloriously saved them from the fire and so much so that there wasn't a speck of evidence to show that they had ever been in a fire!

**(Daniel 3:28 NKJV)** 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! **(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."

'who sent His angel' – this is consistent with "like a son of god'.

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

Whatever positions they held before, they each got promotions to higher positions!

**So, what do we do with this story? What do we conclude? And how have we been affected by this, either the first time you read it before or even now?**

*The God-Man who walked on the water, fed the masses, healed the lame, blind, mute and deaf, who cleansed the lepers, who raised the dead, who himself was raised from the dead is certainly able to save us by plucking us out of the fires of Hell which were licking at our unsaved souls.*

*In this case, he didn't pluck them out of the fire but walked thru it with them so that they remained unharmed and looked as if they never were thrown into the furnace.*

*Sometimes, therefore, He heals completely, sometimes He walks thru our afflictions and sufferings with us; In either case He is to be highly exalted.*