

How to Live under Blazing Opposition: The Example of Daniel's Friends

DANIEL 3

The Life of Nebuchadnezzar

- ▶ 605 B.C. = Accession Year (0th Year): **Acts 1**
 - ▶ Conquest of Jerusalem (1st time): Jehoiakim Subjugated
 - ▶ Accession to the Throne of Neo-Babylonia
 - ▶ Taking Daniel to Babylon, Put under Training for 3 Years (Dan 1)
- ▶ 602 B.C. = 2nd Year
 - ▶ Vision of the Great Statue (Dan 2): **Message 1**
- ▶ 598-597 B.C.= 7th-8th Year: **Acts 2**
 - ▶ Conquest of Jerusalem (2nd Time): Jehoiachin Deposed
 - ▶ Taking Ezekiel & Jehoiachin to Babylon

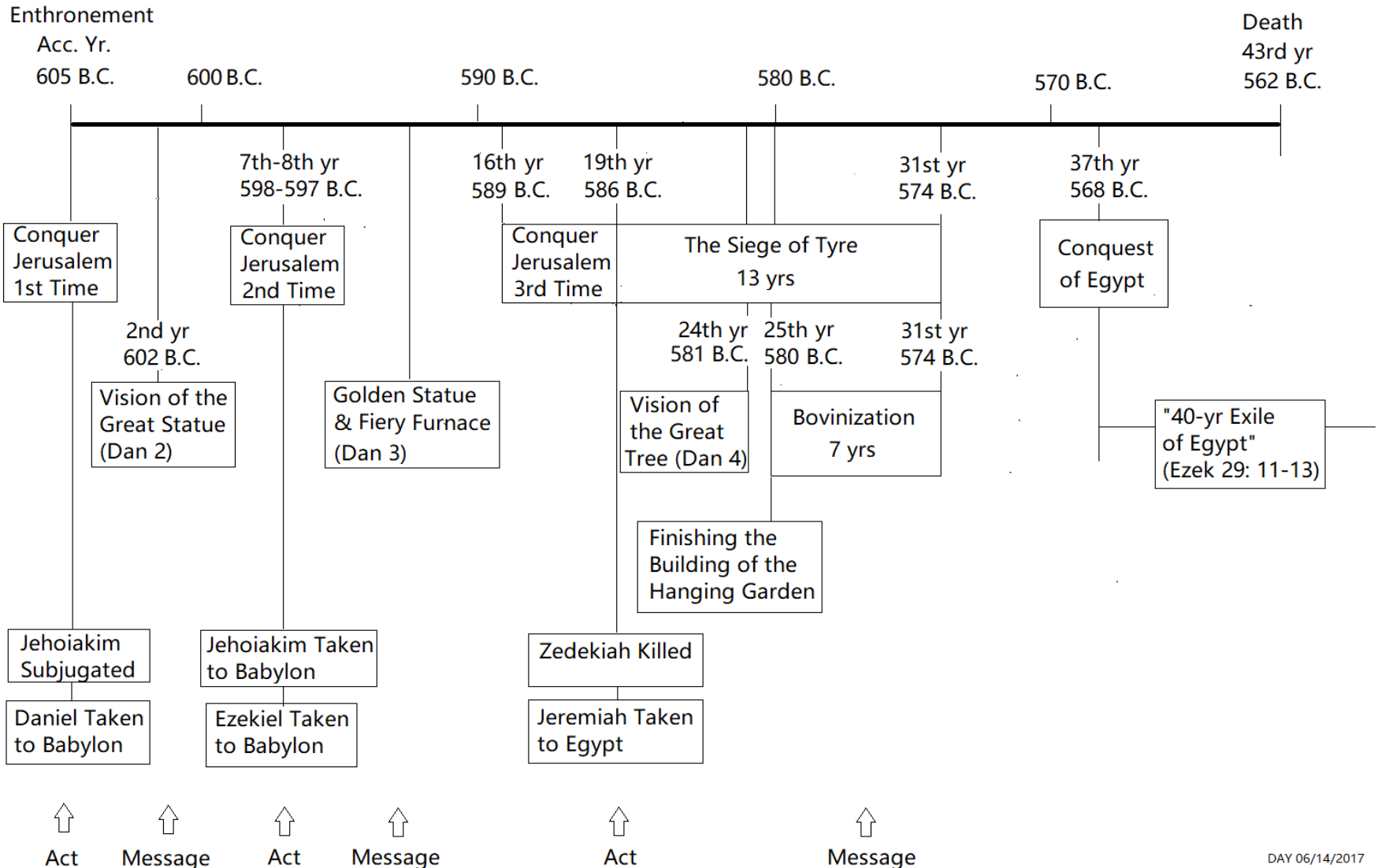
The Life of Nebuchadnezzar

- ▶ During 597-589 B.C.
 - ▶ Golden Statue & Fiery Furnace (Dan 3): **Message 2**
- ▶ 589-586 B.C. = 16th-19th Year:
 - ▶ Conquer Jerusalem (3rd Time): **Acts 3**
 - ▶ Zedekiah Killed; Jeremiah Taken to Egypt
 - ▶ Begin the Siege on Tyre (Lasting 13 Years)
- ▶ 585 B.C. = 20th Year
 - ▶ May 28: Thales Eclipse, Ending the War btn Lydia and Media
 - ▶ Brokering Peace (btn L & M); Marrying Amytis of Media (?)

The Life of Nebuchadnezzar

- ▶ 581 B.C. = 24th Year:
 - ▶ Vision of the Great Tree (Dan 4): **Message 3 Told**
- ▶ 580 -574 B.C. = 25th -31st Year:
 - ▶ Finish Building the Hanging Garden in 580 B.C.
 - ▶ Bovinization for 7 Years: **Message 3 Realized**
- ▶ 568 B.C. = 37th Year
 - ▶ Conquer Egypt: Begin the "40-year Exile of Egypt" (Ezek 29:11-13)
- ▶ 562 B.C. = 43rd Year: Death

The Life of Nebuchadnezzar



What Was Made?

- ▶ **3:1** Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, the height of which *was* sixty cubits *and* its width six cubits; he set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. (Dan. 3:1 NAU)
- ▶ Its Size Was about 90 Feet Tall, and 9 Feet Wide
- ▶ It Is Out of Proportion and Unstable if Standing Alone; OK if Build in a Niche on the City Wall (c.300 Feet High)
- ▶ It Was Probably Made of Wood with Gold Overlaid on It
- ▶ Plain of Dura = "Where It Is Walled"

Why Making It?

- ▶ God Gave Nebuchadnezzar the Dream of the Great Statue after His first Conquest of Jerusalem (605 B.C.).
- ▶ Daniel Gave God's First Message to Nebuchadnezzar, that He Will Be the Most Glorious (Authoritarian) King of History.
- ▶ Nebuchadnezzar Just Finished the Second Conquest of Jerusalem (597 B.C.). Making the Image Was like a Triumph.
- ▶ He Became Hot-Headed, and Thought That His Victories Were All due to His Own Strength/Ingenuity, i.e. He's a God.
- ▶ He Made the Image of Himself as the Representation of His Favorite God (Marduk or Nabu), and Demanded Worship.

Who Were There?

- ▶ ² Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent *word* to assemble the satraps/Princes, the prefects/Governors and the governors/Captains, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates/Sherriffs and all the rulers of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. ³ Then 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. (Dan. 3:2-3)
- ▶ Seven Levels of Governmental Officials Were Summoned.
- ▶ This Is like the Beginning of Totalitarianism.

What Was Required?

- ▶ ⁴ Then the herald loudly proclaimed: "To you the command is given, O peoples, nations and men of every language, ⁵ that 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. ⁶ But whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire." (Dan. 3:4-6 NAU)
- ▶ Six Musical Instruments from Eastern (Persian) and Western (Greek) Cultures Were Used, to Represent the Heart/Soul of All Nations/Peoples.

How Was the Compliance?

- ▶ ⁷ Therefore 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. (Dan. 3:7 NAU)
- ▶ “All the People” Probably Means All the People in Babylon, Including the Citizens of the City, and the Officials from All Around the Empire Representing All the People in the Empire.
- ▶ All Polytheistic Religions (Paganism) Are Alike, with Gods Made in the Image of Men, Representing Demons. People Don't Mind Modifying Their Pantheons.

The Accusation

- ▶ ⁸ For this reason at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and brought charges against the Jews. ⁹ They responded and said to Nebuchadnezzar the king: "O king, live forever! ¹⁰ You, O king, have made a decree that every man who hears the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, and bagpipe and all kinds of music, is to fall down and worship the golden image. ¹¹ But whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire. ¹² There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the administration of the province of Babylon, namely Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. These men, O king, have disregarded you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up." (Dan. 3:8-12 NAU)
- ▶ Their Lives Were Just Saved by Daniel & Friends, but They Could Not Forgive That They Were Ruled by These Young Foreigners.

The Threat

- ▶ ¹³ Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego; then these men were brought before the king. ¹⁴ Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up? ¹⁵ Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery and bagpipe and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, *very well*. But if you do not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?" (Dan. 3:13-15 NAU)
- ▶ It Is a Duel between the Gods (Marduk/Baal or Nabu vs. Yahweh)

The Response

- ▶ ¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. ¹⁷ If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. ¹⁸ But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up." (Dan. 3:16-18 NAU)
- ▶ God Can Save His People. Whether He Will Save Is Determined by His Sovereignty, for the Good of His Name and His People.
- ▶ Preservation of the Physical Body Is Not the Chief End of Life. Spiritual Unity with God Is.

The Consequence

- ▶ ¹⁹ Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with wrath, and his facial expression was altered toward Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. He answered by giving orders to heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. ²⁰ He commanded certain valiant warriors who were in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in order to cast *them* into the furnace of blazing fire. ²¹ Then these men were tied up in their trousers, their coats, their caps and their *other* clothes, and were cast into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire. ²² For this reason, because the king's command was urgent and the furnace had been made extremely hot, the flame of the fire slew those men who carried up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. (Dan. 3:19-22 NAU)
- ▶ “7 Time Hotter” Is Metaphoric, but It Is Really Fiery to the Uttermost.

The Surprise

- ▶ ²³ But these three men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, fell into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire *still* tied up. ²⁴ Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up in haste; he said to his high officials, "Was it not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire?" They replied to the king, "Certainly, O king." ²⁵ He said, "Look! I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!" (Dan. 3:23-25 NAU)
- ▶ Three Were Thrown in; Nebuchadnezzar Saw Four!
- ▶ The Fourth Is Like "A Son of the Gods" (Pre-incarnation Christ?)

The Deliverance

- ▶ ²⁶ Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the furnace of blazing fire; he responded and said, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, come out, you servants of the Most High God, and come here!" Then Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the midst of the fire. ²⁷ The satraps, the prefects, the governors and the king's high officials gathered around *and* saw in regard to these men that the fire had no effect on the bodies of these men nor was the hair of their head singed, nor were their trousers damaged, nor had the smell of fire *even* come upon them. (Dan. 3:26-27 NAU)
- ▶ Amazing Divine Deliverance Resulted in the Recognition That They Are the Servants of the Most High God.

The Decree

- ▶ ²⁸ Nebuchadnezzar responded and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent His angel and delivered His servants who put their trust in Him, violating the king's command, and yielded up their bodies so as not to serve or worship any god except their own God. ²⁹ Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation or tongue that speaks anything offensive against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb and their houses reduced to a rubbish heap, inasmuch as there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way." (Dan. 3:28-29 NAU)
- ▶ God Honored His Name through the Mouth of a Pagan King.
- ▶ True God Has No Limitation in His Power and Goodness.

The Elevation

- ▶ ³⁰ Then the king caused Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to prosper in the province of Babylon. (Dan. 3:30 NAU)
- ▶ The Three Friends of Daniel Were Elevated in their Civil Service Positions, due to their Faithfulness to their God, not their King.

The Lessons

- ▶ God Uses All Thing Created for His Good Purpose: Humans, Angels, and even Demons.
- ▶ Humans Used by God to Do Great Things Should Not Be Hot-Headed and Attribute All the Glory to Self.
- ▶ God Certainly Can Save His Servants from Physical Harm.
- ▶ God Good Servants Do Not Challenge God's Sovereignty, but Trust in God's Goodness.
- ▶ God's Good Servants Value Spiritual Life over Physical Life.
- ▶ When God Does Miracles of Delivery, His Name Is Always Glorified over Other Gods.