

## **Adventures in Truth:**

### **02: Bible Numbers and Our Choices**

Two Cities: Jerusalem and Babylon, the city of God and the city of apostasy, confusion, and rebellion. Two numbers Six and Seven; Six is fallen man's number, the number of Babylon's mystery religion; 7 is God's number, Seven days in the week, Seventh-day Sabbath, and in Revelation, Seven candlesticks, stars, eyes, horns, blessings, and Seven seals, Seven letters, Seven trumpets, Seven plagues, and Seven promises. Here we look at an amazing prophecy story from the book of Daniel, probably one of the greatest chapters in one of the greatest books in the Bible.

**“Nebuchadnezzar the king, made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain or Dura, in the province of Babylon. “Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, counselors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. “Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counselors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king 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 people, nations, and languages. “That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up: “And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.” Daniel 3:1-6.** So you can see that the king meant business, either bow down to that image or you were going to be placed in the burning fiery furnace.

In Daniel 2 is a very interesting prophecy. Nebuchadnezzar had a dream, and in that dream he saw a great image with a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron, and feet part of iron and part of clay. It represented a series of world kingdoms; Babylon, then Medo-Persia, then Greece, followed by Rome, then Rome divided, finally ten divisions represented by the ten toes. Then a great rock smote the image upon its feet, indicating the kingdom and second coming of Jesus.

The Head of Gold represented Babylon. This impressed Nebuchadnezzar very much, but he did not like the idea of other kingdoms following his! So in defiance of the dream where God said that his kingdom was going to be followed by another kingdom and by another, he had a great image built, made of gold all the way down, indicating that his kingdom was going to last for ever. He was choosing his own way rather than God's way! Then he was not content with this, but chose to force everyone else to agree with him! Under the penalty of death, you either bowed down to this image or were thrown into the burning fiery furnace.

Some people say, “Look! I will have to lose my job if I stand out for the true Sabbath.” Well, back there it meant not only losing their job, but losing their life because they were going to be

thrown into the burning fiery furnace. God's people were in a bad situation.

How did they come to be in Babylon instead of Jerusalem? **“In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it.” Daniel 1:1.**

The Bible tells the story of two cities. The cities are Jerusalem and Babylon. Babylon stands for error, that which is counterfeit. Jerusalem stands for the truth. The Bible tells the tale of these two cities, right from the first book of Genesis, through to the book of Revelation. All the way through, God's call is to come out of Babylon into Jerusalem, out of error into truth. But here, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had gone down into Jerusalem and taken Israel captive into Babylon.

it was a dark picture that is presented here in the opening verses of Daniel. **“And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.” Verse 2.** Why? Because of Jerusalem's wrong choice to copy heathen ways and worship idols, so God finally decreed 70 years captivity for them! Maybe then they would get their fill of heathenism.

Now the king had decreed you either bow down to the image or you went straight into the burning fiery furnace. That's how Nebuchadnezzar got his converts. No gentle persuasion with him. It was bow down to that image or into the fiery furnace. Dismal choice there!

Modern man has the idea that the further you go back in history, the more 'primitive' people were. This comes from the false theory of evolution. But the ancient Babylonians were not backward people. They were very, very smart and intelligent people, having sciences unknown today. In mathematics they used the 60 principle of numbers. We today use a system based on 10, a decimal system is quite easy to work with, 10 is divisible by 5 and by 2. But the Babylonian 60 system, is easier to work with than the decimal, if you know how, because 60 is divisible by 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and of course 10. The Babylonians had it all worked out centuries ago. They were masters of the art of mathematics.

How high was this image? It was three score cubits, a 'score' is 20 so three score would be 60 cubits. How wide is it? 6 cubits. Notice that the 6 and 60 is running all through this chapter. This image was 60 cubits by 6 cubits because all through the Babylonian system [and their religion also] you have the number 6, It is stamped all over this chapter. The image is mentioned six times, six musical instruments and so forth. Over in the book of Revelation you find a man at the head of the Babylonian system with a number 666 because 6 is the devil's number.

Seven is God's number. You have seven days in the week, seven notes in music, seven colors in the rainbow, seven seas. Seven is stamped all over creation and through the Bible as a number of completeness. When you get into Revelation you have seven churches, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven blessings, seven plagues. Seven is the number that God uses.

But six is the devil's number and that's where an expression comes down to us that a confused person is at sixes and sevens. If you add six and seven together, it comes to thirteen, and thirteen is considered to be unlucky. In fact, you'll find that it's very, very rare that you'll find a

hotel or a motel with a room 13, or an airplane with a 13 seat. Even in apartments they will skip number 13, because no one would sleep in it or live in it. 13 is considered to be very unlucky. We hardly know the reason why, but certainly it goes back to the Bible times where six is the devil's number and seven is God's number. Whenever you mix the things of God and the things of the devil, you always get trouble, right?

Here we have the king of Babylon going down into Jerusalem and taking those things from the temple of God into Babylon and desecrating them. To make it worse, under the penalty of death, now you either bow down to his image or you go headlong into the burning fiery furnace. The three Hebrews were slaves, but actually serving in the court of Babylon. I am sure they had been watching as that image was made and finally set up and praying for courage to stand for God when the crisis came.

Nebuchadnezzar's decree caused that those three young men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, to spend the night in prayer I am sure. Then the day dawned. There was pomp and show and glitter, gold and glory of every kind, and there was that giant image shining there like a gem. The plain of Dura is flat as far as you can see, so that image would have stood out there for miles in every direction. Then think of the sunlight striking that image and how it would have reflected there, it must have been a glorious scene. Heathen worship is that way and so it attracts the natural heart of man, and Nebuchadnezzar planned that every person bow down.

**“That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up: “And whoso falls not down and worships, shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. “Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of musick, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.” Daniel 3:4-7.**

How many does it say that fell down when the music sounded and bowed down in front of that image? All without an exception, it seemed to be, bowed down in front of that giant image. As the king looked out upon that whole concourse of people, he smiled. “Everyone is bowing down in front of my image. That proves Babylon will stand forever.”

Then some spies came to report. **“Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews.”** Now these Chaldeans were among the magicians and they were jealous of the Jews and wanted very much to get rid of them!

**“They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live for ever. Thou, O king, hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, shall fall down and worship the golden image: And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.” Daniel 3:8-11.**

**“There are certain Jews whom thou has set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee! They serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.” Verse 12.**

**“Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?” Verses 13-14.** He couldn’t believe it. “Is it true? I can’t believe it that you would have let me down. I’ll give you a second chance!”

**Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.” Daniel 3:15-18.**

Some folk say when they hear the truth about the Sabbath, “What you’re preaching is true. I believe it. I believe the Sabbath is right. I know that is what the Bible teaches. But, you see, if it was not for my boss I would step out and do what I know to be right. But it is the boss, he was very good to me in a squeeze, a tight financial time that he had. He still kept me on and I feel I’m indebted to him. If it was nothing else, I’d step out tomorrow and do it.” You hear this type of excuse in various ways. We need to remember the experience of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego because there were not three people more dependent upon a human being than those three Hebrews were dependent upon King Nebuchadnezzar for very life itself.

What was stopping those three Hebrews from bowing down in front of that image? It was one of God’s Ten Commandments: **“Thou shall not bow down thyself to them nor serve them.”** This is not just a story that happened back in the days of Babylon. There’s more to it than that. **“Now all these things happened unto them for examples: (types or illustrations), and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” 1 Corinthians 10:11.**

These things have been written as an illustration for the generation that’s going to be living in the world just before Jesus returns. This story is more than just a story, more than just a historical incident. It is a type or illustration of what’s going to happen again to God’s people when just before Jesus returns.

**“And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.” Revelation 13:11-15.**

What happened back in the days of Israel in Babylon is going to happen again in the last days because, the Bible says, the beast power is going to set up another image, and if we are not willing to bow down and worship the image of the beast, we are going to be killed. So the experience of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego has been recorded there to illustrate what we are going to face, very soon. They were called to stand for truth. They're not going to defy God. They weren't going to disobey God. They weren't going to hesitate. They had made up their minds. They knew what was right.

An experience happened over in southern Russia some years ago in the communist days. One of our young evangelists was working over there and he was brought before the communist Russian authorities, and they forbade him to preach. They said, "There's to be no more preaching." That night he went home and he picked up his Bible and it said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel." And he thought that meant southern Russia where he was working. So the following day he went out preaching again and they arrested him the second time.

They warned him again and they said, "We'll give you one more chance. Once more, and you'll go before the firing squad." Well, that night again he went home and he read the Bible and it said, "Go ye into all the world." And so he thought that included Southern Russia. So the third day he went out preaching. Naturally they were watching him, and they arrested him as soon as he started to preach. They brought him in before the court room of the high officials in that part of the country, the communistic world. They brought him before the officers, the army officers and the leaders, and they said, "We have given you two chances," You have disobeyed, At eight o'clock you go before the firing squad tomorrow morning."

Do you know what that young evangelist said? He said, "Gentlemen, you men serve the Russian government. I serve the God of heaven. Tomorrow morning at eight o'clock I won't die." Well, the story as he related it later, said that the court room just echoed with the laughter of those men. They said, "We will make sure that you go before the firing squad tomorrow morning, there will be no doubt about it. At eight o'clock you will die tomorrow morning." Well, the rest of the story is a very interesting one because the following morning he didn't die, and for years after he remained our best soul winner in that part of Russia.

Even though it's a long time since Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, our God is not dead. We serve the same God that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego served, Here they said, "Be it known unto thee, O king, that if our God is not willing to deliver us, we will not turn. We will stand for the right." That's the type of attitude that God is looking for in the world today, that men and women will stand for truth and stand for the right.

Our whole world is just saturated with compromise, even in the religious world people want compromise. You know, they know it's right, but... and then they list the excuses, and they feel that God will excuse them. That's the very attitude of the devil. He will try and get us to compromise. God doesn't want us to compromise, He wants us to stand for truth. He wants us to stand firm.

**"Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego therefore he spoke, and commanded that they should**

**heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated.” Verse 19.** [That is as hot as possible]

And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and throw them into the burning fiery furnace.

**“Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.” Daniel 3:20-23.**

The next thing you read is the fact of Nebuchadnezzar looking into the fire.

**“Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spoke, and said unto his counselors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. “He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.” Verses 24-25.**

**“Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spoke, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire. “And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counselors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was a hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them. “Then Nebuchadnezzar spoke, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent His angel, and delivered His servants that trusted in Him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, and they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God.” Verses 26-28.**

Isn't that a marvelous testimony from a heathen king? They were willing to lose life itself, but they weren't going to compromise. They weren't going to go back on what they knew to be right. They might have decided to bend down and fasten their sandals; many Christians would reason that way to get them out of a bad spot. But what would have happened if Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would have reasoned that way? I'll tell you what would have happened. The heralds would have gone out throughout the whole Babylonian empire and talked of the supremacy of Nebuchadnezzar and his religion, represented by the golden image. That's what would have happened. But instead, after the experience of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and Jesus being in that fiery furnace, you won't find another mention of that old image.

The King spoke and he did not even mention his great image, **“Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort. “Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.” Verses 29-30.**

What a marvelous story: And the Bible says, Those things have been recorded for our admonition because the very situation is going to be repeated again. People say: “I wonder how I would act if I’d been back in the shoes of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. I wonder whether I would have had the courage like those three did, to stand for truth.”

Here’s how you can have the courage to stand, and you can apply a little test to yourself. If today you stand firm for what you know to be right, under ridicule, under opposition, wherever you might meet it, then you would stand firm then. What I am in a crisis, is the same way I act from day to day. I’m not going to be any different in a crisis than I am today. If I’m faithful today in the little things that come along, then I’ll know I will stand firm when the big issue comes along. But if I compromise now, I’ll compromise then. Nothing is more certain.

The Bible says that if you’re worshiping on Sunday, you’re following the antichrist whether you want to believe that or not, whether you went to admit it or not, you are. Who commanded Sunday? The antichrist did, inspired by the devil himself. Who commanded the Sabbath? God did, so the day that I worship represents the God I follow.

If these three men had compromised, the message would have gone out to the then-known world of the superiority of the idol-worship-religion of Nebuchadnezzar. But instead the heralds went out into the world telling them all about the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that there was no other God like Him. The whole message of God went to the then-known world in one week. I believe that something like that is going to happen in the last days. **“For He will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.” Romans 9:28.** God is going to finish the work. He’ll see that there are men and women whom He can trust, who will stand for Him though the heavens fall.

Did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego know that there was going to be a way provided for them? No, they didn’t. Not before they got in the fire did they know that God was going to deliver them. They knew that God could, but they didn’t know that God would, not until they got in the fire. So they made that full commitment. That’s the way it is with us. Once we make the commitment, once we make our decision, then God will open the way for us. But He won’t do it for us until we make that commitment.

Many people like to pray for the Holy Spirit; but they forget—the Cross came before the upper room! We must follow Jesus through Gethsemane and on to Calvary, we must also die to self on that cross, and be converted, before we can receive the fire of heaven in the Upper Room experience.

**“And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.” Revelation 18:1.** This angel symbolizes a message, the Loud Cry is going to go to the whole world. May God help us all to be faithful to that message so that we will stand. We won’t compromise. In no way will we try and water it down and make excuses, but we will stand for truth though the heavens fall. May God help us to have that determination right now.