

Daniel 3 (Notes and thoughts taken from Daniel, Brazos Theological Commentary, Sam Wells and George Sumner)

As a group we are using the book Daniel and the 12 Prophets by Goldingay as well as the above commentary.

Chapter 3 follows neatly after chapter 2.

Having had the dream of empire in his own image, Nebuchadnezzar erects a physical image of himself to be worshiped by his subjects.

This sort of sets up two kingdoms thinking. Kingdom of God and Kingdom of Self. As Augustine says, because human life has not submitted to divine rule it organizes itself in mimicry of God's rule,

Nebuchadnezzar gathers all the people with the sound of music, gathers them to worship him and his golden statue. The repetition here lends an air of farce to the whole scene. It portrays the government officials as bombastic and overly pretentious.

Daniel is deeply interested in the question of diversity of culture and how they work together. The people are told whoever does not worship the statue will not be saved but thrown into the furnace.

Isa 43 (also written in the time of exile) says the Lord gathers the nations to hear his case. Beside the Lord there is no savior. In 43 we hear When you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.

The Israelites know that life in exile is always risky but with God on their side, they will survive.

I found it fascinating that this commentary reminds us that Christians do not seek suffering, as the faithful Jews do not seek suffering. We pray to be delivered from the great trial.

In the face of possible punishment the three Jews stand by their faith and the King is duly upset. He fires up the furnace because he is on fire with anger. The king's rage emphasized in Daniel is a continual theme of the book.

The 3 are fed to the furnace and another figure like a man appears. This is in contrast to Angelic figures which also appear in Daniel.