

**Who is the fourth man in the fire? Was it Jesus? Or an angel?**Top of Form

* [Audio Mp3](http://audio.evidenceunseen.com/)

(Dan. 3:25)

CLAIM: Nebuchadnezzar looked into the fiery furnace and said, “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. 3:25) Who is this fourth person in the fiery furnace?

RESPONSE: Whoever this person was, he was clearly a supernatural being. That much is clear. But who or what was this figure in the furnace?

***First, most Christians throughout history understood this to refer to the preincarnate Christ*.** Collins writes, “Christian tradition typically identified the ‘son of God’ here as Christ.”[[1]](https://www.evidenceunseen.com/bible-difficulties-2/ot-difficulties/daniel-amos/dan-325-who-is-the-fourth-man-in-the-fire-was-it-jesus-or-an-angel/%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn1)

***Second, the expression “son of the gods” can also grammatically be rendered “the Son of God.”*** Miller writes, “In biblical Aramaic the plural noun *elahin* may be assumed to have the same force as *elohim* in biblical Hebrew, which can be rendered as a plural, ‘gods,’ or as a singular, ‘God.’”[[2]](https://www.evidenceunseen.com/bible-difficulties-2/ot-difficulties/daniel-amos/dan-325-who-is-the-fourth-man-in-the-fire-was-it-jesus-or-an-angel/%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn2) Against this reading, Archer points out that Nebuchadnezzar was a polytheist, and it’s more likely that he was referring to the son of the gods (plural).[[3]](https://www.evidenceunseen.com/bible-difficulties-2/ot-difficulties/daniel-amos/dan-325-who-is-the-fourth-man-in-the-fire-was-it-jesus-or-an-angel/%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn3)

Even before the time of Jesus, the Qumran community used this expression (“the Son of God”) to refer to the coming Messiah. Collins writes, “A titular use of ‘Son of God’ is now found in an Aramaic text from Qumran, 4Q246. The identification of this figure has been a matter of dispute. The most likely reference is to a messianic king, although the term ‘messiah’ is not used.”[[4]](https://www.evidenceunseen.com/bible-difficulties-2/ot-difficulties/daniel-amos/dan-325-who-is-the-fourth-man-in-the-fire-was-it-jesus-or-an-angel/%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn4)

***Third, the text explicitly calls this figure an angel*.** Later, Nebuchadnezzar states that this was an “angel” (v.28). Moreover, the Greek translations of this passage “describe the descent of an angel into the furnace.”[[5]](https://www.evidenceunseen.com/bible-difficulties-2/ot-difficulties/daniel-amos/dan-325-who-is-the-fourth-man-in-the-fire-was-it-jesus-or-an-angel/%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn5) On the other hand, many biblical scholars believe that the so-called “Angel of the Lord” is the preincarnate Christ. So calling the figure an angel wouldn’t preclude him also being a theophany of God himself.

Isaiah writes that God himself would be with his people in the fire during the Exile: “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, nor will the flame burn you” (Isa. 43:2).

In the end, commentators are divided on this. Joyce Baldwin does not believe that this is the preincarnate Christ,[[6]](https://www.evidenceunseen.com/bible-difficulties-2/ot-difficulties/daniel-amos/dan-325-who-is-the-fourth-man-in-the-fire-was-it-jesus-or-an-angel/%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn6) while Stephen Miller and Edward Young believe that it is.[[7]](https://www.evidenceunseen.com/bible-difficulties-2/ot-difficulties/daniel-amos/dan-325-who-is-the-fourth-man-in-the-fire-was-it-jesus-or-an-angel/%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn7) Gleason Archer doesn’t quite take a position—merely calling the figure a “divine companion.”[[8]](https://www.evidenceunseen.com/bible-difficulties-2/ot-difficulties/daniel-amos/dan-325-who-is-the-fourth-man-in-the-fire-was-it-jesus-or-an-angel/%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn8) We are more inclined to see this as the preincarnate Christ, saving the three men.