

# Daniel 3:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

## Analysis

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The extensive list of officials—'princes, governors, captains, judges, treasurers, counsellors, sheriffs, and all rulers of the provinces'—emphasizes the ceremony's comprehensive scope. Every level of bureaucracy must attend, ensuring total governmental participation in state religion. This represents the totalitarian impulse to control not just behavior but worship and allegiance. The assembly's diversity (regional, military, judicial, financial leaders) shows the empire's vast reach. Requiring officials' presence tests loyalty—attendance implies consent to the image's worship. Absence would constitute political defiance.

## Historical Context

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Ancient Near Eastern empires maintained complex bureaucracies with specialized roles. Archaeological discoveries including Babylonian administrative texts confirm extensive governmental structures. Mass gatherings of officials served multiple purposes: asserting imperial unity, demonstrating the king's power, requiring public loyalty oaths, and disseminating policy. Such ceremonies were common at building dedications, military victories, and royal accessions. Nebuchadnezzar used these events to consolidate power and enforce religious conformity.

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

## Study Questions

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1. How does requiring universal participation in state religious ceremonies test and compromise individual conscience?
2. What does the comprehensiveness of the official list teach about totalitarian systems' drive to eliminate all spheres of non-conformity?

## Interlinear Text

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נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר ר	מֶלֶכָּא:	שָׁלַח	לְמַכְבֵּי שׁוֹן	לְאַחַשְׁדֶּרְפָּנִי א
<b>Then Nebuchadnezzar</b>	<b>the king</b>	<b>sent</b>	<b>to gather together</b>	<b>the princes</b>
H5020	H4430	H7972	H3673	H324
סִגְנֵי א	וּפְחֻזֵּי א	אֲדָרְגָזְכֵּיָא	גִּדְ בְּרֵי א	דְּתַבְרֵיָא
<b>the governors</b>	<b>and the captains</b>	<b>the judges</b>	<b>the treasurers</b>	<b>the counsellors</b>
H5460	H6347	H148	H1411	H1884
תַּפְתֵּי א	וְכָל ל	שְׁלֹטְנֵי י	מְדִינֹת א	לְמַתָּא
<b>the sheriffs</b>	<b>and all</b>	<b>the rulers</b>	<b>of the provinces</b>	<b>to come</b>
H8614	H3606	H7984	H4083	H858
לְמַתָּא	תַּפְתֵּי א	הֵקֵי ים	דִּי י	צִלְמֵי א
<b>to the dedication</b>	<b>the sheriffs</b>	<b>had set up</b>	<b>Then Nebuchadnezzar</b>	<b>the king</b>
H2597	H8614	H6966	H5020	H4430

## Additional Cross-References

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**Daniel 3:27** (Kingdom): And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire

had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.

**Proverbs 29:12** (Parallel theme): If a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked.

**1 Kings 12:32** (Parallel theme): And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Beth-el, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Beth-el the priests of the high places which he had made.

**Numbers 25:2** (Parallel theme): And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods.

**Judges 16:23** (Parallel theme): Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand.