

# Daniel 3:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

## Analysis

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The phrase "whoso falleth not down and worshippeth" uses emphatic negative construction, making compliance mandatory without exception. The threatened punishment "shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace" emphasizes immediate, irrevocable judgment. The Aramaic sha'tah hada (אֲתָתָה הָדָה, "the same hour") indicates instant execution without trial or appeal, demonstrating Nebuchadnezzar's absolute power and the decree's totalitarian nature.

This verse illustrates how earthly powers demand exclusive allegiance that properly belongs only to God. The command to worship "the golden image" violates the first and second commandments (Exodus 20:3-5), placing believers in direct conflict with state authority. The passage teaches that civil disobedience becomes necessary when human law contradicts divine command, establishing a principle that guided early Christian martyrs refusing to worship Caesar and continues informing faithful resistance to unjust laws.

The immediate, severe punishment for noncompliance reveals the high cost of faithfulness in hostile contexts. Yet this very extremity creates the context for God's miraculous deliverance and testimony to His power. Human tyranny, pushed to its limit, becomes the stage for divine intervention that glorifies God before unbelievers. This prefigures the greater deliverance Christ accomplishes—rescuing believers from Satan's tyranny and the fiery judgment of sin through His atoning death.

## Historical Context

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Nebuchadnezzar's golden image (likely overlaid with gold rather than solid gold due to its size—90 feet tall) stood on the plain of Dura near Babylon. The public dedication ceremony assembled provincial officials throughout the empire, creating a mass demonstration of political and religious unity. Ancient Near Eastern kings regularly used religious ceremonies to consolidate power and enforce loyalty, making refusal both religious apostasy and political rebellion.

The "burning fiery furnace" (atun eshsha yaqadta) was likely a brick kiln used in Babylon's extensive building projects. Archaeological evidence confirms Babylonian use of large kilns capable of housing multiple people, making execution by fire technologically feasible. This horrific punishment method served as public spectacle deterring dissent while demonstrating royal power over life and death.

## Related Passages

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

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

## Study Questions

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1. When does obedience to earthly authority end and civil disobedience to maintain faithfulness to God become necessary?
2. How can you prepare spiritually for potential conflicts between cultural expectations and biblical commands before crisis forces immediate decision?

## Interlinear Text

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וְמִן	לֹא	לְלִפְנֵי	וְיִשְׁתַּחַווּ	בָּהּ	שְׁעָתָה
And whoso	H1768	not	down	and worshippeth	H0 shall the same hour
H4479	H3809	H5308	H5457		H8160

  

אָתָּה	לְגֹיא	אַתָּה	נָאָתָּה	לְלִפְנֵי
be cast	into the midst	furnace	fiery	of a burning

| H7412 | H1459 | H861 | H5135 | H3345 |

## Additional Cross-References

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**Matthew 13:50** (Parallel theme): And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

**Matthew 13:42** (Parallel theme): And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

**Jeremiah 29:22** (Parallel theme): And of them shall be taken up a curse by all the captivity of Judah which are in Babylon, saying, The LORD make thee like Zedekiah and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire;

**Daniel 3:11** (Worship): And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

**Daniel 3:15** (Worship): 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?

**Revelation 9:2** (Parallel theme): And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

**Revelation 14:11** (Worship): And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

