

Daniel 3:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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 worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

Analysis

The phrase "at that time" marks the moment of testing—when music sounded, immediate worship was required. The comprehensive listing of instruments (repeated throughout the chapter) creates a sense of overwhelming sensory manipulation through coordinated musical performance. Ancient cultures understood music's power to evoke emotion, create unity, and bypass rational thought, making it effective for inducing conformist behavior.

"All the people, the nations, and the languages" emphasizes universal compliance—the empire's ethnic diversity united in idolatrous worship. The threefold description (people, nations, languages) parallels Revelation's descriptions of end-times apostasy when "all that dwell upon the earth shall worship" the beast (Revelation 13:8). The verb "fell down and worshipped" describes both physical prostration and spiritual submission—outward gesture signifying inward allegiance.

This verse reveals the frightening ease with which masses comply with evil when backed by authority, spectacle, and social pressure. Only three men (Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego) refused among thousands present—a sobering reminder that the faithful are often a tiny remnant. The phrase "the golden image that

Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up" (repeated for emphasis) identifies the object as man-made, highlighting the absurdity of worshiping human creations. This points to Christ, whom every knee will worship—not by coercion but in recognition of His divine nature (Philippians 2:10-11).

Historical Context

Music played a crucial role in ancient Near Eastern religious ceremonies, creating emotional atmosphere and signaling ritual participation. The instruments listed (cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer) represent wind, string, and percussion instruments common in Babylonian culture. Coordinated musical performance at state occasions demonstrated the empire's sophistication and created powerful psychological pressure for conformity.

Mass public worship ceremonies were common in polytheistic cultures, serving both religious and political functions. They reinforced social cohesion, demonstrated loyalty to the king, and symbolically unified diverse populations under common religious observance. Refusing participation marked one as both religiously deviant and politically disloyal, justifying severe punishment.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does music's emotional power make it effective for inducing conformist behavior, and how should this awareness affect what we allow to shape our affections?
2. What does the universal compliance of "all the people" teach about the rarity of genuine faithfulness when tested by overwhelming social and political pressure?

3. How does this mass idolatry prefigure end-times apostasy described in Revelation, and how should this shape our understanding of future persecution?

Interlinear Text

כָּל עַמֵּי אֶרֶץ שָׁמְעוּ יְיָ יָמָא בְּהַ יְיָ הָ קָבַל לְ כָל
all **Therefore** H1836 H0 **at that time** **when** **heard** **all** **the people**
H3606 H6903 H2166 H1768 H8086 H3606 H5972

פְּסַלְטֵר יִן שֹׁבָבָא קִיִּת רֹס מִשֵּׁר וְקִיִּת אֶ קֶרְנָא קֶל ל
the sound **of the cornet** **flute** **harp** **sackbut** **psaltery**
H7032 H7162 H4953 H7030 H5443 H6460

אֶמִּי אֶ עַמֵּי אֶ כָּל נָפְלָו יִן זָמַר אֶ זִנֵּי יֶ כָּל
all **kinds** **of musick** **fell down** **all** **the people** **the nations**
H3606 H2178 H2170 H5308 H3606 H5972 H524

הָקִי יָם יְיָ יִהְיֶה אֶ לִצֵּלָם סִגְדִּין וְלִשְׁנֵי אֶ
and the languages **and worshipped** **image** **the golden** **when** **had set up**
H3961 H5457 H6755 H1722 H1768 H6966

מֶלֶכָּא: נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר
that Nebuchadnezzar **the king**
H5020 H4430