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The Accusation Against the Jews
3: 8-12

The accusation against the Jews DIG: Who accused Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego? What was the motive of the accusers? How were their accusations anti-Semitic? Why would Satan want to attack and destroy these three Jews, and all Jews everywhere? What were the three accusations against them?

REFLECT: Have you ever stood up for "the Jews" in any way? In your community? At your place of work? At church? Have you ever stood up for God in the same places? Why? Why not? How are Gentiles saved to make Jews jealous (Romans 11:11)? Is your conscience held captive to the Word of God? Why not? How so?

Standing up for God will often be a lonely activity.

After the command to **worship the golden statue** (**to see link click Bl – Nebuchadnezzar's Decree to Worship the Statue**), there were three **men** in that great crowd who stood tall when everybody else bowed low. **Their** faith was in **the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob** and in **His** TaNaKh that **He** had spoken to **His** people. Knowing Jewish history, **Shadrach (Hananiah), Meshach (Mishael) and Abednego (Azariah)** were confident that **ADONAI** was in control and **they** had nothing to **fear**. The prophet **Isaiah** had written: **But now, this is what ADONAI says, He who created you, Jacob, He who formed you, Isra'el, "Don't be afraid, for I have redeemed you; I am calling you by your name, you are Mine. When you pass by the waters, I will be with you; when you pass through the rivers, they will not overwhelm you; when you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched . . . the flames will not burn you" (Isaiah 43:1-2).** Faith means obeying **God** regardless of the feelings within us, the circumstances around us, or the consequences before us.[122]



Apparently, **the crowd** was so vast that **Nebuchadnezzar** could not see **Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego** standing. But the writer of **Dani'el** reveals the identity of **the accusers. At that time some Chaldeans,** in other words, some **Babylonian** nationalists, **came forward and brought an accusation against the Jews (3:8).** These were not other magi, because they owed their lives to **a Jew** (**Dani'el 2)**. Since there appears to have been no reason to point out **their** nationality, the designation seems to reflect a resentment specifically toward **the Jewish people**, and **their** religious practices that caused **them** to act so very differently than the rest of the world.[123] The original Aramaic term (see **Ac – Dani'el from a Messianic Jewish Perspective: Languages**), **brought an accusation**, *keratz*, is rather graphic, it means *to slander* or *to backbite.* It refers to malicious **accusations** that devour the accused *piece by piece*. Hence, more literally, the idiom means that **the Chaldeans** *ate their pieces* and tried to turn **Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego** into chopped liver, to use a Jewish synonym.[124] **The Adversary** knew that **the Messiah** of **Isra'el** and **the Savior** of all mankind would come through **God's** divinely **chosen people**. **They are the people of Isra'el, chosen to be God's adopted children.** So **God revealed His Sh'khinah glory to them. He made covenants with them and gave them His Torah. He gave them the privilege of worshiping Him and receiving His wonderful promises. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are their ancestors, and Messiah Himself was an Israelite as far as His human nature is concerned. And He is ADONAI, the One who rules over everything and is worthy of eternal praise (Romans 9:4-5 NLT)!**

The Chaldeans reminded **King Nebuchadnezzar** of **his decree** as if **he** had

forgotten **his** own words. **Their** approach was to be polite at first: **May the king live forever! Your Majesty has issued a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music must fall down and worship the image of gold, and that whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace (3:9-11).** Getting to **their** main point, **they** finally spelled out **their accusation**? **But there are some Jews** (**they** keep making the point that **they** were **Jew**s) **whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon – Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego – who pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. The accusation** against **the Jewish** captives implied a subtle **accusation** against **the king himself**. After all, **Nebuchadnezzar himself** had appointed **them** to top positions of authority within **the Province of Babylon (2:49)**. The anti-Semitic overtone was hard to miss.

Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah were identified as the guilty parties and **accused** of three things: First, **these men . . . have no regard for you (3:12a).** This accusation implies that **the Jewish men** had **no** respect for **the one** who had so graciously appointed **them** to positions of authority. Secondly, **they do not serve your gods (3:12b).** This information was not new to **the king**. **He** knew from **his** previous encounter with **Dani'el** that **the Jews** only worshiped **YHVH**. And thirdly, **[They did not] worship the image of gold you have set up (3:12c).** This **accusation** described a clear act of disobedience to **Nebuchadnezzar's decree**.[125] With this approach, **Nebuchadnezzar's** reaction was predictable (see **Bn – Dani'el's Friends Questioned**).

True faith isn't frightened by threats, impressed by crowds, or swayed by superstitious ceremonies. True faith obeys **the Lord** and trusts **Him** to work out the consequences. These three **Jewish men** knew the law of **God** – **You shall have no other gods before Me . . . You shall not bow down to them nor serve them (Exodus 20:3** and **5).** Once **ADONAI** has spoken on a matter, it is settled and there's no room for discussion or need for compromise. To **bow down** before **the statue** even once, no matter what excuse **they** might give, would have destroyed **their** witness and broken **their** fellowship with **God**. The tense of the Greek verb in **Matthew 4:9** indicates that Satan asked **Yeshua** to worship **him** only one time, and **the Savior** refused. **Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah** would not **bow down** to **the golden statue** even once because it would lead to serving **Nebuchadnezzar's** false gods for the rest of **their** lives.[126]

It is worth noticing that there were only three **men** in the whole vast crowd who

refused to **bow down** to **Nebuchadnezzar's statue**. This highlights the fact that standing up for **God** will often be a lonely activity. There are times when choosing to do what is right means that we cannot simply hide in the crowd. We have to stand more or less alone. Sometimes it will seem that the whole world is watching, as when Martin Luther stood before Catholic authorities in Worms, Germany 1521. Called upon to abandon his commitment to justification by faith alone, Luther boldly declared, "Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason . . . my conscience is captive to **the Word of God**. I cannot and will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. **God** help me." Luther's example shows us that at times we may even have to stand alone for what's right, even within the Church itself.[127]

*Dear heavenly **Father**, praise **You** for **Your** steadfast love for **Isra'el**. **Thus says ADONAI: "Only if heaven above can be measured and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, then also I will cast off the offspring of Isra'el (Jeremiah 31:37a).** Those who love **You** must also love **Your Jewish children**, for it is from **the root of Jesse (Isaiah 11:1)** that the promised **Messiah** would come **(Matthew 1:1, 2 Samuel 7:12-16, Jeremiah 23:5-6).** But until then, **Jews** and **Gentiles** are united into one **Body**, which is a picture of an **olive tree** with **branches** of both **Jew** and **Gentile (Romans 11:17-24)?** Thank **You** for loving and opening the door to heaven to all who believe in **You** as their **Lord and Savior** – **Jew** and **Gentile**, **male** and **female**, **rich** and **poor** (**Galatians 3: 25-26, 28).** Thank **You** for being such a wonderful **Father**, always loving on **Your** me and seeking to draw me to be united in **Messiah (Ephesians 1:9-10).** To **the One** who sits at **Your right hand**. Amen*