

the book of Daniel. On the (see his book "Ur of the Chaldees, page-- ). This is the incident related in Daniel 3, where the king made an image of gold and ordered that all the people should bow down and worship it when music was sounded. Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego failed to bow down to it and were consequently thrown into the fiery furnace. Woolley says that he has examined at Ur the lines of the foundations of the various temples and has found evidence that the original structure of the temple had a very small inner room in which the image of the god was kept. To enter this it was necessary to go through small corridors. At the sides of these corridors were store rooms in which temple provisions were kept. At the time of Nebuchadnezzar these partitions were torn down and the store rooms removed, so that a large space in front of the room where the image stood was left open, and the people standing in the outer court could actually see the image. He infers from this that before the time of Nebuchadnezzar, it was customary as it seems to have been at all times in Egypt for the offering to be done entirely by the priest. Only he approached the hidden inner room where the statue of the god was kept. The people did not come into any direct contact with the idol. Nebuchadnezzar tore out the partitions in front and the store rooms which hindered visions of the idol from the court, evidently desiring that the worship of the statue should become a matter for the general public, rather than something performed only by a few priests. There was thus not an innovation of worshiping a new image, but the introduction of a more general type of worship which resulted in placing the Jews under the necessity of refusing to obey and being subject to penalties. This evidence of Woolley's is quite recent. He presents it only as a suggestion. I would not put too much stress on it, for it may prove not to be correct. But it is a very interesting suggestion and may possibly be the explanation of this chapter in the Book of Daniel.