

1. Last week I completed several introductory points to Daniel chapter three.
2. Now we are ready for Daniel chapter three verse one.

KJV

Dan 3:1 Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.

NIV

Dan 3:1 King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, ninety feet high and nine feet wide, and set it up on the plain of Dura in Babylon.

1. Everything in Daniel three suggests clearly that the main purpose of this chapter is practical rather than prophetic.
2. There are no predictions. The narrative simply reports the fortunes of the three friends of Daniel. All three were steadfast confessors of the faith.
3. As noted earlier Daniel does not figure in the chapter at all.
4. Most expositors believe Daniel had been sent out of "country" on special assignment, i.e., he was on the king's business elsewhere.
5. Hebrews 11:34 cites the story as a lesson in faith.

Heb 11:34 quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies.

6. The king has his worker bees erect an idolatrous image.
7. Wycliffe says of the image, "The dimensions furnished in ratio, 60 x 6, a ratio of 10 to 1; this would seem to suggest an image set on a pedestal."
8. This was one tall and skinny statue.
 - 8.1 Most people are five times taller than wide. There are exceptions of course.
9. As to the location of Dura, there are at least three places of that name which have been located.

9.1 One of which was near the city, the others are too distant therefore we can safely conclude "Big Gold" was built just outside the city of Babylon.

10. The image may have been dedicated to some Babylonian deity but given our context it would seem the statue represents King Nebuchadnezzar as the god of Babylon.

11. There are those who believe the statue was made of pure gold given Babylon's abundant supply.

12. Whether plated or pure there was an enormous amount of gold used!

13. Wycliffe goes on to write in his Commentary:

"If we assume that the image was half as thick as it was wide, or four and a half feet. Using these three dimensions, (and we assume it was made of pure gold) the total weight would be 4,400,000 pounds.

14. Col. R. B. Thieme has written:

"At \$33 an ounce, this spectacular statue would have cost about \$2,315,000,000! Not only does this give us an idea of the fantastic wealth of Nebuchadnezzar's empire, but it reveals the extent of his egomania."

15. This golden monument was set up in a valley; most likely a large open area where athletic games were held or troops were reviewed.

16. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent for the princes, the governors, the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to a worship service.

17. Now let's take a look at Dan 3:2-3.

KJV

Dan 3:2 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.

NIV

Dan 3:2 He then summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the image he had set up.

KJV

Dan 3:3 Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

NIV

Dan 3:3 So the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials assembled for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and they stood before it.

Principles

1. Approbation lust requires constant stimulation and Nebuchadnezzar's lust pattern was no exception.

2. His insatiable pride demanded admirers for his latest display of wealth and power. Therefore, he called together the officials of his empire to participate in a presentation and public dedication of the image.

3. There is certainly nothing wrong with having material possessions. Sin results when there is a false motivation for such acquisition and/or pride of possession.

3.1 The proper mental attitude toward wealth and/or promotion occurs when one understands from where wealth and promotion comes. It comes of course from the Lord.

4. Let's stop here for a moment and look at what the Bible has to say about wealth:

1. There is nothing wrong with having wealth.

1.1 This principle is well established in Scripture. Certainly Abraham was wealthy and he fought to maintain his wealth. This is not so unusual. David was wealthy and he destroyed those who stole from him. For example he destroyed the Amalekites at Ziklag.

1.2 Wealthy people are used as examples in the Bible as godly folk whom God blesses with wealth. The Mosaic law says it is ok to kill an intruder who tries to steal from you.

1.3 Man has long since identified the truth that normal people appreciate property and wealth.

1.3.1 Abraham Lincoln in a speech on March 6, 1860 said "I take it that it is best for all to leave each man free to acquire property as fast as he can. Some will get wealthy. I don't believe in a law to prevent a man from getting rich; it would do more harm than good."

1.3.2 George Washington in 1777 recognized that wealthy or propertied people make the better soldiers for they have purpose in their defense of wealth, "You will therefore send me none but natives, and Men of some property, if you have them."

1.3.3 Economic freedom will always result in disparities in wealth.

1.3.4 The macro result will however be more for all. Clearly every liberal society of recent past has now proven that communism and socialism does not succeed given time. The reference here to socialism and communism includes all forms of collectivism where the wealth of others is used to satisfy the wants of the "have nots." And this is true whether the means be direct or indirect be it done by felons or government.

1.3.5 Again history clearly teaches the total pie gets larger when freedom permits the pursuit of individual wealth. The concept is as old as 1776 when Adam Smith coined the phrase "the invisible hand." In his book *A General Inquiry Into the Nature and Cause of the Wealth of Nations* he went on to write.

"A free man in a free society..." led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention. Nor is it ... worse for the society ... By pursuing his own interest he ... promotes ... the society more effectually than he intends ... I have never known much good to come from those who affected to trade for the public good."

1.3.6 The greater the freedom the more significant the disparity of wealth.

An Anonymous writer has written, "Take all the money in the world and distribute it equally and wait a time and you will find most will make its way back to where it came."

1.3.7 Samuel Johnson has written: "So far is it from being true that men are naturally equal, that no two people can be half an hour together in a room but one will acquire an evident superiority over the other."

1.4 The Bible teaches capitalism and the value of accumulating personal wealth--so long as we think properly about the wealth and particularly the source of the wealth.

1.5 Alexis de Tocqueville wrote of the problem of man and wealth in 1830 after visiting America. "There is ... a manly and lawful passion for equality which incites men to wish all to be powerful and honored. This passion tends to elevate the humble to the rank of the great; but there exists also in the human heart a depraved taste of equality, which impels the weak to attempt to lower the powerful to their own level, and reduces men to prefer equality in slavery to inequality with freedom."

1.6 God long ago in eternity past recognized this penchant for lust and covetousness so he established the Decalogue of freedom.

1.7 The ten commandments are designed to protect the individual in a nation.

Exo 20:3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Exo 20:4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

Exo 20:5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;

Exo 20:6 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

Exo 20:7 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

Exo 20:8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Exo 20:9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

Exo 20:10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

Exo 20:11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

Exo 20:12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

Exo 20:13 Thou shalt not kill.

Exo 20:14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Exo 20:15 Thou shalt not steal.

Exo 20:16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

Exo 20:17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

1.8 The Bible according to the freedom code teaches capitalism, for in its purest sense of established economic definitions, private property is to be allowed.

1.8.1 Only under capitalism and certainly not under socialism and communism is private ownership of property permitted.

1.9 God has never sanctioned egalitarianism.

1.9.1 In fact in the Millennium there will be the greatest and the least.

1.9.2 In heaven there will also be relative reward and differences in the "haves" and the "have nots."

1.10 The doctrine of crowns tells us some will sit on the porch sipping cold Dr. Pepper and some will pick cotton and sing with gusto because they are so happy.

1.10.1 Old Testament prophecy of inequality in the Millennium can be found in several places but not the least of which is Jer 31:44.

Jer 31:44 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

1.10.2 There is a New Testament prophecy of inequality in the Millennium.
Heb 8:11-13

Heb 8:11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

1.11 The problem with wealth is not "wealth" but the attitude of the believer towards wealth. We need from time to time to ask ourselves the following questions.

1.11.1 Do you know the source of your wealth?

1.11.2 Do you recognize your responsibility to help the poor concerning whom God brings you face to face?

1.11.3 Do you recognize that happiness does not come from material possessions but from doctrine? Peggy Noonan in her book *Simply Speaking* tells of Oprah Winfrey sadly recalling the many celebrities she knows who have no ability to enjoy life. Ms. Noonan went on to quote Ms. Winfrey "they seek continually happiness by purchasing more things, each becoming more bizarre."

2. We must remember that wealth is a gift of God and we don't earn or deserve it.

Deu 8:17 And thou shalt say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth.

Deu 8:18 But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is God that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.

Mat 6:19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

Mat 6:20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

2.1 As the Lord taught repeatedly, you can store up treasure on earth but there is no assurance that there will be a tomorrow.

2.2 Wealth can be removed in a heartbeat and there you are standing amidst your once proud kingdom eating the grass of the field. Dan 4:28-37

Dan 4:28 All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar.

Dan 4:29 At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon.

Dan 4:30 The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?

Dan 4:31 While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee.

Dan 4:32 And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

Dan 4:33 The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.

Dan 4:34 And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation:

Dan 4:35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

Dan 4:36 At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me.

Dan 4:37 Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.

3. The Bible is full of examples of believers who were wealthy:

3.1 Boaz, who is in the line of Christ, was a wealthy man.

Rth 2:1 And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz.

3.2 This does not mean that all good people are wealthy and all bad people are poor. Joseph and Mary were poor and therefore so also was Christ.

Luk 2:22 And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;

Luk 2:23 (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;)

Luk 2:24 And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons.

4. God curses Eli for not controlling his boys and then prophecies that He (God) will prosper Israel and curse Eli and his family. Their curse in essence: Eli and his family will not prosper in a wealthy land.

1Sa 2:31 The time is coming when I will cut short your strength and the strength of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your family line

1Sa 2:32 and you will see distress in my dwelling. Although I give wealth and prosperity to Israel, in your family line there will never be an old man.

5. God gave Solomon the promise of affluence because he chose wisdom over wealth, fame and prosperity.

2Ch 1:11 And God said to Solomon, Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honor, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king:

2Ch 1:12 Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honor, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like.

6. Job had been blessed of the Lord with great wealth.

Job 31:25 If I rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because mine hand had gotten much;

7. In fact wealth and riches are promised to the righteous.

Psa 112:1 Praise ye the LORD. Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.

Psa 112:2 His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed.

Psa 112:3 Wealth and riches shall be in his house: and his righteousness endureth for ever.

8. Men are urged to avoid the temptations of a dalliance lest they see their wealth squandered.

Pro 5:3 For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil...

Pro 5:10 Lest strangers be filled with thy wealth; and thy labors be in the house of a stranger;

9. To truly appreciate wealth you have to work for it says Pro 13:11

Pro 13:11 Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labor shall increase.

10. Again, a good man will enjoy his wealth even in his death.

Pro 13:22 A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just.

11. Wealth is a gift of God as well as the power to enjoy it.

Ecc 5:19 Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labor; this is the gift of God.

12. At the Second Advent Israel will acquire the wealth of the nations.

Zec 14:14 And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance.

13. Though custody of portions of material wealth is given to man, it is God who, by virtue of His sovereign creatorship, owns "the cattle upon a thousand hills."

Psa 50:10 for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills.

Psa 50:11 I know every bird in the mountains, and the creatures of the field are mine.

Psa 50:12 If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it.

Psa 50:13 Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats?

Psa 50:14 Sacrifice thank offerings to God, fulfill your vows to the Most High,

Psa 50:15 and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me."

14. Promotion comes from the Lord.

Psa 75:6 For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.

Psa 75:7 But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

15. Solomon could see that God often caused it to rain on the just and the unjust.

Ecc 7:14 In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him.

Ecc 7:15 All things have I seen in the days of my vanity: there is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that longeth his life in his wickedness.

16. Job could see that prosperity often followed obedience.

Job 36:11 If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures.

Job 36:12 But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge.

17. According to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus He has promised to supply all the needs of His own.

Phi 4:19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

18. Scripture as you have seen has a great deal to say about the possession of wealth and the use of both spiritual and material things. The point, we should not hold the king's wealth against him. Even after he is disciplined drastically for his arrogance of unbelief, he will be blessed with even more wealth. The same thing happened to David—so go figure.

End Lesson 2-11-2001