

1. Last week I taught in summary fashion the Doctrine of The Angel of The Lord. We are now ready to begin Dan 3:27.

2. Before continuing let me give you an expanded translation of Daniel chapter three verses twenty-four, twenty-five and twenty-six.

Dan 3:24 After King Nebuchadnezzar arrived from the Palace, he looked into the furnace and was astounded, what he saw caused him to leap to his feet; the King turned to his chief of staff, "Didn't we throw all three men into the fire and were not their hands and feet tied?" One of his cabinet members answered, "Certainly, O king."

Dan 3:25 King Nebuchadnezzar then said: O Look, I see four men unbound; in fact they are all four walking around in the furnace; there are flames leaping all around them but they seem to be unharmed and the fourth man looks like a son of one of our gods.

Dan 3:26 Then, after the furnace had cooled down somewhat Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the furnace and spoke, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the most high God, come out and come here. Then the three came out of the furnace."

3. Now let's see what we can learn from verse twenty-seven.

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Dan 3:27 And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.

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Dan 3:27 and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.

Principles:

1. Imagine the excitement of the dignitaries who were "gathered together" near the furnace to see what was happening!

2. God created a fantastic witness when the visiting firemen "saw the three men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power."

Heb 11:34 There were men of faith who 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.

3. What an opportunity for them to change their eternal future by one decision! Since God has not revealed to us how many believed if any because of their witness, let's see what we do know:

4. Let's take a look at the King's reaction.

KJV

Dan 3:28 Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God.

NIV

Dan 3:28 Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God.

1. The King is impressed with the "lives of the three young men."

2. Their lives are a witness to King Nebuchadnezzar.

3. Recall in our previous study of "witnessing" we learned how we witness both with our words and our lives.

1Th 2:6 We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else. As apostles of Christ we could have been a burden to you,

1Th 2:7 but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children.

1Th 2:8 We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.

1Th 2:9 Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you.

4. Again, Nebuchadnezzar in Dan 3:26 verbally acknowledged the "God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego" as the only One who could "send an angel to deliver such men from the fiery furnace but His statement is more of an observation and not a statement of faith.

5. God completely rescued his servants, an obvious empirical fact.

6. There can be little doubt that the king was impressed with the ability of a God who could accomplish such a spectacular feat; but again, he was impressed with the **MANIFESTATION** of the power rather than the **SOURCE** of the power.

7. His false values prompted the king to completely reverse his former edict of praise for the God of Daniel and formulate another monstrous law; a new law which resulted again in the same interference with human volition—"you will worship the golden image!" He will now make a third decree.

8. Now let's see what the King decreed:

KJV

Dan 3:29 Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.

NIV

Dan 3:29 Therefore I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way."

1. Unfortunately, King Nebuchadnezzar had missed the whole point: he saw the miracle, but he did not receive the message. While he was awed by the greatness of God, he rejected the grace of God in salvation!

2. In the new decree Nebuchadnezzar reversed his position clearly revealing the instability of an unbeliever.

3. He had been wrong to force his subjects to worship a golden image; he was just as wrong to demand that his subjects not speak ill of Jehovah!

3.1 People must come to Christ of their own free will. Only then do they have the right or reason to worship Him. True worship is a manifestation of adoration but without a relationship there can be no love and activities in the name of Christianity mean no more than the genuflection itself.

4. Another point of doctrine: instability is not the monopoly of unbelievers. A believer out of fellowship can commit any sin, overt or mental, and be just as unstable as nitroglycerin!

4.1 Had Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego been out of fellowship and/or negative toward doctrine they would have lacked the stability to faith during their ultimate fiery test in the furnace.

5. Nebuchadnezzar has just implemented a state religion. State-sponsored religion is anti-Biblical and can only produce evil. Believers should never promote legislation whereby the state supports Christianity or any other religion.

5.1 This is not a function of the government.

6. During the Middle Ages (more accurately known as the Dark Ages), the State paid the salaries of the clergy, and these men became powerful and influential; the people under their rule experienced deplorable conditions just as will occur when the Antichrist supports the "High Church of Rome" during the Tribulation.

7. The church of the Middle Ages is described as the church of Thyatira in Rev 2:18-24.

Rev 2:18 "To the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze.

Rev 2:19 I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first.

Rev 2:20 Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols.

Rev 2:21 I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling.

Rev 2:22 So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways.

Rev 2:23 I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.

Rev 2:24 Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets (I will not impose any other burden on you):

8. When Nebuchadnezzar said, "I make a decree," he abandoned his attempt to force idol worship on his Empire, however, the principle of coercion remained the same.

9. Although he was impressed with the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, he overlooked the fact that God does not need the sponsorship of any king or State!

10. Where there is law and order in a strong national entity evangelism can be conducted under ideal conditions. Fusion of Church and State or coercion invariably destroys the issue of the Gospel.

11. It is obvious that Nebuchadnezzar habitually used a system of intimidation to maintain control within his kingdom. In Dan 2:5 the king threatened the members of his cabinet in the same way.

Dan 2:5 The king replied to the astrologers, "This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble.

12. To have them "cut in pieces and their houses made a dunghill" was apparently used frequently to obtain obedience.

13. Rich or poor great or small stood to lose their dearest possession-life itself. Thus, this order also attempted to neutralize the volition of everyone but the king!

14. It is God who in charge and it is He who protects His own; He also protects His divine institution of volition.

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