

1. Last week I taught verses twenty-seven, twenty-eight and twenty-nine. Before resuming our study of Daniel chapter three verse thirty, I want to give you an expanded translation of Dan 3:24-29:

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."

Dan 3:27 The members of King Nebuchadnezzar's cabinet, together with the heads of the various provinces who had come to Babylon to worship the image, they all crowded around Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. They saw that there were no burns on their bodies and furthermore they were amazed that the fire had not even singed a single hair of their head; their robes were not even scorched, and each Potentate was astounded that the young men had no smell from the fire on them.

Dan 3:28 Nebuchadnezzar then lifted up his hands toward heaven and shouted, "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 my command; these men were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own."

Dan 3:29 The King walked slowly back to the reviewing stand where he pronounced the following decree: "anyone who says anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego shall be cut into pieces and their houses will be reduced to rubble, for there is no other god who can save in this way."

Now let's review a little of that learned last week and then return to our study at verse thirty:

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.

3.2 True worship is a manifestation of adoration; 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 any unbeliever.

4.1 Had Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego been out of fellowship, they would have lacked the stability to faith rest their life-or-death test.

5. As we noted last week, state-sponsored religion is anti-Biblical and can only produce evil. Believers should never promote legislation whereby the state supports Christianity; 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.

15. Psalm 37:1-10 not only promises rewards to the believer who loves the Lord, but also, in contrast the Psalmist shows us how thoroughly God handles the discipline of those who are evil in His sight:

Psa 37:1 Do not fret because of evil men or be envious of those who do wrong;

Psa 37:2 for like the grass they will soon wither, like green plants they will soon die away.

Psa 37:3 Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.

Psa 37:4 Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Psa 37:5 Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this:

Psa 37:6 He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.

Psa 37:7 Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes.

Psa 37:8 Refrain from anger and turn from wrath do not fret--it leads only to evil.

Psa 37:9 For evil men will be cut off, but those who hope in the LORD will inherit the land.

Psa 37:10 A little while, and the wicked will be no more; though you look for them, they will not be found.

16. Promotion comes to those who can handle it, but woe to them who seek to aggrandize self!

17. While Nebuchadnezzar reveled in his own glory he gave no thought to the prophecy that this power would be taken from him.

18. Yet already his decline had begun because of mental attitude sins and their overt results: soon he would be reduced to nothing unless you consider a man grazing in the field as "something" special.

19. Now for our last verse in chapter three.

KJV/NIV

Dan 3:30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon.

1. King Nebuchadnezzar rewarded Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego with promotion, although they had rendered no service to the king by surviving the punishment of the fiery furnace.

2. Actually, his radical actions had given them a fantastic time of fellowship with their marvelous Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

3. No doubt in years to come they would relive those hours within the furnace many times and regard the experience as the highlight of their lives!

4. Thus we see how God turned cursing into blessing by bestowing both spiritual and materialistic rewards to these faithful servants who refused to compromise.

Pro 16:7 "When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."

5. Before I give you an expanded translation of verses twenty-seven through thirty let me read what Wycliffe has written of Dan 3:24-30.

5.1 "These verses must be interpreted from Nebuchadnezzar's pagan point of view, not from our Christian point of view. "Like the Son of God" should be "like a son of the gods," i.e., like a Chaldean divine being. The king was thinking of the various orders of pagan deities ... This person may indeed have been the preincarnate Son of God, but if so, Nebuchadnezzar did not know who He was ..."

5.2 Wycliffe goes on to write: "The victory of faith was fivefold:

- (1) They were loosed from their bonds (v. 25).
- (2) They were protected from harm (v. 27).
- (3) They were comforted in trial (vv. 24, 25, 28).
- (4) Their God was glorified (v. 29).
- (5) As God's servants they were rewarded (v. 30)."

6. Now for an alternative expanded translation of Dan 3:27-30.

Dan 3:27 After the three young men came out of the furnace the King's highest officials, governors and advisors all crowded around. The men were not burned and their hair wasn't scorched, and their clothes didn't even smell like smoke.

Dan 3:28 King Nebuchadnezzar said: "Praise needs to be offered to their god for sending an angel to rescue his servants! These men trusted their god and refused to obey my commands. Yes, they chose to die rather than to worship or serve any god except their own.

Dan 3:29 Therefore, I make a decree: I will not allow any people of any nation or race to say anything against their God. Anyone who does will be chopped up and their houses will be torn down and thrown outside the city in the refuse pile, because no other god has such great power to deliver.

Dan 3:30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to positions of high office in his administration.

Now let's look at a few lessons from chapter three:

1. Daniel Chapter three reveals the pernicious activities of religion.
2. God cannot be reduced to material substance; therefore, nothing made by man is worthy of worship.
3. Neither pride or the abuse of power can change the course of human history.
4. Governmental interference with human volition in spiritual matters is anti-Biblical and does not constitute a legitimate function of government.
5. Response to ecumenical religion is not ordered under the divine institutions which God has ordained.
6. God never honors compromise.
7. A believer should never be foolish enough to retaliate against his personal enemies. Remember "the battle is the Lord's."
8. In time of pressure and suffering the presence of doctrine in the soul is imperative.

9. Happiness comes from doctrine in the soul and not from materialistic possessions or power.

10. God protected the faithful believers of Daniel's day when they faced persecution and death.

11. God protects His people. He will always protect His own.

12. Daniel, Chapter three has a special application for His people Israel during their special trial under the Antichrist.

12.1 Nebuchadnezzar is a picture of the False Prophet who sets up an image to be worshipped in the false temple (Rev 13:11-15).

Rev 13:11 Then I saw another beast, coming out of the earth. He had two horns (he comes like a religious "sweety" and acts later like a dragon) like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon.

Rev 13:12 He exercised all the authority of the first beast on his behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed.

Rev 13:13 And he performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men.

Rev 13:14 Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he deceived the inhabitants of the earth. He ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived.

Rev 13:15 He was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed.

12.2 The image which Nebuchadnezzar sets up foreshadows the image of the abomination of the desolation of the Tribulation.

Dan 11:31 "His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice. Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation.

Mat 24:15 "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel - let the reader understand--

End Lesson Taught 5-13-2001