

"Living for God in the Midst of Difficult Times"

Part 7

Daniel 3

Introduction: Two weeks ago in our series "Living for God in the Midst of Difficult Times" we were in Daniel chapter 3. We are going to pick up where we left off 2 weeks ago but before we do let me do a quick review.

In chapter 3 of Daniel we see a time of testing for Daniel's 3 friends. Daniel is not on the scene and God had planned it this way. Back in chapter 1 we saw that Daniel and most likely about 74 other young men were deported from Jerusalem to Babylon. They were placed into a Babylonian program which was designed to brain wash them and to make them forget their roots. About 71 of the young men who were deported chose to go along with the plan of the Babylonians. But Daniel and his 3 friends refused to compromise on the Truth of God's Word. They would not eat the meat that had been offered to idols nor would they drink the king's wine. The result was God gave them understanding that far exceeded all the others. They were under the training of the Babylonians 3 years and then they were brought to serve before the king.

In chapter 2 of Daniel the king dreamed a dream and Daniel is the only person who can interpret the dream. Then as we come to chapter 3 we see a test of the faith of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

I. The Cause

When Daniel interprets the dream the king then promotes him and then Daniel requests that his 3 friends also be promoted. It is immediately following the promotions of Daniel and his friends that the test comes.

Application:

This promotion had placed these 4 Godly men in leadership over the entire kingdom and this infuriated Satan. He then would launch a spiritual attack through the Babylonians.

Anytime you take a stand for God and have an opportunity to magnify Jesus Christ you had better believe that there will be attacks. As in this situation we can say the heat will get turned up.

Then we come to chapter 3 where we shall see the test.

Notice Daniel 3:1

The king has an image of gold 90 feet high and 9 feet wide erected in the plain of Dura.

II. The Command and the Coercion

Notice Daniel 3:4-6

He issued a command that when the orchestra began to play everyone was to bow down to the image. For anyone who refused to bow down they would be taken and thrown alive into the fiery furnace.

Now as I told you Daniel is not in Babylon at this time. We do not know where he was but all we know is that he is not there. I also believe that God had taken Daniel away at this time for a reason and that reason was so that Daniel's 3 friends would learn to stand on their own. Daniel had been the leader for over 3 years and now it was time for these men to stand on their own so God took away the crutch/Daniel.

III. The Conviction

When the orchestra began to play everyone in the kingdom fell down and did as they were commanded with 3 exceptions. Daniel's 3 friends refused to bow down to the image.

Notice Daniel 3:8-12

These 3 had learned something very valuable under the leadership of Daniel and that was the Word of God was the compass for their lives. Let me show you why I say this.

Exodus 20:1-5

And God spake all these words, saying,

² *I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*

³ *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

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.*

***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;*

This is where we stopped last week but there is a very important point I need to make here before we move on.

Every person is controlled by one of two things.

1. **Internal conviction.**
2. **External circumstances.**

These young men were controlled not by the outward pressure but they were controlled by inward convictions. This is seen very little in the day in which we live in today.

I have told you before and I will say it again, **there is pressure coming down the road** and it is so important that we who are believers fill our minds and our hearts with the Truth of God's Word.

Psalm 119:10-11

¹⁰ With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.

¹¹ Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

In order to live for God in the midst of pressure we must learn God's Word and allow it to be that which controls us.

Proverbs 2:1, 10-11

My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee;

¹⁰ When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul;

¹¹ Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee:

Now, we are commanded to obey the laws of the government but not if the government requires us to compromise the Word of God. There is a passage in the New Testament that reminds me of the stand these men took.

Matthew 22:15-21

¹⁵ Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk.

¹⁶ And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men.

¹⁷ Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?

¹⁸ But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?

¹⁹ Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny.

²⁰ And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription?

²¹ They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

They should have asked, "What is God's?" Then Jesus would have asked, "Whose image is on you?"

These 3 men in Daniel were giving to God that which belonged to God and that was all their heart, soul, and mind.

IV. The Calmness

Notice Daniel 3:13-15

These 3 young men were taken in before the king. It is one thing to stand for your convictions when you are in the midst of the crowd but when you are face to face with the person who has the power to inflict punishment it is another situation.

Here was opportunity to back down. This was time to reconsider. It was an opportunity to say, "Well, maybe we will bow down because everyone else is doing it."

Notice Daniel 3:16

This was nothing disrespectful. They were not abrasive. They simply said they had nothing to say about the matter. The bottom line was they had taken their stand and it would do no good to discuss the matter. No amount of discussion would change their minds. God's Word said to not bow to idols so they would not bow.

Notice Daniel 3:17-18

They told the king that God could save them from the fire but if He chose not to they still would not bow. They were fulfilling a Scripture given by Jesus to the Apostle John.

Revelation 2:10

*¹⁰ Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: **be thou faithful unto death**, and I will give thee a crown of life.*

There was no begging nor was there any pleading. This was a calm answer from these young men who were below the age of 20. How did they keep so calm?

Isaiah 26:3

³ Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

Jeremiah 17:7-8

⁷ Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.

⁸ For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

V. The Care

Notice Daniel 3:19-30

There are several lessons from this that we need to see.

1. **God often allows His children to go through the fire.**
2. **God will always be with us in whatever we face.**

Hebrews 13:5

⁵ Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

Psalms 37:25-28

*²⁵ I have been young, and now am old; yet have **I not seen the righteous forsaken**, nor his seed begging bread.*

²⁶ *He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed.*

²⁷ *Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore.*

²⁸ *For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.*

Isaiah 41:10, 13

¹⁰ *Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.*

¹³ *For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.*

Isaiah 43:2

² *When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.*

Conclusion:

There is so much to learn from this passage. There is one main thought that I want you to get from this.

This entire test of these 3 men was permitted by God in order that He would be glorified.

This is why God allows us to go through the fiery trials in our lives today.

John 11:1-4

Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

² *(It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)*

³ *Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.*

⁴ *When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.*