

The Fiery Furnace

Daniel 3

Part 3

Introduction: Last week in our study of Daniel we look again at the image which king Nebuchadnezzar had set up in the plain of Dura. It is believed there was an attempt to overthrow the king and now as we come into this chapter he has called together all of his rulers in his kingdom, and he is requiring that they show their loyalty to him by bowing to the image when the music is played.

Notice Daniel 3:1-6

They were all threatened with the fiery furnace if they did not bow when the music was played. Last week we considered how the music was used in a way to play on the emotions of the people so as to get them caught up in the worship of the image.

Notice the words of Larkin again.

"All men are religious by nature, and are easily carried away by anything that stirs their religious feelings. Knowing this, Nebuchadnezzar took advantage of it. Everything was done to excite and stir the religious emotions of that vast multitude on the "Plain of Dura." Large orchestras, with their various musical instruments, were stationed at convenient places, and all the paraphernalia and ritualistic ceremony of idolatrous worship, with the most gorgeous display of religious trappings, such as were used by the "Babylonian Cults," were doubtless used to impress the bystanders, and get them to worship the Image."

Music is good and it is in music that we worship our God. But music can also be used by Satan to play on the emotions. What happens is that the music is used to ramp up the emotions and many people in the church service have nothing but an emotional experience and they become convinced that they have had some kind of encounter with God and for this reason they believe you must have a "FEELING" when you leave the church otherwise God was not in it. We can be sure that just as Satan counterfeits many things that one thing he has counterfeited over time has been music and he has convinced many people that what they are singing is Godly music. But the truth is that Satan has written the song through the pen of the writer.

When we stopped last week, we were watching as the music began to play and the rulers all bowed down with the exception of 3 men. They were Daniel's 3 friends who had been promoted by recommendation of Daniel.

Notice Daniel 3:7-12

Daniel's 3 friends were noticed, and they were reported by certain Chaldeans who were jealous of them because of the promotions which they had received. These Chaldeans were quick to go straight to the king with the report.

This now brings us to where we are in our study.

Faith Tested by Fire

Part 2

Notice Daniel 3:13-14

The king had a problem with anger, and it will cost him shortly. Let us try to understand why Nebuchadnezzar was so angry. He had gone to a great deal of time and expense to get the image made and then set up. He had to have the orchestra all organized, which took time and money. We must understand that this all took a lot of time. It did not happen overnight. Then behind this was the plan to force the rulers to show their loyalty to him. So, all of this is put together, and I am sure the king is anticipating the day the image is unveiled. He has high expectations. The day comes and it seems to go as planned until the report comes to him concerning the 3 Jews. These 3 men cast a wet blanket over the entire day of celebration. You could say they ruined the plans of the king. Then there was now the possibility that others may follow in their footsteps and rebel also. Can we now see why the king was so angry and can we see just how significant the stand is that Daniel's friends take?

Notice Daniel 3:14 again.

Here in verse 14 the pressure is turned up to the next level for Daniel's 3 friends. It is one thing to take a stand against your superiors, but it raises to another level when you are called to stand in front of the man who has the power to execute you and you are questioned for your rebellious stand. This was an opportunity for these men to compromise. But they refused to do so. Let us also understand that these 3 Jews knew that the king's threat was not just words, but it was real. How would they have known this for sure? Let us notice the words of Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 29:20-23

²⁰ Hear ye therefore the word of the LORD, all ye of the captivity, whom I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon:

²¹ Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, of Ahab the son of Kolaiah, and of Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah, which prophesy a lie unto you in my name; Behold, I will deliver them into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; and he shall slay them before your eyes;

²² And of them shall be taken up a curse by all the captivity of Judah which are in Babylon, saying, The LORD make thee like Zedekiah and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire;

²³ Because they have committed villany in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbours' wives, and have spoken lying words in my name, which I have not commanded them; even I know, and am a witness, saith the LORD.

Application:

What would you do in this situation? There are many people who could find a way to justify compromise here. Notice the words of Wiersbe.

"The three men could have compromised with the king and defended their disobedience by arguing, "Everybody else is doing it," or "Our office demands that we obey," or "We'll bow our knees, but we won't bow our hearts." They might have said, "We can do our people more good by being officers in the king's service than by being ashes in the king's furnace." But true faith doesn't look for loopholes; it simply obeys God and knows that He will do what is best. Faith rests on commands and promises, not on arguments and explanations."

We shall get back to their steadfast stand in a moment.

Notice Daniel 3:14 again.

I just want to draw your attention to the fact that the king seems to be very reluctant to believe even his own men. He asks the 3 Jews "Is it true?" so it seems as though the coup attempt has made him paranoid. Let us see the contrast to his paranoia.

Notice Daniel 3:15-18

Compromise was not even a thought for these 3 men. They were steadfast and walking in faith. They believed that one way or another God would deliver them. It would either be by

a miracle or by death but either way they would be free from the king's ruling power. I want you to see then peace that flooded the hearts of these 3 men. There was no fear, no panic, and no thought of compromise. How were they able to stand so firmly in the face of the furnace of fire? It was their relationship with God that allowed them to stand firm as they faced the fire. It was knowing God and exercising faith in Him. Faith in God always translates into victory for the believer.

Hebrews 11:32-39

³² *And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:*

³³ *Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions.*

³⁴ *Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.*

³⁵ *Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:*

³⁶ *And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:*

³⁷ *They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;*

³⁸ *(Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.*

³⁹ *And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:*

These men had the attitude of Job as they faced the fire and trusted in the Lord.

Job 13:15

¹⁵ *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.*

I want to focus on the fact that they knew God on a different level than most people do. There are several thoughts to consider here.

1. **They knew the promises of God.**

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.

¹¹ Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish.

¹² Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought.

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.

2. They were willing to accept the will of God even if it was not pleasant.

Notice the words of Wood.

"Two matters stand out for notice. First, the young men recognized that God's will might be different from what they would find pleasant, and they were willing to have it so, without complaining. Too often Christians are not willing to have God's will different from their own, and then do complain most vigorously when it proves to be that way. Second, they did not make their own obedience contingent upon God's doing that which was pleasant to them."

We must understand that no matter the situation the will of God is always the very best for us.

Romans 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

² And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Notice the words of Pritchard.

"So many Christians want to make deals with God. "Lord, I'll stand up for you as long as (pick one) A) I don't lose my job, B) my friends don't make fun of me, C) I still get that promotion, D) I don't get in trouble with my boss, E) I can still have a successful career." But God doesn't make deals with anyone. He calls us to be faithful and we are called to leave the results with him. He doesn't promise us an easy road if we decide to be faithful to him. And that's why these three young men said, "But if not." They knew God could save them but they knew he might have higher purposes in mind that would require their death. Therefore, they didn't try to back God into a corner by demanding that the Almighty work a miracle on their behalf. They accepted God's will in advance without knowing how things would work out."

Conclusion:

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of walking in a close relationship with the Lord. It is the most important part of living a life that is pleasing to God.

2 Peter 1:2-4

² *Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,*

³ *According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:*

⁴ *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*