



WE WILL NOT BOW!

Daniel Chapter 3

THE PROPHECIES OF DANIEL STATESMAN FOR THE AGES

Session Three / Chapter Three

Wednesday, January 24, 2018

WE WILL NOT BOW!

1
2
3 In our previous study, King Nebuchadnezzar, monarch of Babylon, had a strange dream.
4 In it, he saw a statue with a head of gold, shoulders of silver, trunk of brass and legs of
5 iron. God revealed to Daniel that He was showing the King the Gentile empires from
6 that point to the coming of Christ.

- 7
8 * The head of gold - Babylon
9 * Arms and shoulders of silver - Medo-Persia
10 * Belly or trunk of brass - Greece
11 * Legs of iron - Rome

12
13 Remember the legs representing Rome for the empire would eventually split - Western
14 Rome with its capital staying in the city of Rome; Eastern Rome with its capital in
15 Istanbul.

16
17 * The feet and toes, clay mixed with iron – the weakened feet upon which the image
18 sat.

19 * The stone not cut out of the mountain by human hands that rolls across the plane of
20 time and crushes the feet of the image, bringing it to ruin.

21 * The stone not cut with hands will be Jesus Christ Who sets up His millennial
22 kingdom.

23
24 Nebuchadnezzar must have forgotten the kingdoms that would follow him and the
25 Babylonian empire. Almost immediately, he proclaims himself a veritable god and sets
26 up a 90-ft golden statue. He demands that everyone bow to worship it (him, really).
27 Three men, three of the young Jews from Jerusalem, refuse and have to pay the
28 consequences - that of being thrown into a raging fire. Here is the amazing story:

29
30 Daniel 3:1-6 (King James Version)

31 **Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore**
32 **cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the**
33 **province of Babylon. [2] Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the**
34 **princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors,**

1 **the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the**
2 **image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. [3] Then the princes, the**
3 **governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and**
4 **all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the**
5 **image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image**
6 **that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. [4] Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is**
7 **commanded, O people, nations, and languages, [5] That at what time ye hear the**
8 **sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick,**
9 **ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set**
10 **up: [6] And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast**
11 **into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.**

12
13 You probably have already observed that Daniel himself does not appear in this narrative.
14 Why? We don't really know. He might have been ill. He might have been out of the
15 country on official business. However, his three friends were there, Shadrach, Meshach
16 and Abednego were there and faced a huge moral decision. *"Do we bow? Or don't*
17 *we?"*

18
19

One would have to ask, "Well, why not just bow? What difference does it make? After all, it's only a physical gesture. It's not what's in our hearts. We know King Nebuchadnezzar is not a god. So let's just play along. Why there are so many people here, they won't even recognize that it's us. Let's just do it and get on with life." That is called SITUATIONAL ETHICS. "We know it's wrong, but, hey - we have a situation here that could cost us our lives.....so why not just bow and be done with it!"

20
21 Note in verse three that the JUDGES were there (the magistrates, as some versions note
22 it). It was important to this arrogant king that the judicial bench was represented.
23 When the founders of our country formed our government, they put in place a system of
24 balance: executive = legislative = judicial. These were to be equal branches of the
25 government making sure that we were not controlled by only one of them. Today,
26 however, we have seen the escalation of power by judges who are shown to even over-
27 power the executive (presidency). This is a development that should be watched
28 carefully. It comes close, in my opinion, to becoming a potentially liberty-threatening
29 situation. Especially the liberty of religion. Watch it closely. In this case, it was a
30 matter of the King having absolute authority over the judicial - yes, even to the point of
31 life and death. In our lifetimes, there have been nations such as China and others, in
32 which the king, or president - or whatever you call him has demanded actual worship of
33 himself.

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MARTYRS

Some of us have in our libraries *FOX'S BOOK OF MARTYRS*. It is the story of many, many men and women who lost their lives to governing authorities (both secular and religious) for their faith in Christ. One might easily simply dismiss those accounts as something in the past that is not extant in our life time. That would be a severe mistake!

For 27 years, the International Bulletin of Missionary Research has published an annual Status of Global Mission report, which attempts to quantify the world Christian reality, comparing Christianity's circumstances to those of other faiths, and assaying how Christianity's various expressions are faring when measured against the recent (and not so recent) past. Thee report is unfailingly interesting, sometimes jarring, and occasionally provocative. The provocation in a recent report involves martyrs - defined as believers in Christ who have lost their lives, prematurely, in situations of witness, as a result of human hostility. The report estimates there were, on average, 270 new Christian martyrs every 24 hours between 2000- 2010 for a total during that time period of approximately one million.

AGAINST THE FLOW / JOHN LENNOX / PAGE 138 / MONARCH BOOKS

What you and I are enjoying (at least for now), religious freedom, must not be taken for granted. There are 'budding Nebuchadnezzars' everywhere, anxious to take such liberty away for their own aggrandizement. Let us be aware of the secularists who are demanding any discussion of or presentation of God be eliminated from public recognition. Discrimination against Christianity is rampant in our own nation. Watch it - the secularists are constructing their own version of Nebuchadnezzar's statue and demanding we kowtow to it.

The three young Jews in Daniel's saga were in grave danger of losing their lives to the whims of a proud and blasphemous king. Their courage in the face of this situation is a story known to millions through the ages. Let's look into it:

THE KING'S MUSIC

Daniel 3:5

That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up:

We are familiar with most of those instruments. Exceptions:

1 The sackbut - a primitive trombone

2
3 The psaltery - a board with strings strung tightly, which could either be strummed or
4 plucked

5
6 The dulcimer - like today's zither, a stringed instrument

7
8 The cornet - a type of trumpet

9
10 Why music? Why, indeed! Music can be intensely seductive. It sets the mood. With
11 the exception of the cornet, it appears that most of these instruments were for mood
12 music. Yes, put the people into a sleepy mood....they won't even know they are
13 performing rank idolatry. Clever. But it didn't fool the three young Jews.

14
15 THE CHALDEAN SELL-OUT

16
17 In our last study, we saw how God used Daniel to interpret the King's incredible dream
18 (ch. 2). In so doing, Daniel saved the lives of these Chaldeans who otherwise would
19 have been cut to pieces. Were they grateful? Hardly. Now they betray the three
20 young Jews who would not bow to that 90 ft monstrosity:

21
22 Daniel 3:8-12

23 **Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews. [9]**
24 **They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live for ever. [10] Thou, O**
25 **king, hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet,**
26 **flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, shall fall down**
27 **and worship the golden image: [11] And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth,**
28 **that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. [12] There are**
29 **certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon,**
30 **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee:**
31 **they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.**

32
33 The three young Hebrew exiles who, along with Daniel had been found in excellent
34 mental and physical condition, had been granted positions of authority and responsibility
35 in Babylon. The Chaldeans admitted it: *"You set them up in places of authority"* (vs.
36 12). These accusers told the truth. The three had not bowed down. Now
37 Nebuchadnezzar blows his stack:

38
39 Daniel 3:13-15

40 **Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach,**

1 **Meshach, and Abed-nego. Then they brought these men before the king. [14]**
2 **Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and**
3 **Abed-nego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set**
4 **up? [15] Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute,**
5 **harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and**
6 **worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast**
7 **the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that**
8 **shall deliver you out of my hands?**

9
10 It is indicative of their exalted place of authority that the King gave them a second
11 chance. He must have been curious about their failure to bow to the image. Why
12 would they do such a thing at risk of not only their position in government but their very
13 lives. The King could not imagine that there were people in his kingdom who would
14 give their lives for their faith, for their belief, for their God. So....surely they would bow
15 down now that he had so graciously given them a second chance. Oh, was he shocked at
16 their response:

17
18 Daniel 3:16-18

19 **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, answered and said to the king, O**
20 **Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. [17] If it be so,**
21 **our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he**
22 **will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. [18] But if not, be it known unto thee, O**
23 **king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast**
24 **set up.**

25
26 First, these brave, godly young men denied Nebuchadnezzar's assumption that their God
27 could not deliver them. Even facing a horrible death by immolation, they would testify
28 for their God. "He is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace!" That must
29 have set the king's blood a-boiling. But they were not done: "But even if He does not
30 save us, King, we're not going to worship your golden image!"

31
32 I believe the issue that caused the king's apoplexy was that he had absolutely no power
33 over these three men! His threats, his authority over almost everything, even his ability
34 to have them tossed alive into a raging, fiery inferno, could not dissuade them. Their
35 faith in God, even facing a demonic, probably fatal sentence, could not shake their faith.
36 Now, in a hellish rage (which would cost some of his men their lives), he gave forth this
37 edict:

38
39 Daniel 3:19-23

40 **[19] Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was**

1 **changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego: therefore he spake, and**
2 **commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was**
3 **wont to be heated. [20] And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his**
4 **army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and to cast them into the burning**
5 **fiery furnace. [21] Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their**
6 **hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery**
7 **furnace. [22] Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the**
8 **furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach,**
9 **Meshach, and Abed-nego. [23] And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and**
10 **Abed-nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.**

11
12 Several things were at stake as far as the king was concerned. HIS PRIDE After all,
13 was he not the exalted ruler? The mighty Nebuchadnezzar? Was the whole known
14 world not his to enjoy? Who were these upstart young Jews to refuse to bow down to hi
15 image?

16
17 Secondly, HIS MONEY. Who knows what size fortune it took to erect the 90 ft high
18 image made of gold? Or even the furnace? It is believed this massive fiery caldron was
19 upright with a wide top to show flames belching forth. A smaller opening at the bottom
20 made it possible to pull out the ashes. It apparently was visible from a long way off.
21 The monarch had put forth his best effort to insure that all would pay homage to him.
22 But these upstarts, these foreigners, dared defy the order. There was no apparent fear to
23 be seen in the three young men. They would not bow, no matter how hot that furnace
24 became. The king had but one recourse: pitch them in the inferno. In his anger, he
25 ordered that the fire be made even hotter. It was so bad that the men who got close
26 enough to throw the three young Jews into the fire were consumed by it.

27 28 THE FOURTH MAN

29
30 Daniel 3:24-26

31
32 **Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonied, and rose up in haste, and spake, and**
33 **said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?**
34 **They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. [25] He answered and said, Lo,**
35 **I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the**
36 **form of the fourth is like the Son of God.**

37 **[26] Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace,**
38 **and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the most**
39 **high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego,**
40 **came forth of the midst of the fire.**

1 The deliverance of these young men could be explained only by the supernatural. Not
2 only were the three not harmed at all, but there was no physical evidence that they had
3 even been in the fire.

4
5 One major change was evident: Three men had been thrown into the fire, but not
6 onlookers saw four men walking around in the flames. What had been his arrogant and
7 blasphemous challenge just earlier? The young men had claimed faith in God.....and
8 now before him, in the fire, was the Son of God. The king now understood that there
9 was a true God to whom Nebuchadnezzar's threats meant nothing.

10
11 Satan is a master "saber-rattler," but his powers are very limited. God can override
12 everything he attempts

13
14
15 Daniel 3:27

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

20
21 Not only were the young men unharmed by the fire, there was no evidence that they had
22 even BEEN in the fire! No singed hair (which you can smell away off). No burning of
23 their clothes. Nothing! God had delivered them.

24
25 Nebuchadnezzar ran hot and cold in his spiritual life. Now, seeing this miracle of
26 deliverance, his spiritual thermometer got a boost. He was at least for the moment a
27 believer:

28
29 Daniel 3:28-30

30 **Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach,**
31 **and Abed-nego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in**
32 **him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not**
33 **serve nor worship any god, except their own God. [29] Therefore I make a decree,**
34 **That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the**
35 **God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses**
36 **shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this**
37 **sort. [30] Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, in the**
38 **province of Babylon.**

39
40 The king thought the fourth man in the fire was an angel. Perhaps so. Many others

1 believe it was Christ Jesus Himself. But whether an angel of the Christ, He had power
2 over Nebuchadnezzar's regime.

3
4 Here is the great truth from this chapter:

5
6 **GOD COULD HAVE DELIVERED THE THREE MEN FROM THE FIRE; BUT HE**
7 **DID NOT DO SO. HE DELIVERED THEM IN THE FIRE.**

8
9 How often have saints of God prayed to be delivered from situation, only to be thrown
10 into it. Often God gets much greater glory when He miraculously delivers us IN our
11 problem, IN our bad health, IN our dire situation.

12
13 So....Nebuchadnezzar now seems to be a follower of God. Ah, but let's look further into
14 Daniel's book. The king was a man of extremes. As we close this chapter, He is a
15 follower of God. But next week, in chapter 4, he is so sinful he becomes an animal.

16
17 Read chapter four and come prepared for the next episode.