

“LIVING WITHOUT COMPROMISE”

Text: Daniel 3:1-18

Subject: “Secrets From The Fiery Furnace”

Introduction

1. The book of Daniel emphasizes the sovereign will of God on earth.
2. It is a series of dreams and visions that reveal the course of gentile history.
3. In chapters 1-6, Daniel’s godly character and integrity are revealed.
4. In chapters 7-12, Daniel receives visions from God and explains their meaning to us.
5. The book of Daniel is a revelation of how God is in control of history.
6. It is a revelation of how God works out His perfect plan on earth.
7. It is also a plea from God; how He wants to have full control of your life and mine.

- ◆ A key figure in Daniel is Nebuchadnezzar.
- ◆ Nebuchadnezzar began his conquest of Judah in 605 B.C.
- ◆ He deported some Jews to Babylon (including Daniel and his friends who were teenagers)
- ◆ God gave Daniel important places of service.
- ◆ He served under four different rulers.
- ◆ He would glorify God in the middle of enemy territory.

(Now the setting before us)

1. In chapter 2, God has just given a revelation to Nebuchadnezzar (a dream Nebuchadnezzar cannot interpret).
2. Daniel then explains the meaning of the dream.
3. And Nebuchadnezzar’s response is an awesome picture of how we can respond in one of two ways to the working of the Holy Spirit.

Question: How did the king respond and how does it speak to me today?

Answer: It was outward, emotional, verbal and yet shallow.

(Notice the response)

- ◆ In Daniel 2:46, the king fell on his face and commanded offerings to be given to Daniel.
- ◆ In v. 47, the king said to Daniel “*Your God is king of kings and a revealer of secrets.*”
- ◆ In v. 48, the king gave Daniel gifts, money and a position of authority.
- ◆ And it seems like King Nebuchadnezzar is spiritual, inspired and in love with God.

(But then comes Daniel 3:1)

(v. 1) “*The King made an image of gold and set it up in the plains of Dura.*”

(In other words)

- ◆ Instead of being humbled by the dream from God, he exalts himself in pride.
- ◆ Instead of drawing nigh to God, he makes a great image for the glory of man (himself).
- ◆ Instead of bowing to the God of Daniel, he bows to the idols of men (independent of God).

(In other words)

1. The king had nice things to say to Daniel.
2. The king had nice words for the wisdom of Daniel.
3. The king had admiration for the ministry and the work of God to Daniel

(But it’s all on the outside)

- ◆ He wasn’t brought to repentance.
- ◆ He wasn’t willing to say no to his plans.

- ◆ He wasn't moved to obedience to God.
- ◆ He didn't want to change his ways.
- ◆ He wasn't willing to forsake his idols.
- ◆ He wasn't willing to accept Daniel's God.

I. The Decree of the King (Vs. 2-8)

- ◆ In v. 2, Nebuchadnezzar calls all the people to gather and fall down and worship a golden image 60 cubits high and 6 cubits wide.
- ◆ All of the musical instruments were to play.
- ◆ All of the people were to bow down before the image representing the glory of man.
- ◆ In v. 3, all the people gather to the image.
- ◆ In v. 4, the herald cries aloud with his voice.
- ◆ In v. 5, "You'll hear the sound of the instruments."
- ◆ And in v. 6, a decree not for the weak of heart.

"And whoever falleth not down and worshippeth, shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."

Question: What's the decree have to do with me?

(It's crystal clear)

1. These Jews, who believed in Jehovah God, are invited to participate in idolatry.
2. These Jews, who worshipped a Holy God, are now invited to bow to an unholy god.
3. The people of God, who had experienced the mighty hand of God, are now being asked to bow down to the immoral Babylonian gods.

Question: What is the big deal about the decree to bow down?

Answer: The big deal is, it is a decree to test and confirm the allegiance of God's people, regardless of the consequences.

(It is a test to discover something)

Ask: Who will take a stand regardless of the cost?

Ask: Who will stand up when all the crowd bows down?

Ask: Who will say no, when everyone else says yes?

Ask: Who will please God, when others please man?

Ask: Who will say no to compromise, when others say yes to compromise?

II. The Decision Of the Three (Vs. 9-18)

Question: What is the testimony of the three Hebrew children?

Answer: It is given in Daniel 3:12

- The Chaldeans who wanted the high offices given to Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego tattletaled. (v. 8)
- In v. 12, the jealous Chaldeans give the report to the king. (Listen to it in v. 12)
"There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of Babylon, and these three have not regarded thee; they serve not the gods, nor worship the golden image which you have set up."

Fact: Only three in the crowd refuse to cave in.

Fact: The spies then carry the news to the kings.

Fact: Enraged, the king sends for the three young men.

Fact: And he offers them a second chance in v. 15.

Fact: And the three respond in vs. 16, 17 & 18

(V. 16) *"We don't even have to reconsider."*

(V. 17) *“God is able to deliver us from the furnace.”*

(V. 18) *“If God chooses to let us burn, you can still forget it, we will not serve thy gods.”*

Question: What is the Holy Spirit saying here?

Question: What does this have to do with all of us today?

1. Better to have the approval of God than the approval of man.
2. Better to die and please God than live and please man.
3. Better to maintain a clear conscience with God than sin and be accepted by the crowd.

Question: How did the three Hebrews respond?

Question: And how does it speak to me today?

1. **They responded on principle:**
 - Their decision was based on the principle of “God first” in every decision.
2. **They responded without hesitation:**
 - They knew that every delay in choosing to please God would weaken the conscience and lead to compromise.
3. **They responded without fear:**
 - They had settled it in their minds that it is better to do right and suffer than to do wrong and be at ease.
4. **They responded based on eternity:**
 - “What would Jesus do?” was on their hearts!
 - “What would Jesus think?” was on their minds!
 - “What would Jesus say?” was ever before them!

Fact: The crowd bowed down! (And sold out!)

Fact: The crowd gave in to intimidation!

Fact: The crowd saw a temporary reward!

Fact: The crowd served other gods!

(The devil deceived and stole more crowns) Why?

- Because the longer I stay where I do not belong, the harder it becomes to exit that place.
- Because the longer I resist the calling voice of God, the harder it becomes to hear that voice again.
- Because moths that investigate burning candles singe their wings for life.
- Because the devil will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and make you pay more than you want to pay.

III. The Deliverance Of The Lord (Vs. 19-30)

- In v. 19, the king heated the furnace seven times hotter.
- In v. 20, the king commanded the army men to cast the three into the fire.
- In v. 21, the three believers find themselves in a burning fiery furnace.
- In v. 22, it is so hot that the fire kills the men who put the three in the flames.
- In v. 24, the king is shocked at what he sees.

(v. 25) *“I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt and the fourth one looks like the Son of God.”*

- In v. 26, the king opens the door and says “Come out here.”
- In v. 27, no hair singed, no clothing burned, not even the smell of fire upon them.

(And in v. 28 the declaration)

“Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego who delivered his servants that trusted in Him.”

Question: What did God do?

Answer: He delivered His own three children.

Question: Why did God deliver them?

Answer: Because they trusted God to do what was best.

Question: What was the result?

Answer: (v. 28) The king was convicted because three people refused to compromise and sell their convictions.

Question: What is the moral of the story?

(The Secrets From The Fiery Furnace)

1. Jesus **honors those** who chose to honor Him.
 - God in heaven took notice of the choice of three young men. (He'll do the same for you.)
2. Jesus **visits us** in our hour of trial:
 - He was present (in person) In the midst of the fire.
 - If He doesn't keep you out of the furnace, He'll go with you through the furnace.
3. Jesus **understands** your pressure to conform:
 - He knows there are people who are calling you to bow down and forsake your convictions, lower your standards and be lost in the crowd.
4. Jesus **rewards obedience** more than you really know:
 - That quick response to the initial promptings of the Holy Spirit pays dividends, the three were promoted. (v. 30)
5. Jesus **burns off the ropes** that bind you if you are willing to take a stand:
 - The only things that were destroyed in the fire were the ropes that bound them before the fire.
 - God will free you of every chain if you are willing to say “yes” to His will for you.
6. Jesus **is on the lookout today** for those who will not bow down any longer.
 - “We will not bow down” are still five words God will hear in heaven today.
7. Jesus **is calling now** to ditch the snares of compromise (Regardless of the consequences).
 - Are you willing to repent and forsake every sin?
 - Are you willing to confess and come clean with God?
 - Are you willing to be freed from guilt and condemnation?
 - Are you willing to be transparent before a living and Holy God?

Remember

- **Calvary only covers what we uncover!!!**

Amen! Bill Kirk