

Three Hebrews in the Fiery Furnace

Daniel Chapter Three

Introduction:

- A. Scholars believe that there is at least 20 years between the events of chapter two and chapter three.
 - 1. At the end of 2:47 Nebuchadnezzar made a grand tribute to Daniel and to Daniel's God.
 - 2. At the beginning of 3:1 Nebuchadnezzar's attitude has changed.
- B. To see in this story a picture of how God will preserve all those who are faithful to Him, is to miss a part of the great message.
 - 1. Three rules of interpretation of prophetic books!
 - Primary
 - Practical
 - Prophetic
 - 2. This story is a case in point:
 - Primary interpretation
 - Practical interpretation
 - Prophetic interpretation

The Great Image of Gold

- A. All the leaders in Babylon were to bow before this image.
 - 1. Intended to be a religious act because the word "worship" occurs 11 times in this text.
 - 2. Chapter three begins a description of this worship.
 - 3. To appropriately dedicate this image, Nebuchadnezzar sent out an invitation to the entire Babylonian official family.

4. It is interesting to notice the almost identical similarities of verse two and three.
- B. Look at the demand the king is making.
1. Verse 4
 2. He wanted them all to fall down at the same time to worship.
 3. He used his royal orchestra to accomplish this.
 4. The use of music in his plan.
- C. There were certain Chaldeans who came forward and accused the Jews of disrespect of the king.
1. Same Chaldeans that Daniel and the three Hebrews had saved from death.
 2. Nebuchadnezzar offered a second chance.
- D. The reversal of the three Hebrews.
1. Violation of Exodus 20:4.
 2. At the base of Mount Sinai, Israel erected an image of a golden calf. On the plain of Dura Nebuchadnezzar erected a golden man.
 3. Either I am going to defy and defile Nebuchadnezzar, or I will defy and defile Jehovah.
 4. That is a choice we will visit sometime in our life.
- E. The Activity of Nebuchadnezzar.
1. Daniel 3:19-23
 2. The fourth man in the fire (3:24-25).
 3. The king is a believer again.

Remember that the Captivity of Israel and the Ascendance of the Babylon Empire is the Beginning of the "Times of the Gentiles."

- A. Continues until Messiah comes at the end of the Tribulation.
1. It begins and ends with a great image, a false god.
 2. In Revelation 13 we see another image, yet the **same image in principle**.
 3. The same commandment of worship is seen in Revelation 13.
- B. To thoroughly understand the prophetic meaning of the image in Daniel 3 we must **go back further** in Biblical history.
1. Baylonianism is a ***system***.
 - A ***political*** and ***religious*** system.
 - Satan's ***counterfeit*** of God's kingdom.
 - It is always the same in every empire.
 2. This is an attempt to set up a Satanic kingdom in opposition to the Kingdom of Christ.
 - Nimrod built a great city – political system.
 - Nimrod built a tower to Baal – a religious system.
 - Nimrod wanted one language, one government, one religion.
 3. To keep people from being divided he devised Babel which was a **spurious plan of redemption by man's efforts and man's works**.
 4. God came down, confused their language and called Babel not the way to God but to "**confusion**."
- C. Nimrod's ancient Babylon was destroyed **but** the spirit of Babylon (antichrist) still lives to be revived again and again, always to perish but to rise again.
1. It is always the same plan.
 2. It always is accompanied by persecution of God's people.
 3. Witness it in the **great empires of the past**.
 4. Despite it all Israel lives on.

- D. At the end of this age **Satan will attempt to revive** his Babylonian program according to Revelation 13.
1. **The history of man is not a succession of isolate events.**
 2. Satan has one grand plan and one grand program.
 3. It is all a struggle **between** the Christ of God and Satan for the kingdom.

With All This in Mind We Read Again the Story of the Image of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 3

- A. What the image represents.
- B. Remember ***what Jesus said*** about the image that will be set up in the last days as the last representative of the spirit of Babylon.
1. Jesus gives us signs to let us know how near we are, and they are being fulfilled at present.
 2. Jesus said that in this Tribulation, Daniel's prophecy concerning the **"abomination of desolation"** will be filled.
- C. Considering Revelation and in the words of Jesus in Matthew 24 we see this prophetic picture of the image of Nebuchadnezzar.
1. Nebuchadnezzar is a **type of the beast** of Revelation 13.
 2. The image is the type of ***abomination of desolation***.
 3. The fiery furnace is a picture of the ***tribulation***.
 4. The three Hebrews are a type of the ***nation of Israel***.
 5. Their deliverance previews **God's future program of deliverance**.
 6. The destruction of those who threw them in the furnace is a picture of **what will happen to those who attempt God's people harm**.

Daniel Today

- A. The lesson from the past.

1. There were people in Daniel's day who stood up for God.

2. There is no finer example of courage under fire.

B. The lesson for the present.

1. When we face similar confrontations, we must emulate this example.

2. We may well be called on to stand up because the days of surface faith will soon end.

C. The lesson for the future.

Conclusion:

Isaiah 43:1-3