

Faith for the Fiery Furnace

Daniel 3; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; 11-14-21

Fiery Trials and the Christian Life – 1 Peter 4:12-13

I think Peter may have had this story in Daniel 3 in mind as he wrote 1 Peter. Daniel 3 is about the challenge of living under pagan governments as believers in the true God.

- The Government as Blessing – Romans 13:1-7; 1 Timothy 2:1-2
- The Government as Beast – Daniel 4:16; Daniel 7:17, 23; Revelation 11:7; Revelation 13:2
- We are to *support* the legitimate use of power.
- We are to *oppose* the illegitimate abuse of power.

The Problem of Unchecked Power (1-7)

- Nebuchadnezzar was king of the Babylonian empire (605-562 BC)
- Babylon was located in modern day, Iraq.
- The gold statue may have been designed in light of the dream the king had in Daniel 2:31-32, 36-38.
- Therefore, the statue may actually have reference to king Nebuchadnezzar himself, one way or another.
- The statue of gold was 90 feet high and 9 feet at the base.
- The passage emphasizes that the king ‘set up’ this idol to be worshiped. (1, 2, 3, 5, 7)
- The passage emphasizes that ‘all the rulers’ were commanded to worship the statue. (2, 3, 4, 7)
- The passage emphasizes that ‘all the peoples’ were intended to worship the statue. (4, 7)
- The passage emphasizes that ‘all kinds of music’ were employed to encourage this worship. (5, 7)
- The picture painted is the requirement of universal obedience to the king’s command (no exception mandate).

Unchecked Power: Unchecked power corrupts God-haters, but not God.

Do you understand the *tendency of human government*?

The Issue of Control (8-23)

- The Jews appear to be the only ones who didn’t obey (at least some of them) – some think this is the design of the statue: to expose the Jewish people as being rebels to the throne.
- Where is Daniel? It is possible that they did not accuse Daniel right away because he was likely in great favor with the king (Daniel 2).
- The key offense appears to be that they have ‘disregarded’ the king, not that they have refused to worship.

- The king goes so far as to boast that they are in his hands alone and no one can deliver them.
- They responded by refusing to argue and simply confess that they believe their God will save them but if He doesn't, that's okay, they still won't obey the king in this.
- The king is enraged and he throws them into the fire, at the cost of the lives of his valiant warriors.

Issue of Control: Wrong and unwise government mandates are not matters of submission, but matters of control which are a matter of worship. (8-23)

Do you understand the need to *hold human government accountable*?

The 'Deliverance' of God's People (24-30)

- They were cast into the fire bound but came out of the fire loosed.
- Outside the fire there were three but in the fire there were four.
- Some see them as if they were strolling in the garden of Eden.
- Some think this fourth being was an angel and others think it was the Lord Jesus.
- This is a picture of God's ultimate protection of his people from any real harm.
- We must trust God to properly disobey men.
- We must yield up our bodies when disobeying those who rule over us.
- The king was impressed but not converted and still cruel.
- The three were blessed through the fire and afterward.
- The presence of Christ with his people in suffering is pictured for us.
- Evil men cannot ultimately hurt the people of God. – Luke 21:12-19

Kinds of Deliverance: Our God is able to deliver us from any and every 'fiery trial,' but He may choose to deliver us simply from apostasy or to deliver us ultimately from this world. (24-30)

Do you understand the *call to trust and love* in the face of government threats?

Application

- Be Ready to Oppose Tyranny - Revelation 13:7
- Faith for the Fiery Furnace - Daniel 3:28
By God's grace through faith, these men were enabled to suffer rather than sin. (Henry) – Hebrews 11:32-40; 1 Peter 1:3-9
- Freedom through the Fiery Furnace - Daniel 3:24-25; John 8:31-38; Psalm 119:67, 71; Job 36:15
- Fellowship in the Fiery Furnace - Daniel 3:24-25; Isaiah 63:9; 2 Corinthians 1:4
- The Fourth Man in the Fire - Isaiah 43:1-7