

Daniel 2:46-49-3:1-18: Reward and The Stand

I. Daniel Rewarded.

This great king was obviously impressed; Daniel was given royal honor. Nebuchadnezzar knew that it wasn't Daniel himself that revealed these things, but Daniel's God revealed it through Daniel. Daniel not only had his life spared, but he was promoted to high office - and since they prayed as a team, Daniel requested that they should be promoted as a team.

Colossians 3:23-24 - And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

II. The Golden Image.

It seems that Nebuchadnezzar deliberately made the statue in his desire to reign forever - in contradiction to God's declared plan. He wanted to remain powerful and autocrat forever as he was represented by the head of gold.

The image or statue, being 90 feet high and 9 feet wide; it was probably stone overlaid with gold. All public officials had to be present at the dedication of the image, to bow down before it. Nebuchadnezzar uses the worship of this image as a test of allegiance.

A call to worship would be made, the band would play and everyone in the Kingdom had to bow in worship. *The command is empowered by a naked threat, fiery furnace for anyone defiant.* The three Jewish captives did not lodge a formal protest against the image; they simply refrained from the sin of idolatry themselves. The king made sure he had a personal interview with them. This was an even greater test for Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

It is one thing to make a stand for God; it is a greater thing to *stick to your stand* when pointedly asked and threatened with death if you're His follower.

We can imagine the enormous pressure on Hananiah, Meshael, and Azariah to compromise; the king, the furnace, the music, their colleagues, their competitors – the entire nation. There are many excuses to compromise; God's grace, general tide, loss of position... *Yet God was more real to them than any of those things.*

They had **no need** to defend themselves. Their guilt in the matter was clear - they clearly would not bow down to this image.

- i. In this, the Jewish men show they have a good understanding and appreciation of God's great power. In fact, they know that God is able to save them from both the **burning fiery furnace** and from the **hand** of Nebuchadnezzar himself.
- ii. In this, the Jewish men show they have a good understanding and appreciation of *submission* to God. They know God's power, but they also know that they must do what is right even if God does not do what they expect or hope Him to do.

They recognized that God's plan might be different than their desires. "I have my own desires and dreams and I pray that God fulfills them. But if He doesn't, I can't turn my back on Him."

Job 13:15 - *Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him*

These men stood firm when challenged to eat impure foods and they saw God bless their obedience. That gave them the courage to obey now, when the stakes were much higher.

Exodus 20:1-6 - *And God spoke all these words, saying: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. "You shall have no other gods before Me. "You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.*

"Do not judge the situation by the king's threat and by the heat of the burning fiery furnace, but by the everlasting God and the eternal life which awaits you. Let not flute, harp...fascinate you, but hearken to the music of the glorified. Men frown at you, but you can see God smiling on you, and so you are not moved." (Spurgeon)

Proverbs 23:17 - *Do not let your heart envy sinners, but be zealous for the fear of the LORD all the day.*

Matthew 10:28 - *"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*