

Atlantic Lyman conf.1972-02 Studies in Daniel 03

by Joseph Balsan

The sermon emphasizes the importance of worshiping God in spirit and truth, and the need for salvation through Jesus Christ, using the story of Daniel 3 as an example.

Duration: 58:33

Scripture: Daniel 3:27, Daniel 3:30, Matthew 24:15, Matthew 24:21-22, John 16:33, Revelation 13:17

Topics: "Human Depravity", "Divine Redemption"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of man's inability to save himself and the need for God to send his Son, Jesus Christ, to save humanity. The preacher references Romans 6:5, which states that Christ died for the ungodly when they were without strength. The sermon also mentions the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace, where the king sees a fourth person with them, likened to the Son of God. The preacher highlights God's promise in Isaiah 43 that walking through fire will not consume believers. The sermon emphasizes the fallen nature of man and the need for redemption through Christ.

Transcript

See you all out tonight? Let us open our Bibles to Daniel 3. Shall we? Daniel chapter 3. Daniel 3 and verse 1. Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold whose height was three score cubits and the breadth around six cubits. He set it up in the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counselors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces who come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counselors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. And they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, harp, flute, harp, sackbut, salty, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

And whoso falleth not down and worshipeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning, fiery furnace. Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, salty, and all kinds of music, all the people, the nations, and the languages fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near and accused the Jews.

They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live forever. Thou, O king, hast made a decree that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, salty, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image. And whoso falleth not down and worshipeth, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning, fiery furnace.

There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These men, O king, have not regard of thee. They serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

Then Nebuchadnezzar, in his rage and fury, commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? Do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? Now if ye be ready, that at what time ye shall hear the sound of the cornet, lute, harp, sackcloth, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made well.

But if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning, fiery furnace. And who is that god that shall deliver you out of my hands? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our god whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning, fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

But if it not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Therefore he spake and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated.

And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his armies to burn Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning, fiery furnace. Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning, fiery furnace. Therefore, because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound in the midst of the burning, fiery furnace. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the son of God.

Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning, fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the Most High God, come forth, and come thither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out of the midst of the fire, and the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the

fire had no power, nor was any hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them. Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and hath changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god except their own god.

Therefore I make a decree that every people, nation, and language which speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill, because there is no other god that can deliver after this sort. Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon. May the Lord bless to us the reading of his word.

Shall we look to the Lord in prayer? Our Father, we desire to thank Thee tonight for the privilege we have of coming before Thee. We thank Thee for Thy word which Thou hast given us, and the precious truth that it contains. And so we do pray that this evening we might indeed have the open ear and the open heart to hear what Thou would say to us.

And we pray if there are those amongst us who do not know the Lord Jesus, that they too may hear Thy voice, and this might be the night when they will make their decision, and that they will be turned to the Lord Jesus, who trusts Him as their very own. Give us help in speaking Thy word, and bless it to each one. In the Savior's precious name.

Amen. Now, as we have been mentioning, this prophecy of Daniel's is a prophecy concerning the times of the Gentiles, as it is recorded for us here on the chart. In other words, God gives us, through the prophet Daniel, the course of Gentile dominion from the time that the children of Israel were taken captive into the land of Babylon, and Nebuchadnezzar became the ruler until the time, our time, and also the come until our Lord Jesus Christ comes back.

Now, last night we were looking at the second chapter of Daniel, and we saw the dream that was given to the ruler, Nebuchadnezzar, the dream of a great image, and that image was composed of a head of gold, a chest and arms of silver, thighs of brass, legs of iron, and feet of iron and clay with ten toes of mixture of iron and clay, and he saw until a great stone fell from the great mountain from heaven, and the stone smote the image in its feet and destroyed the image, and that stone grew until it filled the entire world. And Daniel was given the interpretation of it, and it was pointed out to Nebuchadnezzar that he was pictured, and his kingdom was pictured in the first of the great parts of that image, which was the head of gold. And after the Babylonian Empire would come an empire which we know as the Medo-Persian Empire, which ruled for about 200 years, and after that there would be a third, its great king, of course, its great leader, of whom we will be speaking a little more when we come to the eighth chapter, but its great leader was Alexander the Great, and we saw how that that kingdom was going to replace the Medo-Persian and then the Roman Empire, which came into existence, and was in existence when our Lord Jesus Christ was upon the earth, and then that the last form of this kingdom, which is yet to come, is going to be in the form of ten rulers, or a ten-state empire, over which we are going to see that one man is going to rule, and who is going to be known as the beast, but we will see about this person when we come to the seventh chapter of the book of Daniel, but this empire is going to be destroyed by the return of our Lord Jesus Christ from heaven.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is going to come in power, and when he does come in power, he is coming back again, and he is going to destroy Gentile world dominion, and he is going to bring in his kingdom, and so

the Bible gives us a wonderful prospect as far as the world is concerned. It tells us that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming again. Now, I do want to say, I didn't mention it last night, that quite a number of so-called religious leaders in various denominations, they are inclined to think that this stone which fell from heaven is a picture of our Lord Jesus Christ in his first coming, and that it is by means of the gospel, as the gospel permeates and penetrates throughout the world, that eventually the world is going to be changed, and eventually the kingdom of Christ is going to be inaugurated.

But I want you to notice that when that stone fell, the Bible says that it fell upon those ten toes. In other words, it is in the days of those ten kings that God is going to set up a kingdom, and as far as the history of Rome has been concerned, there has never been a time when there was a ten kingdom phase of that empire. It was divided into two great parts which perhaps are pictured for us in the two legs, that is the Eastern Roman Empire and the Western Roman Empire, but it has never existed in a ten kingdom form as the Bible tells us it is going to exist.

And so, that idea that the stone which falls from heaven is a picture of the first coming of Christ, and that by means of the preaching of the gospel, the world is going to be converted, and the world is going to be improved, and the governments of men are going to be changed and altered, while we know how far away from truth that is even in our day. Why, you know, in the 40s when they brought into existence the United Nations, why they didn't even recognize the Lord Jesus Christ. The United States and those countries which are supposed to be so-called Christian countries didn't even dare to pray publicly, lest they should insult or hurt other countries which are not necessarily Christian, so-called.

So, my friends, today we know that there are more heathen in the world than there have ever been before, and we know that there are more people who are members of churches who think that they're Christians, but have never been born again, and who need to be converted just as much as the hot-and-tot in Africa, or the poor Hindu in India, or the poor dark benighted aborigine who is in Australia. We know that today the Christians are a very small minority. So, that theory or that idea falls to the ground, but this is something, as we have mentioned, that is yet future, that is going to take place in the time of the end, after this present age in which we are living today, which began on the day of Pentecost, and will continue until the Lord comes to take his church to be with him.

When that is complete, why then, of course, the time of the end, this tribulation period, as we are going to see, is brought into existence. Now, as I said, Daniel interpreted the dream of Nebuchadnezzar to him, and evidently that dream and its interpretation had made such a profound impression upon this man, Nebuchadnezzar. Well, as we see in the last part of the second chapter, when Daniel interpreted the dream, and gave the dream, and also the interpretation of it, why, Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, it says in the 46th verse, and worshiped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odors unto him.

The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldst reveal this secret. Now, it seems as though Nebuchadnezzar is a man who certainly is honoring God, isn't he? At least he has the words. He makes the confession, he says, your God is the God of gods, your God is the Lord of kings, your God is the revealer of secrets.

And you would think that Nebuchadnezzar is a man who is, as it were, inclined toward the God that this man Daniel stood for. But when you come to the third chapter of Daniel, you find that the first thing that is

presented to us is that this man Nebuchadnezzar the king, he makes an image of gold whose height was three squared cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits. He set it up in the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon.

In fact, probably Nebuchadnezzar thinking of that head of gold, and realizing that he was the ruler of a very diversified, nationalistic society, that there were people of many languages and many tongues, different cultures whom he had conquered and whom he had brought under his domain, he hits upon a plan whereby he thinks he's going to unify and strengthen his kingdom. What does he determine to do, and what does he do? Well, he has this great image made all of gold, sixty cubits high and six cubits wide. Now, there is a difference of opinion as to what a cubit is.

Some measured it as 18 inches, others measured it as 22 inches. In most cases, it's recognized to be about 18 inches. So, if we take the cubit as 18 inches, an image of solid gold or covered with gold, whatever it was, of 60 cubits high would be an image of about 90 feet high, which is equivalent to about 10 stories high.

He has this tremendous image, an image that is about nine feet wide, and he has this great image set up in the midst of the plain of Dura, and he calls together from all over his empire, he calls together the princes, the governors, the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counselors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. Now, here in this third chapter of Daniel, we have brought before us one of the characteristics of Gentile dominion, and that is that this man is characterized by pride, and this man, he brings in the deification of man in the form of an image, he brings in idolatry. He brings in this great image in the image of a man, and that image, of course, is the deification of man.

What do I mean by the deification of man? It means that man himself becomes the object of worship in the form of an image. You know how many people there are today that even though they perhaps do not realize it, they are making, as it were, little gods of themselves. Take, for instance, the theory of evolution that we have in our schools today, and that is being taught in our schools today.

What is that? You know, you listen to some professors, and you listen to some leaders, and they say, I would rather be an evolved bit of protoplasm that emerged from a swamp, and that is gradually becoming a god, than to be a man who is fallen, and who is ruined, and who is lost. So that the theory of evolution brings before us that man begins as a bit of protoplasm, and he goes through various evolutionary phases, and he is developing, and he is growing, and he is increasing, and eventually, by means of his own wisdom, and by means of his own ability, he is going to become perfect. He is going to bring about a perfect society, and if he continues to improve himself, and if we can get all people to improve themselves, why, eventually, we will have a perfect society.

But what does the Bible tell us? The Bible tells us that when God created man, he created him innocent. He created him perfect. Man was endowed with a wisdom by which he was able to give names to all the beasts of the earth, to all the fowls of the air, to all the fish of the sea.

God made that man to be the ruler over the entire creation. But what happened? Why, man listened to the voice of the temple, didn't he? And man sinned, and when man sinned, he became a fallen creature. He became subject to death.

The wages of sin is death. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. And for 4,000 years, why, God gave man the opportunity to lift himself up and make himself better.

But what happened? Why, man couldn't save himself, and so God had to send his son, the Lord Jesus Christ, into the world to save us. You know, in Romans chapter 6 verse 5, it says, when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a good man will one die, yet for scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet for a good man some would even dare to die.

But God commends his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. You know, most people, they have in themselves the idea, well I know I'm a sinner, but you know, I'm trying to improve myself. I'm trying to make myself better.

I'm trying to lift myself up, and I think that with a little effort, I'll make myself so acceptable to God that God will accept me into heaven, and that God will take me into heaven, so that people are depending upon themselves and upon their own works in order to make themselves right with God. My friends, the Bible tells us, when we were yet without strength, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly. That you and I cannot save ourselves, you and I need the Savior.

You and I need the Lord Jesus Christ. I wonder if every one of us here tonight have found that out. I wonder what your hope is of getting to heaven.

What are you depending upon to get you to heaven? Are you depending upon your works? Are you depending upon you making yourself better? Are you depending upon you lifting yourself up? Or are you depending tonight upon what the Lord Jesus Christ has done? Have you realized and learned that you could never save yourself, and that it's only sinners that Jesus saves? And so this man sets up this image, but he not only has the image, you know he has a tremendous orchestra there to help his religion. Oh my, how essential the so-called music and musical instruments of the world are in order to promote that religious feeling and that religious worship. Oh you know, if you were to take the orchestras and if you were to take the train choirs out of some places of worship today, there are many people who would find nothing in it.

They would have no interest in it. They're like the man who says, oh I like to go to my church because you know we've got such a wonderful organist and we've got such a wonderful choir and as I hear this music and I hear this organ it gives me such a religious feeling and I have such an impression and sense as though I was drawing close to God. Well that's why he had this music.

You know the idea was to promote that religious feeling because when people get that religious feeling they get emotionally moved. But you know when we come to the Word of God through the New Testament, we find that God is seeking worship. But you know what kind he's seeking? It says God is a spirit, the fourth chapter of John, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

In other words, my friends, there is no worship like the worship of a heart that has experienced God's salvation and that can thank him for what he has done for him or for her. There's no worship like the gratitude of a thankful heart that's moved by appreciation for what Christ has done and that has been touched by the Holy Spirit and that is moved by the Holy Spirit to worship. And that's why a person really has to be born again before he can ever worship.

An unsaved person can't really worship because worship is only by the Holy Spirit and in order to worship God we must be indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Just as our prayers are of no avail unless they're in the Spirit and the Holy Spirit is given to us in order to enable us to pray, in order to enable us to worship, in order to enable us even to know that we are children of God. How does a person know that he's saved? How am I able to say with certainty that I'm saved? Do I just try to imagine that I'm saved? Do I just keep thinking for myself and saying to myself, you're saved, you're saved, you're saved.

No friends, I've got something better than that. The moment I accepted Christ as my Savior, the Holy Spirit of God came in and the Holy Spirit gave me the assurance that I am a child of God. And we know we have passed from death unto life because the Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.

The moment a sinner trusts Christ, the Holy Spirit comes in and he gives that person the assurance that he or she is a child of God. And then that one can worship. Then that one can offer to God praise and thanks and gratitude.

But until then, a person cannot worship. But here's Nebuchadnezzar. He has this orchestra.

And so when the orchestra strikes its sound and the music comes forth in beautiful, melodious tones, why that whole plain filled with multitudes of people, they all fall down and bow before that image. All? Yes, everybody except three people. Why all of a sudden there's three people and they're standing and they don't bow.

They don't worship that image. They just stand. And you know, my, they're conspicuous.

Three people in the vast plain filled with people and everybody's falling down to worship. But here's only three young men and they're standing. My, they must have been conspicuous.

And my, they were a minority. You know, lots of people today are afraid of being a minority. And some Christians are even afraid of being conspicuous.

My, I don't want to be different. I don't want to be different. Why, I don't want to stand.

I want to be just like everybody else. Our young people today, they want to be like all the rest in their dress, in their habits, in their conduct. They, I don't want to be different.

But you know, if you're a Christian, shouldn't you be different? Shouldn't you be different? If you're a child of God, shouldn't you be willing to stand out for the Lord Jesus Christ? Here were these three young men. And of course, these three young men were very prominent young men. They had been promoted after Daniel gave Nebuchadnezzar the dream and the interpretation of it, why they had been promoted.

And so, of course, you know, they were quite the envy. They were the envy of a number of Chaldeans. And when the Chaldeans saw those three young men standing, why, they thought they had a case.

They ran to Nebuchadnezzar and they says, oh king, oh king, didn't you say that when the music sounded forth that everyone should bow down and worship the image which you made? There are certain Jews whom thou has set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These men, oh king, have not regarded thee. They serve not thy gods nor worship the golden image which thou has set up.

Yes, there's three young men who stand. And they don't fall down. They don't worship your God.

They don't worship your image. Now, why didn't these young men worship the image? Why didn't they bow down? Weren't they in the land of Babylon? Why, even some of their fellow Jewish friends, they were bowing down. But here were three young men.

Now, we don't know where Daniel was at this point. He may have been on a mission. I don't know where Daniel was.

I like to think that the reason why it was only these three men, and Daniel is not mentioned, is to show us that these three young men, even though they were associated with Daniel in chapter 1 and chapter 2, these were young men that even they had convictions of their own. In other words, though they were in fellowship, and though they stood with Daniel when they stood together, when Daniel wasn't there, they were just as true to God, even though Daniel wasn't there. You know, sometimes we see some wives who are very true to God when their husbands are there, but when their husbands aren't, then they forget all about it.

And vice versa. Some husbands who are very true to God when the wife is there, and when the wife dies while the husband's gone. Sometimes it's so with the children.

As long as their parents are going on in the ways of God, they go on, but when their parents are gone, they seem to get along. These three young men, they had personal convictions of themselves. They had the Word of God for themselves.

Why didn't they bow to this image? You know why? They had the commandments of God. The first commandment was, thou shalt have no other god before me. The second commandment was, thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.

People might have said, oh those ten commandments are obsolete. Those ten commandments are outdated. But these young men, they knew that they were not outdated.

They were the true, the unvarying, unchanging truths of God. My friends, God's principles don't change. God's principles are the same at all times.

People say, oh we're living in a day-to-day when morals are changing. Moral standards are changing. But you know, God's laws are just the same, and God's principles are just the same.

And so there are those three young men because they have the Word of God. My friends, that's the important thing. If I have the Word of God, have the Word of God for what you do.

Have the Word of God for what you don't do. And when you have the Word of God, you've got a good solid foundation. You've got good principles for convictions, and this will put that bone into your spiritual life and your spiritual constitution.

Well, they stood. They stood. And when these men made this accusation, why Nebuchadnezzar called them into his presence and he says, is it true? Is it true that you don't bow down to my image? Now if you're ready, at what time you hear the sound of the music and that, you do what you're supposed to well.

But if not, into the burning fiery furnace you go. And notice the beautiful testimony that these men give in the 16th verse. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar,

we are not careful to answer thee in this manner.

If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace. Our God is able. They were assured of the ability of God.

And he will deliver us out of thine hand, O God. They were assured of his willingness to deliver. Not only of his ability, but of his willingness.

But then he says, if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods nor worship the golden image which thou hast set. If God doesn't deliver us, we'd rather go into the burning fiery furnace than to disobey God. And the king is so curious that he causes this furnace to be heated one seventh times more.

And then he commands the strongest men in his empire to take them and bind them and to cast them into that burning fiery furnace. And as they take, as the strongest men in the empire take these three young men and cast them into the burning fiery furnace, the Bible says, the heat of the fire is so tremendous that they themselves are consumed by the flame. And then the king sees something.

There he sees those three young men cast into that burning fiery furnace. But an amazing thing happens. What is it? It turns out they're not burned.

They're not consumed by the flame. And as the king sees, he's astonished. He says, didn't we cast three men into that burning fiery furnace? But I see four.

And the fourth is like unto the Son of God. Now it doesn't seem as though anybody else saw that. But the king was enabled to see that there was somebody else with them in that burning fiery furnace.

Now you know, if we were to turn to the book of Isaiah, and I think it's the 43rd chapter, where in the first few verses of that chapter, God gave the promise to Israel. If you walk through the fire, it shall not consume you. Here were three young men who experienced the truth of God's promise.

And he says, I will be with thee. And there was the Lord with them in their trial and in their difficulty. And the only thing that happened was that the flames only devoured the things that tied them.

And there they were free. They were free in the midst of that fire. People sometimes wonder if there are miracles.

Here in this third chapter of Daniel, we have this miracle. But you notice it tells us that when Nebuchadnezzar sees it, why Nebuchadnezzar calls them out. And when those young men are called out, why he finds that the fire had no power on their bodies.

The 27th verse, there was not a hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them. Just think of that. They were untouched, unscathed, not a single hair of their head had been consumed by the flame.

The very smoke of the fire was not on them. And Nebuchadnezzar has to acknowledge, he says, blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Adam. You know, sometimes we as believers for the cause of Christ, we go through terrific trial.

He says, in the world you shall have tribulation. But he says, I'll be with you in it. And you know, many a time we fail to experience the presence of the Lord because we don't want to go through the fire.

We avoid the furnace. We avoid the persecution. We avoid the suffering.

And yet, if you and I are going to live for the Lord, if you and I are going to stand for the Lord, it will involve suffering. But the Lord says, if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him. The measure of our reign in the coming kingdom of Christ will be determined by the way that you and I have stood for him and have suffered for him.

Now, you notice here it says in this chart, the enforced worship of the image, a preserved remnant typical of the abomination of desolation and the faithful remnant in the time of the end. Now, this was an actual historical incident, something that actually happened here in this third chapter of Daniel. And of course, it has a practical lesson for you and for me, that these young men, because of their stand for the Lord, they endured suffering.

But the Lord was with them in it, and the result was that they experienced an enriching of their lives that they never forgot. I'm sure those three young men never forgot in all their lives what the burning, fiery furnace was, and what the experience of the presence of the Lord with them in it. I'm sure they wouldn't have sold that experience for a hundred million dollars.

And how true it is that there are Christians who pass through deep waters in trials for the Lord's sake, and you know they have an experience of the Lord's presence that they wouldn't sell for anything. They wouldn't ship anything. It's been an experience, a red-letter experience in their lives.

But you know, this is in the book of prophecy. Why is this incident, which is an actual historical incident, why is it in the book of prophecy like Daniel? Because what happened here in Daniel 3 is a picture of what is going to happen in the time of the tribulation. What is going to happen? Well, there is going to be, as we saw, this ten kingdom empire, and there is going to be this leader who is spoken of as the little horn in Daniel chapter 7, and he is going to set up an image.

What? In our modern, advanced, progressive society, is there going to be something like that? Well, let's turn for a moment to Revelation chapter 13. Now, Revelation and Daniel are two books that, as it were, throw light one on the other. In Revelation chapter 13, notice in this chapter we have the account of two great leaders who are going to come into prominence after the Lord has taken His church to be with Him.

In this time of the end, the first leader is the political leader. In the first ten verses we read about him. We're not going to mention him because we're going to speak about him when we speak about the little horn.

And then the second leader is another one who is called the Antichrist, and we're going to read about him when we come to the 11th chapter of Daniel, because the 11th chapter of Daniel gives us information about this person, the Antichrist, who is going to rise in Israel. But I want you to notice these two between them. It tells us in the 13th verse, He, the Antichrist, doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which ye have power to do in the sight of the beast, saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast which had the wound by his sword, and did live.

And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast. Now this Antichrist is going to have an image made to the beast, and he is going to put that in a place of prominence in the temple in Jerusalem. And it says he's going to give power to this image, that it should both speak and cause, that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand or in their foreheads. And that no man might buy or sell, save he that hath the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. And you know, those of us who have experienced a little bit of this world, we know how tied up everything is getting.

We know that government programs are so prominent and so important, and that unions and combines are becoming so prominent and essential that a man's not able to buy or sell. It's getting more and more difficult for a person to be independent. He's got to join the big combine if he wants to get ahead.

In many places a man can't even get a job if he doesn't join the union. We realize that all of these things are tending towards something. What are they tending toward? They're tending toward this time of tribulation when after the Lord takes his people home, this great political head is going to do away with all other worship.

And with the Antichrist they are going to erect this image of the beast, and everybody is going to have to receive his mark or the number of his name in his forehead or in his hand. He won't be able to buy or sell. He won't be able to do anything without that mark.

And the Bible tells us in the 14th chapter of Revelation and the 9th verse it says, the third angel followed them saying with a loud voice, if any man worship the beast in his image and receive his mark in his forehead or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation. And he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the lamb in the smoke of their torment to send it up forever and ever. And they have no rest day nor night who worship the beast in his image and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

So you see, the consequences of receiving the mark of his name is that such a person will come under the judgment of God. So a person in this time of tribulation is going to be tossed between two things. If I don't bow, if I don't receive the mark, if I don't yield, I won't be able to buy or sell.

I won't be able to live. If I do receive the mark, if I do yield, if I do bow, if I do accept, then it's everlasting torment and I've got to make the choice to hear or to hear at. But just as there were three young men who stood and refused to bow, so there is going to be a company of people who are going to refuse to bow to them.

They are going to refuse to acknowledge the Antichrist. Who are they? Well, we read about them in the 24th chapter of Matthew. If you turn to Daniel chapter 3, you'll notice in Daniel chapter 3, by the way, notice that we have a little expression there.

I think that occurs two times here in Daniel chapter 3. Notice it says in the 12th verse, it says, there are certain Jews. There are certain Jews. And you notice that he speaks of them as Jews.

These Jews, why they refuse to bow. And so there will be a remnant of Israel in the tribulation period. Now we have a book of course in Matthew 24, 15 to 24.

If you just turn to Matthew 24 for a moment. Matthew 24. And you notice in the 15th verse, it says, when ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place.

Whoso readeth, let him understand. Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains. Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house.

Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes, and woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days. But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day. For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved. But for the elect's sake, those days shall be shortened. Now who are the elect? I want you to notice it's Jewish.

He's speaking about the Sabbath day. He's speaking about Judea. After the Lord takes his people of the church to be with him, God is going to begin dealing with the Jewish people again.

Israel. Israel today is in their land. Since 1948, the Israel nation of Israel has come into existence.

Why, only this last month, I have read in Time Magazine that within the next ten years, they are expecting a half million Jews from Russia alone to go into the land of Palestine. Where two years ago, there were only 3,000 Jews coming from Russia, last year there were 15,000. The year before there were 15,000.

And now they're expecting them at the rate of 50,000 a year from Russia alone. So that in ten years, there will be 500,000 Jews from Russia alone who will go to Palestine. In the last 20 years, since 1948, millions of Jews have come into the land of Palestine.

Why? Because the stage is getting set. When God takes his church to be with him, and this present age comes to an end, God will begin dealing with Israel again. Israel, the nation which rejected the Messiah, and who have been suffering for the last 1,900 years because of the rejection of the Messiah, are back in their own land.

And God is going to allow them to be tested. He says, you refused my son, now you'll accept the Antichrist. And a great majority of the Jews will bow to and accept the Antichrist, just as many of these Israelites here in Nebuchadnezzar's day, they fell down before the image, but there was only a small minority of them who refused the bounty of the image.

So there will be a remnant, 144,000 of them, Revelation chapter 7 tells us, who will refuse to bow to the Antichrist. They will refuse the mark of the beast. They will refuse the number of his name.

And because of that, they'll be put into a furnace. In other words, they'll be put into a time of great tribulation, a time of great testing, when they'll have to flee for their lives, when they'll be put through intense persecution. And God will deliver them by the coming of our Lord Jesus.

He tells us here in Matthew chapter 24 and verse 21, for then shall be great tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved. But for the elect's sake, those days shall be shortened.

What will happen? Just as God delivered those three young men in burning fire and furnace, so he is going to deliver that remnant in the tribulation period. And he's going to do it by his return from heaven, his judgment on the Gentile powers and his deliverance of those who are his. Now, we who are saved, we who know the Lord Jesus Christ is our Savior, we will not be in the earth in the tribulation period.

Because these things cannot come until after the Christians are taken out. The Holy Spirit is in the world today and is holding back the manifestation of the beast and the Antichrist. But when we are taken out, then these things are going to come in.

And one of the things is going to be the erection of this image, the worship of the beast and the Antichrist. And those who have refused Christ are going to receive the Antichrist, the Bible says so. The Bible says those who believe not the truth today are going to believe that lie in that day.

The Bible says because they would not be saved today, they shall be dead in that day. And so, my friends, it's Christ or Antichrist. The choice is up to you.

Shall we pray? Brother Harold, will you pray for us?

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