

FIERY FURNACE

TEXT: Daniel 3:1-6:

1 Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.

2 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.



3 Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, 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.

4 Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages,

5 That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up:

6 And whoso falleth not down and worshipping shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.



There was God and His Kingdom, represented by the city of Jerusalem. Jerusalem was a great walled city where people came, and the Temple of God was there, and the people were people of faith.

Not many miles away there was another Kingdom. It was the Kingdom of Babylon. The people there did not know God. They had the hanging gardens and a great walled city because the King had married a woman who loved mountains, and Babylon was down in the plains by the River Euphrates. He built mountains – he built gardens. He had gone out and got many captives and made them slaves in order to accomplish this.

It is said by Bible history that the tower of Babel was built 600 feet tall. The walls of this city were so great that six chariots, side by side, could ride around on top of the walls.



Then one day there came a battle — a war against right and wrong, a war between Babylon and Jerusalem. The king of Babylon came and destroyed the city of Jerusalem. Then the king requested that the best of the youth be brought to Babylon to become his servants and slaves:

Daniel 1:3-4:

³ And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the Children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes;

⁴ Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.

Among those taken were Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. We call them the Hebrew children.

At this very moment and hour in the world in which we live, the Kingdom of God is represented by the Church, by people of faith, and by people who love the Lord. Also represented is the devil and his kingdom.



Now, you are either in God's Kingdom or in the devil's kingdom, because there are only two kingdoms. You are not in both of them. And we are in the moment and hour when the Lord will soon return; and if the Bible declares anything, it talks about the conditions that will exist in the world before the Lord's Coming.

We will continue in future studies regarding Christ's Return — the close of this Holy Spirit dispensation, the re-establishing of Israel, and the prophecies that are being fulfilled for our Lord's soon Return.

But the Coming of our Lord tells us not only that He is coming for a church without spot, wrinkle, and blemish, but also about a great falling away. It also tells about marriage and giving in marriage, and talks about sin abounding as it did in the days of Noah . . . so shall it be in the coming of the Son of Man.

Matthew 24:37-39:

³⁷ But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the Coming of the Son of Man be.

38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the Coming of the Son of Man be.



There is definitely a conflict between the two great Kingdoms in the world today. Right now, there is something taking place in the religious world. Suddenly there are people who would like to entice the world, and would like to take the people of God away from God and from His house and His kingdom, and display them in a sinful circumstance and condition.

This is the day and hour that Broadway and Hollywood talk about Jesus Christ Superstar — blasphemy! This is the day and hour that a lot of kids that have joined the hippie movement and who desperately need a bath are singing about Jesus. I don't care what you say — if you haven't cleaned your life up and you are breaking the laws of God by committing adultery or fornication, and you are on drugs, liquor, or engaging in illicit sex — and then you stand up and sing about Jesus — it is an abomination. I think that people who sing about Jesus ought to live like Jesus! They ought to know what they are singing.



I want you to take a close look at the parallel of what happened in Babylon and what is happening today.

The Babylonians took these young men of faith who were rooted and grounded in the faith into a foreign land.

The first thing they said was, “*Get out your harp and sing for us.*” The Children of Israel didn't want to sing in that foreign land.

Psalms 137:1-4:

1 By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.

2 We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.

3 For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.

4 How shall we sing the LORD'S song in a strange land?

They didn't care for the songs in that foreign land. They didn't care for the customs and ways in the foreign land. These men would go out and offer sacrifices unto their god and kill these animals, and then they would take the flesh of these animals and cook and eat them. But this was contrary to their teaching. The Word of God says:

Exodus 20:3: Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.

God comes first, and that is for today, too. There must be nothing between you and your God!

Then one day, we find that the faith of these young men was tested. True religion will be tested; but thank God, if we are really true, we can stand the test. Let's be careful that we do not depart from the faith. Let's not allow the church to get so worldly, and the world so churchy, there is no dividing line. There is a DIFFERENCE BETWEEN Christians and worldly sinners, but we are muddying it up a bit today. We are having jazz concerts in the church; we are having rock festivals and calling them Mass in the Church; and we are having kids sing all kinds of songs in the basement of our Protestant churches without knowing Jesus Christ.

I didn't say we ought not to go out into the world and rescue the perishing and care for the dying; but I don't think you have to smell like them, look like them, talk like them, and dress like them in order to win them. I think born-again Christians are going to cleanse themselves of all filthiness of the flesh and spirit if they are really born again. You will know a tree by its fruit.

If you take me out into an orchard and I see some apples hanging on a tree, I would say, "*That's an apple tree*". You would say, "*No, it's not — it is a peach tree.*" I would say, "*I know it's an apple tree because I see apples on it!*"



You can bring people and jazz orchestras into the church, but and if they are living like the devil, are on drugs, and are not Christians according to the teaching of the Bible, then I don't care how much you bring them into the church — they are still sinners and are lost.

You can look any way you want, sing any way you want, talk any way you want, write your name on every church roster in America, and still die and go to Hell. You must be born again, the Word of God says.

John 3:3: Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.

The Babylonians brought the captives into the arena of life, so to speak, for a great test. Nebuchadnezzar commanded that when the music sounds, every person shall bow and worship the king. But the teaching of the Children of Israel was:



Exodus 20:3: Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.

But Babylon says, *“Bow down! Give up!”*

There are a lot of people today who want to bow down to the devil and his crowd. I am not going to deal too much on this, but I want to tell you something. You had better examine also where people who call themselves the Church are spending their dollars. Come on now, the tithe and offering goes for the supporting of a soul-winning program. Anybody that knows this church knows the tithes and offerings always support a soul-winning program; but they know also I have a little bit of business sense, and thank God I have been able to use it so that we might expand a lot quicker than if I hadn't used it. I don't think God gives you a creative ability and expects you to put it on the shelf. I think He expects you to use it. We have used it. But let's not defile the Temple of God, and let's not use God's money for things that are not the things of God.

Bow down! We will be tested as gold that is tried in the fire. Job was a man who did not really sin or turn his back upon God. He trusted God, and he went thru a testing; but thank God, he stood the test. He lost everything and was tested in every manner.

One day the sons of God came up, and the devil came also, and he began to question God's power and God's Children. And God asked:

Job 1:8: And the LORD said unto satan, Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

Then the devil said,

Job 1:10:

¹⁰ Hast not Thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.

¹¹ But put forth Thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face.

12 And the LORD said unto satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So satan went forth from the Presence of the LORD.

Satan, indeed, lashed out at Job relentlessly, using surrounding enemies to kill all his servants by the sword, burn all his sheep, carry off all his camels and oxen, and kill all his children. Job lost everything. What was Job's response:

Job 1:20-22:

20 Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped,

21 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the LORD.

22 In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.



Satan again comes before the Lord, insisting that if God puts His hand against Job to smite him physically, Job will curse Him to His face.

Job 2:4-7:

4 And satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.

5 But put forth Thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse Thee to Thy face.

6 And the LORD said unto satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life

7 So went satan forth from the Presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.

Then Job's wife said to him:



Job 2:9: Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.

Later, his friends came down to visit him, and instead of comforting him, they insisted there had to be some sin or wrongdoing in his life; otherwise he would not be in that condition.

Job 4:7-9:

⁷ Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?

⁸ Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.

⁹ By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of His nostrils are they consumed.



Finally, Job replies:

Job 13:15: Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him: but I will maintain mine own ways before Him.

There were people who were burned at the stake or were fed to the wild animals because of their faith.

I wonder tonight if you will really be true to Jesus. Some Christians have so much “religion” that someone in the Sunday School Department can look crosseyed at them and they want to quit. The pastor can be busy, walking down the hall, and not turn around and smile at them and shake hands because he didn’t even notice them because he was preoccupied. And they say, “*The pastor doesn’t love me anymore, I just won’t come back*”. Boy, you don’t have a lot to hold on to! If some poor little individual can make you lose your religion by saying an unkind word or by not smiling at you, you don’t have much.

God – give us people of faith that will pray for their enemies. Lift up those who are fallen. Be kind to even those who have done you wrong. You are supposed to be kind to them, not go off and hide somewhere. We need some people who will endure the test and stand the test.

Paul was tried — thrown into jail as a prisoner — but he kept his faith. True religion in the church today is being tried on every side. Everything is being shot at the church. Did you hear what I said? **EVERYTHING** is trying to distract people from the reality.



The sinners in the world — and I have been around a lot of them — always want to talk about the sinners in the world and religion. I want to talk about God, and Jesus Christ, and the Bible — not the Church, not the building.

I will never forget what the kids said: “*I believe there is a God; I believe, I guess, there is a Jesus and Holy Spirit — but these Christians are bugging me*”.

Well, if it is people who are bugging you, you are following the wrong ones. Don't follow the people; don't follow the pastor; don't follow the Sunday School teacher. Follow Jesus. Don't trust in the church and in programs — trust in Jesus. He has never lost a battle and He has never failed! Did you ever hear anyone truthfully say that Jesus failed? That Jesus lost a battle? **NEVER!**

So – let's trust the Lord in true salvation and in the shed Blood of Jesus Christ by faith. We will be tested and tried, just as the Hebrew children were tried.

Anyone who preaches that you can be born-again by the supernatural power of God, and that Christ can heal you, and that there can be miracles, and that evil spirits can leave people — man, they look at them today like they are something way out yonder in left field. Anyone who believes Jesus is coming back some day, bodily to catch away the Church, they say, *"I never heard of such a thing."*

There is going to be a resurrection some day — a Judgment Day. People just kind of smile at you and think, *"Well, what's wrong with him"*.

In a little bit, I am going to hit some point and I want **"Oh Me!"** as loud as **"AMEN"**. The point is, **JESUS IS COMING SOON!!!**

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego said:

Daniel 3:18: But 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 up.

They didn't ask anybody about it – they had convictions in their heart. I think it is time that we, as Christians, take our stand and say we will not defile ourselves with the king's meat or the devil's crowd — the devil's food — the devil's ways.

I went up to the hospital today. As I was driving down the street, I beheld something I still can't believe – but I saw it in the street. I don't know whether it was a cheap blouse or what it was; but I will guarantee you, what those girls had on weren't dresses. And I thought of what my dad used to say: *"If you advertise, you will get business."* And brother, they were advertising! And I think it's about time people who call themselves Christians look like Christians.

But be careful. You may dress any way you want, with a dress clear down to your ankles, and still die and go to Hell. But I believe that if Jesus Christ is in your heart and life, you want to look decent. Some girls I have seen on the streets lately don't have enough on to flag a freight train down. I don't think it is conducive for Christians to act like that.

I will not go the way of the world. I will not go the way others are going.

It reminds me of the young lady on the dance floor. She had a beautiful boyfriend and she wanted to win him to Jesus. They were dancing and she said, "Are you a Christian?" He said, "My Lord, no! If I was, I wouldn't be on this dance floor."



You are not going to win them drinking with them, cussing with them, and telling dirty jokes. You are going to win them when you are different. If you are not different, I am afraid you may never have met Jesus.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, along with Daniel, were in a foreign land, away from all that was near and dear to them, and away from the Temple of God. They made their decision:

Daniel 1:8: But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

Daniel 1:11-12:

11 Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah [Shadrach], Mishael [Meshach], and Azariah [Abednego],

12 Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.



When Nebuchadnezzar built an image and demanded everyone to bow down to worship, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused.

Daniel 3:4-7:

4 Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages,

5 That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up:

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

7 Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of musick, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.



However, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow down and worship the golden image.

Daniel 3:12-18:

12 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 regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

13 Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king.

14 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?

15 Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, 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?



16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.

17 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.

18 But 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 up.

They were told, “We are going to heat the furnace up seven times hotter than it ordinarily is, and if you don’t bow down when the music sounds, we are going to throw you into the fiery furnace.” They said, “We will not bow down.” And they also said, “Our God is able to deliver us. **NEVERTHELESS — WE WILL NOT BOW DOWN.** We will die first, burn up in that furnace before we will bow down.”

That's the kind of decision we need today. That's the kind of determination we need. Give me some people with that kind of determination, and some who will live for God regardless of circumstances, conditions, fashions, frills, and all the rest, and I will show you a revival.

People who can get knocked off the Christmas tree real easy weren't on there very good in the first place. We are anchored on the Rock – we are solid – we are sound. We believe in something and we are holding on to it, regardless!

These men had something real. Many of you stand at the fiery furnace. You are tested, I know. One of the members of your family is not a Christian – maybe your wife – maybe your husband – maybe one of your children; and they give you a bad time. But if you really love the Lord and you have been born-again, I believe you can stand the test, with God's help. Be a good witness.

Daniel 3:17-18:

17 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.

18 But 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 up.

They would rather die than deny their faith. They went into the fiery furnace, but God brought them out. Hallelujah! I feel like stopping and shouting right here. You can't beat a Christian! A Christian is going to win anyway. If Heaven is half as nice as we talk about, it would be good to go on to Heaven right now.

The trouble is, a lot of us believe there is a Heaven, but we are not sure we are ready to go, and we are in no hurry.

Even death won't take away our faith. This is the faith we need – the kind the devil doesn't want us to have – the kind God wants us to have – the kind the world will take note of.

They went in. Do you know that when they opened the doors to the furnace and threw these three fellows in, some of the men who threw them in died from the flames because the fire was so hot!

Daniel 3:19-23:

19 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.



20 And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.

21 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.

22 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.



23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

Then look at what happened:

Daniel 3:24-25:

24 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.



25 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.

Jesus is ALWAYS THERE!

You take your stand for Him and He will always be there! They didn't say, "Call a prayer meeting – pray for us – we don't think we can hold out. Be with me now, preacher, I am going into the fiery furnace." Jesus went with them!

They had them bound before they threw them in, had them tied, hand and foot; but they came out loosed!

Bless God. People who have enough faith to go into the fiery furnace will come out, and they will be loosed every time; loosed from sin, habits, doubts, and fears, walking around in the flames. I wonder what they were talking about while in that fiery furnace. Did you ever stop to think about that? Jesus was there – and I am sure Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego talked with the Lord.

And Jesus hadn't even come into the world yet — this is Old Testament Scripture. He hadn't been born yet of the virgin Mary.

And the king looked in and said — and I believe God revealed this to him — *“there is a fourth one there and He looks like the Son of God”* — that's the promised Messiah!

Daniel 3:25: 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.



Jesus was making worlds before the fiery furnace. Jesus was in the fiery furnace. Jesus was born of a virgin, and carried a cross to Calvary. If your spiritual eyes were open, you would see Him right here tonight.

He is here tonight and wants you to take your stand — with boldness. He is here tonight to help those of you who are going into your fiery furnace. I hope you believe in this kind of Lord. I hope you have victory tonight. I hope you have overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. If you haven't, there is not a better time to get acquainted with Him and to have your sins forgiven.

There is only one thing that is going to keep the Lord from working for you, and that is sin. It is the only thing that ties the hands of God. But if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9: If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

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