



LIVING IN BABYLON
PART TWO- A LOOK AT DANIEL CHAPTER THREE

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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 1:8) Living in the middle of Babylon, Daniel set the tone of no compromise, of steadfast faithfulness to God and to Truth.

Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink (Daniel 1:11-12) As Daniel stood for God, he also set the tone for his colleagues, leading them into a place of consecration.

As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. (Daniel 1:17) God honored them all for their faithfulness.

We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one (1 John 5:19 NASB) **Like Daniel, we also belong to God and live in Babylon.** In the midst of this world we should have the same heart as Daniel, building our life on our Father God's opinion rather than the world's opinion.

How does the world judge everything? It says the most important things are success and gaining others' approval. But we must refuse the world's value system and bring everything back to our Father and what He says.

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 couldest reveal this secret. 48Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon. 49Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king. (Daniel 2:47-49) The king promotes Daniel because he alone was able to interpret a dream for him. And once again Daniel leads his colleagues into a place of greater authority and responsibility. As we faithfully walk with Jesus, He is always bringing us into wider and greater places in Him.

Now the time comes for Daniel's colleagues' hearts to be tested. Will they bow to the opinion of men or the opinion of the Father?

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. 2Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together...all the rulers... to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. 3Then... all the rulers... were gathered together unto the dedication of the image...; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. 4Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, 5That 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: 6And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. (Daniel 3:1-6) Nebuchadnezzar was an extremely powerful, successful king.

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His making of this image is a classic example of the pride of man. In Babylon (i.e. this world), man judges everything based on his successes and the approval of others. Making an image of yourself is a perfect example of this. Man is constantly exalting himself, his achievements, who he is, and demanding that we judge things the same way.

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What does God say? *We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. 20And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ This is the true God and eternal life. 21 Little children, guard yourselves from idols.* (1 John 5:19-21 NASB) Little children, keep yourselves from idols. But **we do bow at times before the idols of ‘success’, the idols of others’ approval**, instead of standing on this: “God I am a success because I’m your child. I am approved and accepted by You because I am your child.”

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. (Daniel 3:7) Most people do bow. Even in the church, many just go with the flow, with what the world dictates, basing even their Christianity on success and the approval of others.

Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews. *9They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live for ever. 10Thou, O king, hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, shall fall down and worship the golden image: 11And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. 12There 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. 13Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king.* (Daniel 3:8-13) Enter the accusers. Hear their accusations, “These men refuse to do things right. They refuse our value system. They deserve to be punished.”

The apostle Paul experienced the same thing at the hands of the world: *And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers, 20And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, 21And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans* (Acts 16:19-21) When we stand for God, Satan accuses us, sometimes even through other Christians who cling to their traditions rather than the voice of God. Jesus spoke of such accusers: *Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition* (Mark 7:7,9)

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? 15Now 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? (Daniel 3:14-15) In the midst of our trial, Satan always offers a way out. “If you will just compromise a little, just be reasonable, just follow what’s expected of you, you will be fine...But if not...”

Remember, **Satan’s plan is always to neutralize our spiritual authority so that he can take control.** If these men don’t bow, what might they lose? Not only their earthly position and authority, but also their lives. And if they do bow, what will they lose? Their spiritual authority. Which will they choose to put on the line?

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. (Daniel 3:16) “We don’t even have to answer you. Why? Because we serve a higher Authority.”

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. 18But 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. (Daniel 3:17-18) Now, see the steadfast heart of Daniel in these men.

Their refusal to compromise with the world's value system leads to a painful trial for them. But what is their attitude? **“God can deliver us from this painful trial. BUT EVEN IF HE DOES NOT, WE WILL NOT BOW! Why? Because we are in relationship with the living God who is our Father. And He doesn't want us to bow to anything except Him.”**

These men had seen God's faithfulness in their lives. Years before they'd refused to eat the king's food- and now they refuse to bow to him or his gods. Just like David, who fought the lion and the bear, and then later faced Goliath (1 Samuel 17:37.) As you faithfully walk with Christ the trials will get more poignant. The greatest trials are in your soul, the battle between what God says and what the world and Satan say. But **God will always be enough for you as you steadfastly face Goliath.**

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 flames of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. (Daniel 3:19-22) This is exactly how Satan operates. You stand against what he throws at you and he becomes furious. He rages, “Very well, you won't bow. Then I will make your trial seven times hotter than ever. And you're going in the fire, NOW!”

And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. (Daniel 3:23) They are bound. And in your trial, Satan may try to make you feel bound, try to heap feelings of guilt and shame on you, reminding you of your failures and struggles, reminding you how insignificant and foolish you seem judged by the world's standards. You may feel all those things, but you don't have to bow to those feelings.

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. (Daniel 3:24-25) Glory to God! Four men, loose! And the fourth is like the Son of God! Jesus is with them. However hot the fire is heated, Jesus is in there with us. And in the midst of the trial He sets us free!

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 hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire. 27 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 an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them. (Daniel 3:26-27) The only physical change in them was that their bonds had been loosed. God allows Satan to test us, to send trials our way, because **as we remain steadfast in the midst of the trial, we come out FREE.**

The deepest trials and strongest entanglements are in our souls. Where Satan and the world system want to bind us up in guilt and in shame, based on their value system of success and the approval of others. But our heart must be this: God is able to deliver me from this in my soul. But even if He doesn't, I will never bow to the feelings of guilt or shame, because they're not coming from my Father.

I recently asked a fairly new believer in our church, “Are you 100% sure that you are saved?” He replied, “I know that based on the word of God I should be able to say yes. But at times doubts come- I feel that perhaps my failures are too great, perhaps I never really got saved...” He is tempted to judge his salvation by his successes and failures, rather than by what Jesus has done. He is learning to refuse to bow to those lies. As he makes this stand, at times the emotional storm gets wilder, and Satan attacks him in different ways. But Jesus is with him in the midst of it and as he remains steadfast in his heart, refusing to bow, the bonds are loosed and he comes out of it freer and surer of his standing in God. We must only bow before our Father God and what He says.

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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 have 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 any thing 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. 30Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon. (Daniel 3:28-30) Look at the change in this heathen king! All because of the testimony of these men who loved not their lives unto death. They excelled in the king's service, but all along remained completely uncompromising regarding what God wants.

Whatever it costs, we must trust our Father and obey him rather than the dictates of the world. Even if He doesn't deliver us from our painful trial, we must trust and obey His word and not bow to the world system. This is then a testimony to the world, and God honors us for it.

Let's stake everything on what our Father says to us. On our relationship with Him. In that, trials will surely come. But whatever your trial, God is able to deliver you. And let's have the same heart as these men – even if He doesn't, I will not bow.

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"IF ANYONE THIRST, LET THEM COME TO ME AND DRINK"- JESUS
(JOHN 7:37)