

DIAMONDS FROM DANIEL

by

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CHAPTER THREE

THE IMAGE OF GOLD AND THE THREE HOLY YOUNG MEN

Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold

World Wide Gentile Empires *began* with an image set up for the universal worship of man (Daniel 3). They will end with another image set up for the self same purpose (Revelation 13:14-15, etc.). A universal boycott together with a prominent mark and a death penalty for refusal to worship is the issue in each case. Beware of boycotts, dictators and marks (see "*Riches from Revelation*").

Nimrod was the first person to attempt to unify the religions of man by self deification. Nebuchadnezzar here attempts exactly the same thing and both were types of the coming "Beast" the last head of the Gentile world who will insist on being worshipped (Revelation 13:11-15; 19-20).

An image of gold

The Babylonian age was preeminently the golden age of human history. The king of Babylon made an image—a casting of gold of priceless value—an image that was probably intended by Satan to give the lie to Daniel's interpretation of deterioration, decay, devolution and ultimate destruction. It was an image bidding defiance to God and to his prophet.

The Plain of Dura

On the plains of Dura there stands today, a rectilinear mound, about twenty feet high, an exact square of about forty-six feet at the base, resembling the pedestal of a colossal statue. Everything leads to the belief that Nebuchadnezzar's golden image was set up in this place.

Nebuchadnezzar's proud and imperious personality has been stamped upon our imagination from childhood. The monuments bear abundant testimony to the same. "To astonish mankind, I reconstructed and renewed the wonder of Borsippa, the temple of the seven spheres of the world." The Arabs still use the ruins of Babylon as a large quarry, and carry off its bricks. Nine out of every ten of these bricks is stamped with the name of Nebuchadnezzar, a silent answer to the truth of his question "**Is not this great Babylon which I have built?**"

Whoso falleth not down

One of the characteristics of Gentile times is the deification of man. Satan attempted this in the Garden of Eden, “**Ye shall be as gods.**” Selah! Nimrod, inspired by Satan, attempted the same in the land of Shinar which resulted in the first Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar endeavored to establish a religion of his own and a religion which was opposed to the God of heaven. He set up the image of a man. The image was sixty (6x10) cubits high and six cubits broad and six kinds of musical instruments called the crowd to worship. Thus the mysterious number 666 was stamped on the image of man set up by Nebuchadnezzar. This beginning of the “**times of the Gentiles**” also foreshadows its end as described in Revelation 13.

The civil power of the whole empire of Babylon tried to force this universal man-deifying religion upon the world just as in the latter days of the oncoming great tribulation, the devil, the Antichrist and the false prophet, the triumvirate of hell, will force a false religion on the world. The Roman Caesars each claimed Divine honors. The Emperor of Japan to this day claims divine honors and divine worship. Papal Rome has put a man up as vicegerent of the Lord, the Vicar of God, and foolish man stoops to kiss his toe.

All about us we see the increasing deification of man and the humanizing of God. All this is to head up in a great apostasy and the revelation of the man of Sin, the coming Antichrist, who will demand universal worship for himself (II Thessalonians 2) (See “*Riches from Revelation*”).

All the people fell down and worshipped

Gentile dominion and power is thus seen to be idolatrous, intolerant, self-willed and blasphemous. It stands in direct opposition to God, repudiates the Sovereignty of the Almighty, is antagonistic to Christ and flings His followers into dens of lions or fiery furnaces.

This Satan-deluded world has always clubbed its Abels, mocked its Isaacs, imprisoned its Jeremiahs, beheaded its Johns and crucified its saviors.

A burning fiery furnace

Putting people to death in this way was not unusual in the East. For certain offences some were put upon a spit and roasted over a slow fire and some were thrown into hot ovens. The three Hebrews were to be cast into a burning fiery furnace.

Have not regarded thee

To the three Hebrews, Nebuchadnezzar was not the last word. To them Nebuchadnezzar was neither divine nor supreme. They were neither afraid of Kings’ faces nor fiery furnaces. May God raise up more young men like them. We need a few Shadrachs in our colleges today. God give us men.

His rage and fury

The greatness of the three Hebrew holy boys and the littleness of the Gentile unholy king is set forth in striking contrast in these two verses. The calmness of the godly young men presents a remarkable background for the rage and fury of the ruler. The three Holy Companions were the real rulers. They were the real kings.

Is it true?

Is it of purpose? Is it true, O Shadrach? The Hebrew youths refuse to acknowledge in any way any heathen religion. They determined to hold fast at any cost to the only true God and to the truth of God. They preferred death, disgrace and doom to apostasy or compromise.

Sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer

The sackbut was a triangular four stringed instrument, while the dulcimer was similar to the Scottish "Bagpipe." The dulcimer was probably a skin bag with two reed pipes while the psaltery was a stringed instrument.

Who is that God?

The history of the Church has been written in the blood of its saints. There has always been warfare between the powers of darkness and light. The seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman have been in perpetual warfare ever since the fall of man.

Among the noble army of martyrs, Abel leads the van and Cain appears as the first persecutor of God's saints. From that day to the present a sin loving world has labored to destroy the people of God.

Who is that God that shall deliver you?

How blasphemous and God defying! Who is THAT GOD? asks the proud, pompous king.

- THAT God had recently honored him with a wonderful dream.
- THAT GOD had renewed the dream to Daniel.
- THAT GOD had graciously granted the interpretation.
- THAT GOD had made known the whole history of the world to him.

WHO is THAT GOD? Oh, how wicked, wayward, and willful is the heart of man!

THAT GOD had created him, protected him, provided for him, clothed him, fed him and honored him with rulership of the first world empire.

He little knew and little cared that his breath and being were in the hands of the one whom he is pleased to call THAT GOD.

Who shall deliver you out of my hands?

The ultimate trial of faith which sooner or later comes to all the saints is set forth in Daniel 1 and 3. From Abel, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Daniel and the three Hebrews to John the Baptist, Paul, Luther, Wesley, Booth and Bresee to the present time, this Christ-rejecting world has always persecuted its Pauls, despised its Daniels and slain its Saints.

We have no need to answer thee

To hesitate, argue, reason or parley with sin is fatal. Where the path of duty is plain, unhesitating decision and implicit obedience is the only safety. **“We are not careful to answer thee.” “We have no need to answer thee.”** The homage demanded of them was a POSITIVE homage, that demanded of Daniel was a NEGATIVE homage of abstaining from prayer. They would not yield to either!

We are not careful to answer thee

Principles were more to be regarded than policies. Their own personal safety was the least of their concern. They believed that **“We ought to obey God”** first, and then “honor the king.” They practiced the principle later laid down in the New Testament that **“We ought to obey God rather than men.”** Civil government is recognized in scripture as ordained of God for the civil welfare of men, and Christians are to be subject to the powers that be, whatever the form of government (Romans 13:1-7).

But when, as in Nebuchadnezzar’s time, human law enters the realm of religion and commands disobedience to God’s law, duty to God comes first. This lesson in civil government and religion, is important for our time, for, as Revelation 13 teaches, religious organizations in power are again seeking to use civil authority to coerce the conscience, in the effort to compel conformity to religious practices that are contrary to God’s law.

We must say NO to kings and governments, parliaments and Senate’s, when their will and commands are in conflict with the will and Word of God.

Our God is able

The two images of Daniel 2 and 3 represent man’s rule and man’s worship. The **“image of Gold”** was Nebuchadnezzar’s “new thought” and “new theology.” The king’s unenlightened ingenuity set up a new object of worship. The loudly heralded musical attraction was all the more calculated to delude and fool the people, but God’s holy people could not be so easily deceived. They preferred death to disobedience.

They were fully persuaded as to God’s power and presence and were possessed of implicit trust in his goodness and love.

But if not

Living or dying, we are determined to be true to our God and His Holy Word.

Behold the courageous refusal of God's faithful three. Uttering no threatening words, guilty of no outrageous language and yet at the same time speaking no flatteries and making no soothing addresses, these holy youths calmly assured the king that they were by no means perplexed about the consequences. They needed no time even to pray about the matter. They were not even concerned about the event. One thing they had settled. They would on no account at any time worship any of his gods, compromise with conscience, or adore either the king or his image.

If not

This does not imply any inability on God's part. It is a question of His Will. If it is not the will of God to deliver us, we will not bow down. The three Hebrews preferred death to disobedience.

We will not

To Daniel and his holy Hebrew friends, truth had no latitude and loyalty to God no longitude. Faithful to God and uncompromising with sin they are also a fit type of the Jewish remnant in the last days who will be faithful to God in the fiery furnace of the great tribulation. All these things are foreshadowings of events yet future (Romans 15:4).

The flame slew those men

His pride wounded, his will crossed, and his supposed supreme authority disregarded by three youths, Nebuchadnezzar resolved to take ample vengeance on them. The king's commandment was urgent. The furnace was made exceeding hot. The bodies of God's boys were fastened together. Strong soldiers flung them headlong into the flames. The fires which were intended for the children of God slew the soldiers.

Walking in the midst of the fire

- Paul refused to walk out of prison (II Corinthians 12:8-9).
- Noah waited in the Ark till God ordered him to leave.

Daniel was at home in the den of lions and these three Hebrews were in no hurry to get out of the fiery furnace. They were evidently enjoying the walk up and down in the midst of their fiery ordeal!

Four men loose

The fire simply burnt the cords with which they were bound and really set them at liberty. Our hearts may be enlarged by those very troubles with which enemies may desire to straiten, hamper and destroy us.

And they have no hurt

They made no complaint, felt no pain, experienced no uneasiness. The fire did not burn them, the flame did not scorch them, the smoke did not inconvenience them, and in them the scripture was literally fulfilled “**When thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned.**” “**By faith . . . they quenched the violence of fire.**”

The fourth in the midst suffered them not to be burned. Here is something undeniably supernatural. The Lord God had promised as though anticipating this very circumstance “**When thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.**” The loving Lord kept his promise to his trusting people. During the terrors of the great tribulation yet to come God’s persecuted people will likewise be preserved. They were not saved FROM the fiery furnace, but they were saved IN it and preserved THROUGH it. Selah!

The form of the fourth

Cast out by man they were thereby brought into a more beautiful fellowship with Christ. Paul, Silas, Bunyan, and a multitude of others have been cast out into the arms of a waiting Christ.

The fourth . . . the Son of God

Christ came down to deliver Daniel from the lions’ den and the three Hebrews from the fiery furnace.

HE CAME DOWN and LINKED arms with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.
HE CAME DOWN and WALKED with Enoch.
HE CAME DOWN and TALKED with Noah.
HE CAME DOWN and FEASTED with Abraham.
HE CAME DOWN and WRESTLED with Jacob.
HE CAME DOWN and MANIFESTED himself to Moses.
HE CAME DOWN and FILLED the tabernacle in the wilderness and the temple.
HE CAME DOWN and REVEALED the will of God to Gideon and Manoah.
HE CAME DOWN and GUIDED Israel through the wilderness.
HE CAME DOWN and DEFENDED Israel as Captain of the Lord’s hosts.
HE CAME DOWN and DELIVERED Daniel from the den of the lions and the three Hebrews from the fiery furnace and finally . . .
HE CAME DOWN and was born in a stable and cradled in a manger—God manifested in the flesh.

Oh the condescension of Christ. Oh the goodness, greatness and grace of God. The same Christ who appeared to Adam in Eden, who walked with Enoch and talked with Noah, who wrestled with Jacob and feasted with Abraham, who appeared to Moses in the burning bush and to Joshua on the walls of Jericho, again stepped from the heavenly portals and entered the fiery furnace to succor and support his faithful followers. The form of the fourth is always in the midst of His holy people.

And have changed the king's word

Kings and presidents, together with their decrees, are all in the hands of the God of the Old Testament. The Pharaohs and Nebuchadnezzars of the past and present may determine the destruction of God's people but blessed be the God of Israel, Daniel and Shadrach! He is able to change the damnable decrees of mad monarchs and take care of His own.

And yielded their bodies

One reason why God protected and preserved them was because they were wholly and absolutely His own. They had yielded themselves to God (Romans 12:1-2). Their consecration was complete and they were therefore immortal until their work was done.

Shall be cut in pieces

Nebuchadnezzar was convinced but not converted and transformed.

God did not inspire Nebuchadnezzar to use these words, but having uttered them the Holy Spirit inspired Daniel to record them. The saying of wicked demons or bad men were not inspired by God although God was pleased to inspire the writers to record same.

The sayings of Satan, as in Genesis 3:1 were not inspired by God, but God inspired Moses to write them and hence they are part of the inspired scriptures. Nebuchadnezzar was still the same old cruel despot ready to cut in pieces his own people! What madness.

Then the king promoted Shadrach

The secret of success is obedience to God and His word.

Uncompromising devotion to God and unbending conformity to His word are at once the way to both peace and prosperity.

Their faithfulness to God and His word was richly rewarded. They were each given a larger sphere and a new opportunity for bigger service to king and country. They had passed from death (the furnace) unto life (Christ) and as a consequence they were privileged to bear a greater witness.

The king promoted them.

“Standing by a purpose true,
Heeding God's command,
Honor them, the faithful few!
All hail to Daniel's Band!

Dare to be a Daniel!
Dare to stand alone!
Dare to have a purpose firm!
Dare to make it known!

Many mighty men are lost,
Daring not to stand,
Who for God has been a host,
By joining Daniel's Band.

Many giants, great and tall,
Stalking through the land,
Headlong to the earth would fall,
If met by Daniel's Band!

Hold the Gospel banner high!
On to victory grand!
Satan and his host defy,
And shout for Daniel's Band!"

~ end of chapter 3 ~

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