

Self, The Greatest Battle Ever Fought

Daniel Chapter Three, Part One

God had given King Nebuchadnezzar a dream predicting the fall of his kingdom and the rise and fall of three successive nations. All these nations represented the principles of Satan's kingdom and would be destroyed and God's everlasting kingdom would eventually fill the earth.

In this story we find the king rebelling against God's prediction. Just like Satan in the beginning of the great controversy, Nebuchadnezzar was self deceived through pride and thought that his kingdom could prevail. The image that King Nebuchadnezzar set up on the plains of Dura represented himself.

This is the core issue of the great controversy. Whose principles will be found to be everlasting and able to sustain life, the principles of selfless love and liberty or self-exaltation and force? In other words, Will the real God please stand up.

There is nothing new under the sun, what has been, will be, for history repeats itself. The battle plans of Satan used in heaven have been equally successful here on earth. Daniel chapter three and Revelation chapter thirteen lay bare his ultimate goal—to sit in “the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God,” 2 Thessalonians 2:4. Self worship is the ultimate “abomination” that brings “desolation”. As with Satan, so with us, self is the idol “abomination” that will bring our “desolation”. “The wages of sin is death.” Romans 6:23

This literal event in history is a type paralleling the final test “which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth” Revelation 3:10, which centers on worship.

Revelation 13:8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Will we bow to the antichrist by receiving his mark which ultimately represents self exaltation, (Rev 13), or will we be found with the character of God—selfless love, perfectly reproduced in our minds? (Rev 14:1-5). The choices made at this time will result in sealing forever the destiny of every living being.

Revelation 22:11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

12) And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

Those who are willing to be taught, may learn a lesson from the conduct of the king of Babylon. As the enemy sought to make Nebuchadnezzar's **God-given dream serve his own purposes** by leading the king to work for his own glory instead of working for the glory of God, so he works today to pervert truth in order to hinder God's purposes. All false religion has its origin in a corruption of the true. When unmixed with evil, truth is a mighty power to save; but if we allow the enemy to work through us, if by the light given us **we seek to exalt self**, even this truth may become a power for evil.

The enemy would lead us all to use, as did Nebuchadnezzar, the light and knowledge of God **for our own exaltation**. But self-exaltation can find no place in the work of God.

Jeremiah 9:23 24 Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which

exercise loving- kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.

The example of the three Hebrews is a type of the final generation who have taken up the cross of Christ—a self sacrificing love unto death if necessary for the purpose of witnessing to the universe that the principles of God’s kingdom are perfect and everlasting. The confident courage with which they faced death was borne of years of faithful obedience in the little things that taught them the faithfulness of God. Their faith was well-developed before the threat of death by which it was revealed.

Notice the parallels between the story in Daniel three and Revelation’s final showdown found in chapter 13.

1. In both we find “an image”
2. In both we find “666”
3. In both we find a “decree enforcing worship”
4. In both we find a “death decree”
5. In both we find a “deliverance”
6. In both we find “a minority hated”
7. In both we find “witnessing before courts & kings”
8. In both we find “the faith of Jesus displayed”
9. In both we find the faithful keeping the commandments of God

Let’s look more closely at each parallel.

1. The image

Daniel 3:1a Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, . . .

Revelation 13:14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had 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 a sword, and did live.

2. 666

A score is 20 so three score is 60, thus you have 60 cubits high. It was the custom to give one measurement for both the breadth as well as the depth, thus you have 6 cubits wide and 6 cubits deep.

Daniel 3:1 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.

Revelation 13:18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

3. The decree enforcing worship

Daniel 3:4 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:

Revelation 13:8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

The word **worship** is found 11 times in Daniel chapter three. It is found eight times in Revelation 13 and 14. Do you think the issue may be over worship?

4. The death decree

Daniel 3:6 And whoso falleth not down and worshipping shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

Revelation 13:15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

5. The deliverance

Daniel 3:22 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. 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.

Revelation 6:17 For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

Revelation 7:1 And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. 2) And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, 3) Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. 4) And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

Revelation 15:2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

Psalms 91:7 A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. 8) Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. 9) Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; 10) There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. 11) For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

6. The minority hated

Dan 3:12 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.

Revelation 12:17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

7. The witness

Daniel 3:12 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.

Daniel 3:28 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.

Revelation 3:9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. 10) Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. 11) Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

Revelation 12:11 And they overcame him (Satan, the accuser) by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

8. The faith of Jesus

Daniel 3:16 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.

Revelation 14:12 Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

9. Keeping the commandments

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.

Revelation 14:12 Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

The issue of music in worship played a big part in preparing souls to “*fall down and worship the image.*” When something is repeated it is *being emphasized*. So it must be significant that four times in this chapter it mentions falling down and worshipping when ye here the sound of the music. Daniel 3:5, 7, 10, 15. Because of its powerful influence, music may very likely play a big role in the worship of the antichrist.

Daniel 3:4 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:

Our trials are God's workman

Malachi 3:2 But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: 3) And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.

John 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Acts 14:22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

Romans 5:3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

Romans 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Romans 12:12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;

2 Corinthians 1:4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

God has always tried His people in the furnace of affliction. It is in the heat of the furnace that the dross is separated from the true gold of the Christian character. Jesus watches the test; He knows what is needed to purify the precious metal, that it may reflect the radiance of His love. It is by close, testing trials that God disciplines His servants. He sees that some have powers which may be used in the advancement of His work, and He puts these persons upon trial; in His providence He brings them into positions that test their character and reveal defects and weaknesses that have been hidden from their own knowledge. He gives them opportunity to correct these defects and to fit themselves for His service. He shows them their own weakness, and teaches them to lean upon Him; for He is their only help and safeguard.

Trial and persecution will come to all who, in obedience to the Word of God, refuse to worship the antichrist. **Force is the last resort of every false religion.** At first it tries attraction, as the king of Babylon tried the power of

music and outward show. If these attractions, invented by men inspired by Satan, failed to make men worship the image, the hungry flames of the furnace were ready to consume them. So it will be in the final test.

Nebuchadnezzar praises the true God

Daniel 3:28 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.

Nebuchadnezzar makes another decree enforcing worship

Daniel 3:29 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.

It was right for the king to make public confession, and to seek to exalt the God of heaven above all other gods; but in endeavoring to force his subjects to make a similar confession of faith and to show similar reverence, Nebuchadnezzar was exceeding his right as a temporal sovereign. He had no more right, either civil or moral, to threaten men with death for not worshipping God, than he had to make the decree consigning to the flames all who refused to worship the golden image. ***God never compels the obedience of man. He leaves all free to choose whom they will serve.***

It was God's purpose to place things on an eternal basis of security. How could He assure that "affliction shall not rise up the second time?" Nahum 1: 9 He decided that ***time must be given for Satan to develop the principles which were the foundation of his system of government.*** He has done this through the nations who have adopted his principles. He had claimed that his were superior to God's principles. Time was given for the working of Satan's principles, that they might be seen by all.

If God uses the same principles that Satan does, He might have destroyed Satan right away. Is God like Nebuchadnezzar who decreed, worship me or I will throw you into that fiery furnace? Or, do our choices determine our destiny?

Psalm 81:11-13 But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels. Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!

2 Chronicles 30:7 And be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, which trespassed against the LORD God of their fathers, who therefore gave them up to desolation, as ye see.

Hosea 11:8 How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within Me, My repentings are kindled together. (Admah and Zeboim were destroyed along with Sodom and Gomorrah.)

Galatians 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

Proverbs 26:2 As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying, so the curse causeless shall not come.

The worship of images (idols, false gods) represents the worship of self

If we forsake God and choose to worship self by placing our wisdom on the throne of decision, then we shall be faced with attempting to save ourselves from the results of our choice, which we are unable to do. This is the mystery of iniquity which began in heaven with Lucifer, was reproduced in the garden with Eve and remains our battle today. Satan's kingdom principles of self dependance manifested in self exaltation, self preservation, and self salvation were produced in the ancient kingdom of Babylon. Until we have forsaken the principles of Babylon and learn through the fruits of faith to implicitly trust and obey God, we will bring upon ourselves the fruits of that distrust.

Judges 10:13 Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more. 14) Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation.

Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6) In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths. 7) Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.