



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Walking Through The Fire (Daniel 3:4-28)

MARCH 23, 2011

Dave DePue / (785) 249 7604 / www.capitolcom.org / dave.depue@capitolcom.org

King Nebuchadnezzar built an idol, a huge statue of himself. This was in the form of the image given him by God in a dream. The intended message of the dream was that Yahweh, the God of Israel was sovereign. The arrogant king made matters worse by requiring worship from all his officials and subjects living in the region around Babylon. Do you notice government and religious leaders today who require continuous unearned praise, even worship from their subjects or followers?

INTRODUCTION

“In America the law is king. For as in absolute governments the king is law, so in free countries the law ought to be king, and there ought to be no other” (Tomas Paine).¹ In his early American Bible study pamphlet, (titled Common Sense) Paine argues that the American Colonies do have a sovereign ruler: He is called God. The God of heaven gave His followers (Jewish people and Christians) a set of laws called The Ten Commandments. The first and second of these address worship. **“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods besides me. You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God...” (Deuteronomy 5:6-9a).** The nature of law infers enforcement. Of certain, law without enforcement is meaningless. While it *may be* possible to adhere to all laws in the United States, it is *impossible* to keep the entire Law of God. The Apostle Paul wrote: **“...for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:20-23).** Jesus took our punishment for breaking the law (a pardon, not an acquittal) through His death on the cross. However, the legal system requires that we accept a pardon for it to be credited to us. Grace cancels our punishment as this pardon is accepted through faith. **“Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith (Galatians 3:24).**

BOW, BEND OR BURN

Daniel 3:4-6 Then the herald loudly proclaimed, “Nations and peoples of every language, this is what you are commanded to do: As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.”

The first institutions formed by God were, marriage, family, and civil government. We are to submit to authorities. **Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do will bring judgment on themselves (Romans 13:1-2).** Pilate, the Roman governor claimed that he had the power to either free Jesus or to crucify Him. **Jesus answered, “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin” (John 19:11).** God’s purpose for human government is to reward good and to restrain sin in an evil, fallen world.² Governments usually commend those who obey laws. Breaking the law results in punishment from the authorities (not God’s judgment). God blesses civil disobedience to human law which conflicts with His. See Acts 5:29, Exodus 1:17, 21.

WHICH GOD DO YOU SERVE?

Daniel 3:13 Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king, and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up?”

BIBLE STUDIES

LEADERS/LEGISLATORS: WEDNESDAYS 7-7:50 AM, CAPITOL ROOM 142 SOUTH

STAFF & GUESTS: WEDNESDAY S 12:05 – 12:55 PM, CAPITOL ROOM 142 SOUTH

Capitol Commission Kansas

Walking Though The Fire (Daniel 3:4-28)

Dave DePue / (785) 249 7604 / www.capitolcom.org / dave.depue@capitolcom.org

Daniel, chief of the wise men, was apparently out of town on the king's business or he certainly would have been involved. Most likely it was the priests of Belmerodach (a heathen temple) who brought the complaint to the king. They would be jealous because Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego did not worship their gods. Likely they were envious that these Jewish teenagers were in executive positions over them. The three friends were chief administrators of the providence of Babylon (Daniel 2:49). Our colleagues today use the media, ethics complaints, and the judicial system to "scorch" those who oppose their viewpoint on social and fiscal policy.

RESPECTFULL DEFIENCE

Daniel 3:16-18 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, "King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and He will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. But even if He does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

The king attempted to use the force of law to promote a show of worship. Today's equivalent may be the move to implement Sharia Law. Fortunately this is unconstitutional here. Law and force might change behavior but cannot change the heart. Civil leaders of today must know that our American justice system moves slowly and God's judgment is for eternity.

TOO HOT FOR YOU

Daniel 3:21-22a So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. The king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

The three friends were not being disrespectful, just standing fast for the true and living God. Their lives were in God's hands. This threat was serious! The soldiers were killed by the heat blast as they threw the three into the air draft onto the furnace coals. It is better to trust God than be in the hands of men. (Proverbs 10:27)(2 Samuel 24:14).

NO HELL FIRE FOR THESE SAINTS

Daniel 3:24-25 Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?" They replied, "Certainly, Your Majesty." He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods."

The king could distinguish that the fourth person was a heavenly being. His pagan reference is "son of the gods". Scriptures suggest that this was an angel or more likely a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ (Joshua 5:13-15) (Judges 6:11). A great Savior to know!

WORSHIP IS DEMANDED

Daniel 3:28 Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who sent His Angel¹ and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God!"

The king acknowledged that God is sovereign and can overrule civil law, even the dictates of an earthly ruler. The question is whether he (or you) acknowledges God as Lord? How many signs and wonders have you seen?

¹ <http://www.earlyamerica.com/earlyamerica/milestones/commonsense/text.html>

² John MacArthur, The MacArthur Study Bible. (Thomas Nelson Inc.). p1686.