

Daniel 3:14-30 - Faith in the Fire

Intro - Daniel 3 is inspiring & informing. Informed (last wk) of the besetting sin of pride which is often exhibited by man and governments. God gave Neb a dream about Babylon's prominent place in history...but limited place because others would follow. Neb built an image in defiance of the dream displaying his "permanent" place in power & authority and he demanded that all others acknowledge it - "Government is God". Compliance was almost universal. Everybody pledged allegiance...except 3 guys. The peer pressure was intense (family from back home). Because of the 3's non-compliance they were persecuted (2 Tim. 3:12). Their faith in God was under fire...now their faith was going to be in the fire ...literally. FAITH FIRE FUTURE FACADE

FAITH

1. These 3 were given & exhibited an exquisite gift of faith
 - a. After the kings furious demand... 3:15b - 16 "no need to answer about this matter"
 - b. Their faith was resolute, courageous, and uncompromising. Issue is settled
2. The issue at hand was Who was the High King?
 - a. Neb was king but there is a King of kings and Lord of lords
 - b. Acts 4:19 Acts 5:29
 - c. Faith is a resolute confidence and allegiance to the ultimate King - Jesus is Lord!
3. They trusted their King
 - a. 3:17 "God is able to deliver thee" Gen. 18:14a Is. 59:1
 - i. They trusted their KING to preserve their life
 - b. They also trusted their King for the timing of their death - 3:18 "but if not"
4. Faith rests in God and says, "government is not God...Jesus is." Jesus is Lord!
 - a. He is Lord of life - He will preserve me & sustain me for as long as He wills me...
 - b. He is Lord of death Rev. 1:18 2 Sam. 2:6 When He is through with me down here, He will safely bring me up there. Psalm 116:15
 - i. The King of kings is a good Shepherd - leads in life and though death
5. Their "shield of faith" was taking the fiery darts....now comes the literal fire

FIRE

- God's vassal king (Neb) makes a fire for these men of faith 3:19
 - Neb was ruler who had a quick temper (2:5)
 - Not an empty threat Jer. 29:21-22
 - Apocrypha records the flame was about 75' high (Song of the Three 22-24)
- This was a real fire that Neb readily used as a form of execution.
 - Elite soldiers were commanded to bind the faithful three 3:20-21
 - "Seal Team 6" died carrying out their mission - 3:22-23
 - Like at the Red Sea. Israel passes through safely, but Egypt is drowned & Babylon is burned
 - Psalm 91:7 Isaiah 43:2

- Real miracle 3:24-25
 - Proud Neb is astonished by what he sees...not 3 dead but 4 "dancing" (Acts 3:8)
 - Isaiah 63:9 (Acts 9:4)
 - Angels are ministering spirits - Heb. 1:14
 - Psalm 68:19-20
 - 3:26-27 Neb call them from the fire and there is an open inspection.
 - Only thing burned was their bonds. - clothes undamaged
 - No smell of smoke. (camp fire/cook-out always leaves its residue)
 - Hair not singed - Luke 21:16-18
 - God controls: men...kings...nations...the elements
 - Nature is how God usually operates (naturally)
 - Supernatural...out of the ordinary...unusual...miracles
- Miracles are not usuals (by definition)
 - This amazing account is a miracle that should bolster our faith...
 - ...But there are "others" that are the usual - Heb. 11:33-37
- Faith in the fire usually looks different.
 - Mark - when speaking against idols in Egypt - dragged by a rope into a fire
 - Thomas - tortured in India, ran through with spears and thrown into an oven
 - Christians covered with wax were set on fire as light for Nero's Rome
 - Polycarp "86 years I have served Him and He has never once wronged me. How could I blaspheme my King who has saved me" Nail not needed to hold him as he was burned - (Jesus is Lord not Caesar)
 - Rias had boiling tar pour on her and was burned as was her mother Marcella
 - Appolonia (under Clodius Maximus)¹⁹ Cypril in Crete -²¹ Zoe (Diocletian)²⁶
 - Tyndale - 1536 Latimer & Ridley - 1555¹⁹⁹ Nigerian Christians - 1992³³⁸

FUTURE

This real event in Dan. 3 prefigures upcoming events. Not just past, but a pattern for the future

1. Great iniquity and inquisition - Revelation 13:5-10
 - a. The forced idea of *government as god* is coming in the future 2 Thess. 2:4
 - b. An image will be a symbol of allegiance Rev. 13:15
 - c. Bow or be beheaded - Rev. 20:4
2. Great irony There is a future fiery furnace for those who bow to the image
 - a. Rev. 14:9-12 no escape from this furnace
 - b. If save life (by bowing) you will lose life. If lose life you will save your life. Mark 8:35

FACADE

- Neb was astounded by the miracle but not converted by the miracle
 - Miracles don't convert people - Luke 16:30-31 Romans 10:17
- Neb's great statement 3:28-29
 - temporary confession is not conversion. Neb was convinced but not converted.
 - Honored the God of Shadrach....as "their God" not "his God"
- True faith acknowledges God alone. Jesus is Lord - Romans 10:9
 - No other gods before Me....or besides Me. Not one among many...but HIM Only
 - Is your faith a façade? Do you honor God as your God or their God?