



Daniel 3:1-30

7/26/20 AM

THE DECREE OF A DICTATOR

Introduction:

I. A TEST OF FAITH (vs. 1-12)

A. The Construction of the Image (vs. 1)

“an image of gold...sixty cubits...[by] six cubits...on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon”

B. The Convocation at the Image (vs. 2-7)

“the king sent word to assemble...to come to the dedication of the image”

“then...the herald loudly proclaimed...peoples, nations, and men of every language”

“at the moment you hear...you are to fall down and worship the golden image”

“whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire”

“all the peoples...fell down and worshiped”

C. The Conflict over the Image (vs. 8-12)

“certain Chaldeans came forward and brought charges against the Jews”

“You, O king, have made a decree...”

“There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the administration of the province of Babylon...[who] have disregarded you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up.”

II. A TESTIMONY OF FAITH (vs. 13-23)

A. The Attitude of the King (vs. 13-15)

“Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring ...these men...before the king.”

“Is it true...that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up?”

“Now if you are ready...to fall down and worship the image that I have made, very well.”

“what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?”

B. The Answer of the Hebrews (vs. 16-18)

“O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter.”

“If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king.”

“But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”

C. The Anger of the King (vs. 19-23)

“then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with wrath, and his facial expression was altered...he answered by giving orders to heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated”

“he commanded certain valiant warriors who were in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego”

“these men were tied up in their trousers, their coats, their caps and their other clothes, and were cast into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire”

“because the king’s command was urgent and the furnace had been made extremely hot, the flame of the fire slew those men who carried [them]”

“these three men...fell into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire still tied up”

III. THE TRIUMPH OF FAITH (vs. 24-30)

A. The Protection of God (vs. 24-27)

“the king was astounded and stood up in haste..., ‘Was it not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire?’”

“I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire...and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods”

“Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, come out, you servants of the Most High God, and come here!”

“the fire had no effect on the bodies of these men nor was the hair of their head singed, nor were their trousers damaged, nor had the smell of fire even come upon them”

B. The Proclamation of the King (vs. 28-29)

“Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego...”

“who has sent His angel and delivered His servants who put their trust in Him, violating the king’s command, and yielded up their bodies so as not to serve or worship any god except their own God”

“I make a decree that any people, nation or tongue that speaks anything offensive against...God...”

“torn limb from limb and their houses reduced to a rubbish heap”

“there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way”

C. The Promotion of the Three Men (vs. 30)

“Then the king caused Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego to prosper in the province of Babylon.”

Conclusion:

- 1) Loyalty to God and His Word is not a thing to be compromised under any circumstances.
- 2) Suffering, whether it seems fair or not, may well be part of God’s purpose for you.
- 3) God is still and always sovereign, whether the result of your obedience ends in triumph or in tragedy.

Food for Thought:

- 1) What are the lessons of this text for our own testimony in this day and age?
- 2) Why would it have been easy for the Hebrews to bend a little?
- 3) Why does God sometimes allow us to go through trials like this?
- 4) What other biblical examples can you think of which demonstrate a similar strong testimony?