

20:20 Vision Ministries -- Devotions by Roger Browning Week 24 (June 9-15, 2013)

Some of the most familiar miracles in the Old Testament are found in the Book of Daniel. This prophetic book will be the source of our studies this week.

Sunday -- June 9 (Daniel 3:1-7)

King Nebuchadnezzar is an Old Testament picture of the end-times antichrist. Unlike the future world ruler, however, he responds to truth when he finally understands it, as we will see later in our study. In today's text the egotistic king places a 90' golden image on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon (v. 1). He commands his leaders to come to the dedication of the statue (v. 2-3). They are ordered to bow down and worship the image as soon as they hear the sound of all kinds of musical instruments (v. 4-5). Anyone who fails to bow down will be thrown into the blazing furnace (v. 6). As soon as the music starts, all of the leaders follow the king's command, all except three young Jews who will be the main focus in our study tomorrow.

Monday -- June 10 (Daniel 3:8-12)

The Jews have been hated throughout history. Only God's hand of protection has kept them from extinction. The Bible says that they will never cease to be a nation as long as the sun, moon and stars exist (see Jeremiah 31:35-37). King Nebuchadnezzar's astrologers make their living by predicting the future through the movement of the stars, so it stands to reason that they would denounce the Jews because the God of Israel is the only One who can tell what is to come **without error** (v. 8). These astrologers tattle to Nebuchadnezzar that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego did not bow down according to his command (v. 9-12). I am thankful that three young men had enough faith to stand up against the gods of their era. I pray that today's young people will be able to stand up against liberal college professors and other powerful people who seek to lead them away from worshipping the one true God.

Tuesday -- June 11 (Daniel 3:13-18)

Nebuchadnezzar calls for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to verify their disobedience to his command (v. 13-14). Then, he gives them one more chance to bow down before the image of gold. He challenges the God of Israel by asking, "What god will be able to rescue you from my hand" (v. 15)? I love the answer the three young Jews give to the king's question. They acknowledge that their God is able to deliver them from the flames of the fiery furnace, "**but even if He does not**, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up" (v. 16-18, emphasis mine). What faith and courage in the face of certain death! I believe the Church will suffer some physical persecution before God calls her home in the rapture. I pray that we will be able to stand up for Jesus in the same way these three young men stand for their God in this Old Testament account.

Wednesday -- June 12 (Isaiah 43:1-2, 4)

In yesterday's devotions, we found that the Hebrew children put everything on the line when they answered King Nebuchadnezzar. Perhaps they were familiar with today's text written by the prophet Isaiah. God assures Israel that He created them as a nation; therefore, they have nothing to fear because they are His (v.1). He uses the word "**when**," not if, to describe His future protection. He forewarns Israel that they **will** pass through the waters and the rivers, but His Presence will never leave them. "**When** you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze" (v. 2). What a promise! Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego cannot be sure that God will keep them from going through the fire, but they can rest assured of His protection. How about you? Have you felt like you are going through the fire? God will go through the fire with you because you are precious and honored in His sight and because He loves you (v. 4). Praise His holy Name!

Thursday -- June 13 (Daniel 3:19-25)

Nebuchadnezzar loses his respect for the three Hebrew children in a hurry when they refuse to bow down to his man-made god of gold (v. 19). He orders that the furnace be heated seven times hotter than usual and commands his strongest soldiers to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the fiery furnace (v. 20). The flames are so hot that the soldiers are killed as they throw the Jews into the fire (v. 21-23). Nebuchadnezzar cannot believe his eyes! As soon as the three young men reach the bottom of the furnace, the king sees a **Fourth Man** in the fire (v. 24-25). This is the fulfillment of God's promise. Even if you go into the fire, His Son, Jesus, will go in with you. He will never leave you or forsake you (see Hebrews 13:5). **You can trust His promises!**

Friday -- June 14 (Daniel 3:26-30)

Nebuchadnezzar calls Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego out of the fire (v. 26). Upon close examination, the king's men find that there is no evidence that these Jews went into the fire. Their bodies are not burned; their hair is not singed; their robes are not scorched, and there is no smell of fire on them (v. 27). King Nebuchadnezzar makes his second declaration of faith in the God of Israel (v. 28; see also 2:47). How I wish that the Christians of today could be strong enough to stand up against all the unbiblical rulings coming from our politically correct government leaders. We have not only the promises of Isaiah, but also the entire New Testament full of assurances of His Presence. If only our government would take a stand for the true and living God (v. 29)! God's representatives could become a powerful force in formulating laws that do not violate His infallible Word (v. 30).

Saturday -- June 15 (1 Corinthians 3:10-15)

I want to close the week with a reminder that your faith will be put through the fire of testing. Those of us who build on the foundation of Jesus Christ will be **refined** by the fire just as gold, silver and costly stones are (v. 12). Those who build on any other foundation, no matter how sincere they may be, will not survive the coming trials. Jesus entered our world to snatch us from the fires of hell. How sad it will be for those who have never invited the Fourth Man to go through the fires of this old world with them. May you not sleep until you know that Jesus lives in your heart!