

DCF 040721 Dan 3:1-15

Who do we obey – the king or God?

Dan 3:1 Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its width six cubits. He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.

We saw at the end of Dan 2 that Neb praises God. ***Dan 2:47 “Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret.”*** But pride had overcome him. He made a whole statue of gold, to proclaim that his empire would never be conquered and succeeded by the silver, bronze and iron empires. It is so easy to slip back into the old ways. Satan uses pride, sloth, idolatry, lies, selfishness, people and anything else to cause us to forsake our determination to follow God. His sneakiest tricks are to use good things. Like when Abraham’s servant has found Rebekah as a bride for Isaac. They were ready to leave but Laban and their mother say in ***Gen 24:55 “Let the young woman stay with us a few days, at least ten; after that she may go.”***⁵⁶ ***And he said to them, “Do not hinder me, since the LORD has prospered my way; send me away so that I may go to my master.”*** It seemed reasonable to let her stay, but Satan would have used the pause to change their mind. A common strategy of attack is used by Satan when he attacks us on several different fronts – we need to be ready.

The image continued the flattering thought that Neb’s empire was gold. The image was 26.64 m high. 1 cubit = 444mm. The image was probably gold plated, but even that would have cost a lot. Idols do cost a lot while people starve.

Dan 3:2 ² And King Nebuchadnezzar sent word to gather together the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. ³ So the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered together for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

Neb demands that all the officials demonstrate their loyalty to him. A Satrap was the Persian word for ‘protector of the realm’. These leaders needed to treat him as a god, or die. No one was excused. The orchestra was impressive so that no one was excusable. The people obviously feared and respected the commands of the king. They obeyed his orders.

This raises the question: when is it right to disobey the government? When is the government overstepping the mark in demanding loyalty and obedience. We need wisdom to see the spiritual implications of obedience and disobedience in the flesh. Jesus heals on the sabbath – because God’s law and God’s heart, overrule civil law. We saw in John 5 the result of when Jesus heals the man at the pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath, and then claimed God as His Father. ***John 5:18 ¹⁸ Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.*** He overrides the law when He releases the woman caught in adultery. ***John 8:11 And Jesus said to***

her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more." Lev 20:10 ... the adulterer and the adulteress, shall surely be put to death.

Paul teaches in **Rom 13:1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.** In Acts 15 the church is divided over circumcision being essential for salvation. **Acts 15:1 "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."** That rule is abandoned.

Then in Acts 4:18 Peter and John are commanded **not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.** ¹⁹ **But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge.** ²⁰ **For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."** So, the ultimate authority is God. Our behavior must place the kingdom of God and His will, as a priority. God looks at our heart, for the reason behind our actions. **Jer 17:10 I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.**

One further example is in Exodus 1 when the Hebrew midwives are instructed by the king of Egypt: **if it is a son you shall kill him. (v16).** Now the midwives do not obey the king, but lie to him. **Ex 1:17** ¹⁷ **But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the male children alive.** ¹⁸ **So the king of Egypt called for the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this thing, and saved the male children alive?"** ¹⁹ **And the midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are lively and give birth before the midwives come to them."** ²⁰ **Therefore God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied and grew very mighty.** So, God approved of their action, even though it was a lie. Our God looks at our heart.

When we pray for wisdom, we learn to separate the spirit from the flesh. Rules are good, but the first and highest commandment is **Mark 12:30 ...you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.** See and note, our heart takes priority. Then comes our soul or person. Who we become is defined by what we are born into, plus our trials plus our spirit. These are the three witness in **1 John 5:8** ⁸ **And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood;...**

Dan 3:4 ⁴ **Then a herald cried aloud: "To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages,** ⁵ **that at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up;** ⁶ **and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."**

How many images do we worship in our community? An idol is something or someone we place in priority before God. It is anything that takes our time, career, cars, friends and family, pets, entertainment, sporting team, gadgets, clothes, money, food, pride, priority from God. These things can be in our lives, but they must not push God out of first place. Even health and safety

can become a priority in place of God. **Col 3:5** ⁵ *Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.* ⁶ *Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience,* ⁷ *in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.*

Sometimes our image in the community is an idol. We want people to see us as important. You can spot idols if any criticism is received with anger. Try criticizing abortion, or porn, or LGBT, or smoking ceremonies in public. Sometimes good causes can be idolatry.

It is a political ruse used by politicians to pretend they are Christians. They will do anything to win a vote. We saw that in Biden who openly supports abortion, and the LGBTQ movement and yet, goes to church. Putin is also reported as going to Church. 3/3/20 BBC News: **Russian President Vladimir Putin wants marriage to be defined as the union of a man and woman in a revised constitution, ruling out gay marriage.**

22/2/19: Putin often invokes the Russian Orthodox Church in his public speeches, giving the church a much more prominent place in Russian political life than under his predecessors.



We notice here mind control. We see it in North Korea, where everyone claps so well. On 30/8/18 Ri Yong Jin was executed after he dozed off during a meeting presided over by Kim Jong Un. We see it here in WA, when the Media failed to report on a rally against abortion, at Parliament House by over 3000 people. Smoking ceremonies are another example of demonic worship. There is an evil spirit behind the deception, which is the devil. Our only defence is to soak ourselves in the Word of God. Our primary loyalty is not to Australia, nor Aussie culture, nor DCF but to God. Thy KINGDOM come.

Dan 3:7 ⁷ *So at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the horn, flute, harp, and lyre, in symphony with all kinds of music, all the people, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the gold image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.*

Music is a very powerful component of worship – used by satan and God. Music has a definite place in heaven. Rev 5:8 talking about the 24 elders ... ***the 24 elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp*** ... We see the satanic affect when pop-concert crowds raise their hands and sway to words that have nothing to do with the worship of the one and only true God.

1 John 4:3 ... every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. The danger is that people are sucked in by the seemingly harmless act and innocent song to accept the spirit behind the singer.

Martin Iles: Truth is most offensive when it is most relevant.

Daniel 3:8⁸ Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and accused the Jews.⁹ They spoke and said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever!¹⁰ You, O king, have made a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the gold image;¹¹ and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.¹² There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up."

There has been hatred of the Jews throughout history. In last week's homework I showed you a map of Psalm 83, where the enemies had said v4 ***"Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be remembered no more."*** This hatred for God's people – Jews and Christians, comes from satan's hatred of God. He knows his time is short. ***Rev 12:12 For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."***

There would have been hundreds of leaders in the empire, but these Jews were spied on and dobbed in. Their enemies looked for an opportunity to attack them, especially as they had been promoted to high positions. These 3 men did not lodge any protest, they simply refused to worship the image. Their actions were not public, but neither was it a secret. Barnabas Fund has regular prayer requests for Christian families who are spied on and persecuted. Supporting and funding our brothers and sisters in these countries must be a priority in how we spend our money.

Dan 3:13¹³ Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. So they brought these men before the king.¹⁴ Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up?¹⁵ Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, good!

Neb was furious. He had already acknowledged God when Daniel interpreted his dream. But power and pride had consumed him. He could not back down, without seeming powerless and foolish. Even though he had acknowledged God after the dream, he had not walked with Him. The world seduces us away from God if we make no effort to maintain a walk with Him. John 15:4 ⁴ ***Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.***

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego maintained their stand for God. It is one thing to make a stand for God, but then when we are pressed, it takes a lot of courage to still stand.

King David begins his reign, standing strong for God. He then commits adultery with Bathsheba, murders Uriah, after lying to him. But he repents. Elijah prays and stops the rain for 3 years, sees miracles and life restored. But flees for his life in fear of Jezebel. Peter stood strong for Jesus, and witnessed miracles. But after following Jesus on the day of His arrest, he denies his Lord 3 times.

I think a possible difference is that there were 3 men in this event. It is desperately important for us to strengthen one another. **1 Thess 5:11** ¹¹ ***Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.*** The word 'comfort' is also translated 'encourage' (parakaleite). Fellow Christians are our family. It is an alarming reality that we fail continually. But as we share our fears and failures, we can also encourage each other.

But then Neb gives the 3 men an opportunity to obey. He asks: 'is it true?' This is also an opportunity for Satan to undo their courage. To stand is one thing. But to keep on standing is tougher. **Eph 6:13 .. and having done all, to stand.** It is not the time to relax. Heb 12:1 tells us to .. ***lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.***

Dan 3:15 But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?"

The very first commandment is **Ex 20:3 *You shall have no other gods before Me.*** They were teenagers when they had been captured, but their parents had taught them well. Somehow, by their words and their example, their parents had engraved on their hearts, the law of God.

I remember 2 things mainly about Gran. One was: she cried when the Cisco Kid was on TV. I understood years later, the heads of the 4 chiefs in Ipoh Malaya, were on the 4 corners of the main street of town, when the Japanese conquered the country. The second thing was her Bible was open in the lounge, she read it always. There are seeds that you plant in children and grandchildren and students, that may take years to grow. But plant them for Jesus.

The pride of the king is blatant. He asks: ***And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?"*** Neb is about to have his question answered.

Last Hymn: Abide in Me

Homework for Dan 3:1-15:

- 1 S, M and A disobey the king. Are there rules you feel compelled to challenge today?
- 2 What does it mean to love God with all your heart?
- 3 Can you think of politicians who have professed to be Christians, just to get the Christian votes?
- 4 In Ex 1 the midwives lie, and yet God rewards them. Why?
- 5 God has given you some close friends. How can you build them up?
- 6 Is there anything about your walk with God that you have inherited from your parents, and what have you passed on?

Order of Service:

1. Welcome:

This service is recorded as we are limited to 20 people and masks are mandatory. For the hymns please click on the link OR copy and paste the link. Skip any adverts. Pause to pray.

2. Open Prayer: Let us open in prayer: Lord we want to thank you that nothing can stop us coming to You. Thank You for always being accessible to us. Thank you for making us alive in the Spirit so that we are not limited in the flesh – with lockdowns and masks.

- The sick. We pray for those who are sick. Allow God to bring people to your mind. We pray for healing for them.
- The lonely. We pray too for the lonely – especially in these Covid times, with lockdowns. We pray against depression and loneliness. We thank you for phones and emails, so that we can maintain contact. Help us Lord to reach out to them.
- Those suffering financially. We pray too Lord for those whose incomes have been affected by Covid. We pray that they will be covered and protected in these times.
- Us to learn from Daniel. We pray Lord too that we will learn whatever Your Spirit wants to teach us from the studies in Daniel. We break down every barrier that would block us from learning and coming to You. Thank You Lord, that Your Word is always full of wisdom for us.

Amen

3 Song: O Praise the Name – I cast my mind.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LqBpifDpNKc>

Pause to pray a prayer of praise.

4 Song: Tell out my Soul

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qf3mgRUZkAk>

Pray for an alertness and courage and determination to speak out for Jesus.

5 Collection: Thank God for supplying all our needs, so that in this land we have food and shelter. Ask for Him to guide our finances, to build His kingdom.

6 Hymn: Praise my Soul the King of Heaven

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6-W74SzQZe0>

What words caught your attention? “His grace and favour?”, “well our feeble frame...”, one day we will “behold Him face to face”. Pray as God leads you.

7 Prayers:

Pause to pray:

- for those from DCF that God brings to your mind,
- For our government,
- For our prodigals,
- For Darlington and the suburb you live in,

- For your family and friends,
- Ask God to bring people to your mind – pray for them.
- Ask God what barriers need broken – Smash them in Jesus' name.
- Ask God to show you what sins need confessing – confess and accept His forgiveness.

8 Song: Great is Thy Faithfulness

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ErwiBz1QA4o>

Praise God for His faithfulness

9 Song: When we all get to heaven

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4EO87D4AM9k>

Pray rejoicing for this great hope – when we all get to heaven.

10 Prayer for sermon

Lord we pray for your anointing as we open the Word of God. We pray for others who are listening or reading the sermon – that Your Holy Spirit will teach us wonderful things.

11 Sermon: Click on the sermon or read the notes.

12 Final song: Abide with me

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_7rrg_jP-Hc

Abide with Me Lyrics

Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide;
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see—
O Thou who changest not, abide with me.

I need Thy presence every passing hour;
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's pow'r?
Who, like Thyself, my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.

I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless;
 Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness;
 Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
 I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.

Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;
 Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies;
 Heav'n's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
 In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

The Story Behind Abide With Me

Henry Lyte was left an orphan at the age of nine and was taken in by a kind Irish minister named Dr. Robert Borrowes. Even though Dr. Borrowes had five children of his own, he took Henry in and paid for his schooling. Henry followed in Dr. Borrowes footsteps and attended Trinity College in Dublin, where he won prizes and scholarships for poetry. Henry graduated in 1814 and became an ordained minister of the Church of England.

Henry overworked himself taking care of the sick and soon had to visit France to regain health. Henry and his wife Anna spent their days caring for the sick and needy every single day and visiting warmer France in the winter. Henry became ill with tuberculosis and was not expected to live much longer. At the age of 45, Henry prepared a farewell speech for the morning of September 4, 1847 which included the lyrics of Abide With Me. Henry Lyte passed away 10 weeks after preaching his farewell sermon.

13 Prayer:

Lord, like Daniels friends, sometimes we face circumstances that are too big to handle. And we know of people who are in those circumstances. In these times we pray:

Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;
 Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies;
 Heav'n's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
 In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

All we want is your presence in all we do. So, I pray for all those listening to this service, that your presence with them will be real. Amen