

COUNTERFEITS

Convictions over Counterfeits

Daniel 3

Bow to the Music

Daniel 3:4-7 (KJV) 4 Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, 5 That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up: 6 And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. 7 Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of musick, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

- Daniel 3 opens with King Nebuchadnezzar; he had conquered many nations from Babylon to Egypt
- King Nebuchadnezzar had a gold statue built that was 90 feet tall and nine feet wide
- King Nebuchadnezzar issued a decree that when *all* the people of every nation and language heard the music, they would all *bow down and worship* the golden image he had set up
- And whoever does not *bow down and worship* the golden image shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace
- As you can see, King Nebuchadnezzar ruled by fear, you either did what he said, or you suffered the consequences, there were no other options
- When the people began to *hear* the music play, all the people, from every nation and language fell down and worshipped the golden image
- This group of so called “worshippers” help us better understand how believers can yield to the pressure of spiritual counterfeits
 - Like the people in Babylon, many people just “follow the crowd” and build their lives on a *faulty and false* foundation
 - They’ll follow almost anyone or do almost anything in order to survive
- Unbelievers and *some believers* bow and worship to the “music” because they fear man *more* than we fear God ***Proverbs 29:25 (KJV) The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.***

Your Convictions Will Make YOU Stand Out

Daniel 3:10-12 (KJV) 10 Thou, O king, hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, shall fall down and worship the golden image: 11 And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. 12 There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

- Thousands of people from every nation, every culture and language are “bowing and worshipping” the golden image
- All the king’s royal cabinet is bowing and worshipping *except* three men
- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego *heard* the music, but are not bowing and worshipping because they don’t worship idols and false gods, they *only* worship the true *and* living God
- Their convictions to live for and serve only God were *public*

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- Even though they have been exiled from Israel, they were not trying to *blend in* with the culture
- They knew the law of God from **Exodus 20**; ***“Thou shall have no other gods before Me... You shall not bow down to them or serve them”***
- Some of the king’s advisors *noticed* that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were not bowing and worshipping the king’s golden image
- These advisors saw this an opportunity to make the lives of these three young men difficult
- They wanted to make their lives difficult because they weren’t bowing, but also because they were jealous of them
- They went on to tell the king that *those Israelites* that you promoted over all the affairs of Babylon government Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are disobeying your decree
- *Standing for God will make you stand out*
 - As a Christian with spiritual convictions, it’s *impossible* to go through life and not stand out
- What will you do when your stand for God makes you the target of the enemy?

Will You Stand or Will You Bow?

13 Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king, 14 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? 15 Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?"

- Nebuchadnezzar went into a rage and ordered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought to him
- It’s one thing to *take a stand* for God, it’s a greater thing to *stick to your stand* when you’re asked directly is it true?
- King Nebuchadnezzar asked them ***“Is it true*** that you don’t serve my gods nor worship the golden image I have set up?
- Can you stick to your stand for God when your faith is challenged, when you’re criticized, when you’re talked about, etc.?
- King Nebuchadnezzar said I want to give you a 2nd chance; so when you hear the music fall down and worship the golden image I have made and all will be well
- The king said if you don’t worship the golden image, you will be cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace,
- We can imagine the pressure on Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego to compromise and bow to the king’s demands
- It would have been easy for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to make “an excuse” for bowing
- It’s “easy” for us to make excuses for bowing to false gods, too
- True spiritual convictions don’t look for “excuses and loopholes”, it simply obeys God’s commands and promises knowing that God will do what’s best for us

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- King Nebuchadnezzar said to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and who is that God that can deliver you out of my hands?
- Nebuchadnezzar was basically saying his power was greater than God's
- The world can make things difficult for you when you take a stand for God
- How will you answer when the heat is on?

Even if He Doesn't...We Will Not Bow

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. 17 If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. 18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

- Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego told the king it is not even necessary to answer you at this point
- The God that we serve *is able* to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, **and** He will deliver us out of thine hand, O King
- Our faith convictions don't yield to outside pressure
 - They speak this way because their convictions are a sign of their *spiritual maturity* ***Ephesians 4:14 (NLT) 14 Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth.***
- The three Hebrew young men said, "even if He doesn't, O King, we will not serve your gods, nor worship the golden image you have set up"
- Their *faith stand* in God was unwavering regardless of what happens to them
- They *knew* God's power, but they also knew that they must do what's right even if God did not do what they expect or hope He would do
- We too, must refuse to bow to the false, "counterfeit gods" of this world, the false gods of compromise, popularity, materialism, power, pleasure, or comfort
- Faith in God is not based on positive outcomes, but it's based on an unwavering trust in God regardless of the outcome
- Real faith focuses on the object of our faith and not the outcomes of our faith
- God wants us firm in our faith in spite of the threats, intimidation and the ridicule ***Psalm 57:7 (KJV) "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed:..."***

A Friend in the Fire

23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. 24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. 25 He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego rejected the king's offer of saving their lives if they bowed to the music

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- King Nebuchadnezzar got so upset that his face began to change colors and he ordered that the furnace be heated up seven times hotter than normal
- He commanded soldiers from his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, hand and foot
- Because the fire was so hot, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego should have died almost *instantly*
- King Nebuchadnezzar was astounded and jumped to his feet and said to his leaders didn't we cast 3 men in the fire?
- King Nebuchadnezzar said I see *four* men; *loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt*
- When you stand on your convictions, when you stand in in faith, you'll discover you have a *friend* in the fire!
- That's good news for us because whenever we suffer for our faith we will *never, ever* suffer alone
- Jesus does not leave us when there is trouble, but He is right there in the midst of trouble, regardless of how hot the trouble is ***Matthew 28:20 (KJV) "... and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."***
- King Nebuchadnezzar came to the mouth of burning fiery furnace and said to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, you servants of the *Most High God* come out and come here
- Notice God did not "put out" the fire nor did He "lift" the 3 Hebrew young men out of the flames
- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego *walked out* of the midst of the fire
- All the king's officials gathered around them and they saw for themselves not a hair on their head was singed, their clothes did not smell like smoke, and the fire had no power
- The king and all his official saw God in the fire
- Not only do we see *God* in the fire, unbelievers see *Him* as well
- What impresses unbelievers is when they see us going through trials without wavering in our stand for God
- You and I can have the same impact in our families, our jobs, or communities when we take an unwavering stand for God in faith
- King Nebuchadnezzar said himself, ***"There is no other God who can deliver this way!"***
- ***When You Stand for Jesus... You Never Stand Alone***