

Ministry on Daniel 2-11 in several ministries

Part 2

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Note: This text is a computer generated transcript of the sermon. In some cases it may contain errors.

[00:00:01] The third chapter of Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold whose height was three score cubits and the breadth thereof six cubits. He set it up in the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the councillors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the councils, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Then a herald cried aloud, to you it is commanded, O people, natures, and languages, that at what [00:01:01] time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sax, basque, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up. And whoso falleth not down and worshipeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. Therefore at that time when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sax, basque, psaltery, and all kinds of music, all the people, the nations, and the languages fell down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near and accused the Jews, and they spake and said unto the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live forever. Thou, O king, hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sax, basque, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship [00:02:06] the golden image. And whoso falleth not down and worshipeth that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. 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. Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? Do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? Now, if ye be ready, that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackcloth, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship [00:03:06] the image which I have made well. But if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is that god that shall deliver you out of my hands? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. 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. 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.

Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the fall of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Therefore he spake and commanded that they should heat the furnace one [00:04:01] seven times more than was wont to be heated. And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to mine Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosem, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Therefore, because the king's command was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. We'll read as far as there now, we'll read the other later on. I want to turn back now for a minute without losing the place, to the 36th chapter of Jeremiah. [00:05:06] Now excuse me, it's the 29th chapter of Jeremiah I should have said. The 29th chapter of Jeremiah. Here we have a word from the prophet Jeremiah, in verse 20. Hear ye therefore the word of the Lord, all ye of the captivity, whom I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel. Of Ahab the son of of Coliah, and of Zedekiah the son of Matthias, which prophesied, lie unto you in my name. Behold, I will deliver them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and he shall slay them before your eyes. It says Nebuchadnezzar, it's just another way of saying the same name. Sometimes he's called Nebuchadnezzar, and sometimes he's called Nebuchadnezzar. [00:06:04] Verse 22, and of them shall be taken up a curse by all, by all the captivity of Judah, which are in Babylon, saying, the Lord make thee like Zedekiah, and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire, because they have committed villainy in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbor's wives, and have spoken lying words in my name, which I have not commanded them, even I know, and am a witness, saith the Lord. Now I read this, as you can see, it's very evident that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were not the only ones who came under the king's displeasure, and were cast into a burning furnace. Apparently these two men, of whom Jeremiah speaks, they also were treated in a similar way.

[00:07:01] They were roasted in the fire. Such was the so-called justice that was meted out in those days. But with this great difference, in our chapter tonight, we find that these three men, who were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace, were cast in because of their faithfulness to the Lord. But these two mentioned here, Ahab and Zedekiah, of course this isn't the kings of that name, but two other men of that name, who were false prophets, and who had prophesied false things, and also had done many things against the Lord, and rebelled against the Lord. The Lord allowed them in his chastening upon the people of Israel, and his judgment on these two men for what they did, the Lord allowed them also to be cast into [00:08:01] the fire. But they were not delivered, whereas the men in our chapter were delivered. And here we have the difference between these who were faithful to the Lord, and those who were not faithful to the Lord. Of course this doesn't mean to say that the Lord always delivers out of the hand of the difficult things. Sometimes the Lord has allowed those who've been put through persecutions like this to perish, and we have to accept whatever is God's will in the matter. But there's no doubt, there is a very definite lesson in the different treatment we find the Lord allow to these two men, between the two and the three. Because although the three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, are cast into this fire, we find the Lord delivering them out of it, as we shall see. Now, to get the background of our chapter tonight, when we come to this third chapter [00:09:02] of the book of Daniel, as we have it pointed out here on the chart, we have the enforced worship of the image. Nebuchadnezzar makes this golden image. I'm inclined to think that because of this wonderful dream that God gave Nebuchadnezzar, that we saw last week, Wednesday night, in the second chapter, God in his wondrous grace had let Nebuchadnezzar, had given Nebuchadnezzar this dream of this golden image, of this image with the head of gold, which really portrayed the whole time of the Gentiles. Instead of Nebuchadnezzar learning the lesson from this, and realizing that God

had put him in this position, and that was for him to humble himself before God and realize that he received this kingdom from the hand of God. Instead of that, he becomes vain in his imaginations. And instead of turning [00:10:04] to worship the Lord, Nebuchadnezzar continues to worship gods, to worship idols. And not only that, he gets the idea, possibly from this very image that he's seen, of building a huge image of gold, and setting it up there in the midst of his kingdom, and ordering everyone in his dominions, at the time that they hear all of this music being played, to fall down and worship the golden image. And so it says that he made this image of gold, whose height was three square cubits, and whose width was six cubits, the breadth thereof was six cubits. That is, this image was about 100 feet tall, 100 feet high, and about 10 feet wide, and an image of gold. Think of the [00:11:06] cost of it. Think of the value of a thing like that. And this huge image was set up. We might say it was Nebuchadnezzar's crowning idolatry, to set up an idol and to order everyone in his dominions to worship the idol. You know, men, dictators, men who were in a position of authority like Nebuchadnezzar, and many others since, have realized what has been called the unifying influence of religion. That if people can all be brought to believe in only one religion, even though it's a false religion, that that will enable them, the political rulers, to have a greater hold over them. And possibly that's what Nebuchadnezzar realized. But he didn't realize [00:12:01] that Satan is at the back of idolatry. This was really, it was really a work of Satan. The devil was at the back of this. And it was an endeavor to blot out God's testimony that he was giving through Israel. Although Israel had been set aside by God, that is, Jerusalem had been destroyed, and the people of Israel had been carried captive into Babylon, yet God's testimony was still with the godly remnants even there in Babylon. Possibly a mass of the Jews in Babylon were unfaithful to the Lord. And these two, whom the Lord allowed to be roasted in the fire, they represent the unfaithful ones, and those who prophesied lies. But there were the faithful ones. God had a faithful remnant, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and others who were faithful to the Lord. And in the midst of all the corruptions of Babylon, they determined to be faithful. [00:13:04] And so this is where the test comes. And beloved, all these things are a great lesson to us, because in all ages we find there's been a great departure, but God always looks for those who will be faithful. And those who are faithful are always found in the minority. When we were laboring in South America, where it was all Roman Catholicism around us, sometimes they'd say to us, you people must be wrong, and the Roman Catholic Church must be right, because why is it there are so few of you, and there are so many of us? And we used to say, well, if you read the Bible, you will find out that those who stood for the truth have always been in the minority. And it's far better to be with the few to the right than to be with the many that are wrong. And isn't that always true? God's truth is always with the few. We never find God's truth has been with the many. And but it needs a great deal of grace to go on faithfully, and the Lord [00:14:07] gives it to those who are willing to stand for his precious truth. Now it tells us here in our on our chart that the enforced worship of the image and the preserved remnant are typical of the abomination of desolation and of the faithful remnant in the time of the end. That is what we see here is a little picture of what is going to happen after the Lord, after this present church age is completed, and the Lord comes, after the Lord comes to take his church away. It's a picture of what will take place during those seven years that have yet to run their course, the latter half of which is called in scripture the Great Tribulation. And this will be one of the stages of Gentile, Gentile and Jewish apostasy will be the setting up of an image. In fact we have [00:15:05] two things. We have the setting up of the image here, and the endeavor to force, to force universal worship of the image. But when we come over to the sixth chapter, we find here something that's even worse we might say than the setting up of the image. We find the deification of man, because here the order is that the king is to be worshipped, and those who don't worship the king are to be cast into the den of lions. We might ask the question, where was Daniel when these three men were cast into the burning fiery furnace? We might also ask, where was Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego when Daniel was cast into the den of lions? We don't

know. But I'm sure there's one thing that we can be absolutely certain of. [00:16:04] Daniel did not bow down to that image, nor did Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego worship the king. But for some reason or other they do not come to the front. Perhaps Daniel was in a position, because, perhaps it was because of the position he occupied that he was not obliged to fall down to the image. He may have been sent to another part of the king's great dominions at that time, and so was not there. But we can be pretty sure that if Daniel was there, he certainly would have been there with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. And similarly, when we come over to the time of the lion's den, of course this is a good many years later. Daniel is here an old man, whereas here Daniel is a young man. But still, in both instances, we find the remnant is faithful and preserved of God, and that is typical of the faithful remnant of Israel whom God will preserve [00:17:01] during the time of the great tribulation. Now I want to turn over to a verse, first of all, in the end of the book of Daniel, the last chapter. It mentions there, in the 11th verse, Daniel 12 and verse 11, from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. I read this verse because it refers here to the abomination that maketh desolate. Now let's turn over to the Gospel of Matthew. And in the 24th chapter of Matthew, [00:18:02] we have here an outline of what will take place in the land of Israel after the Lord takes the church away.

It says in verse 7, nations shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, there shall be famines and pestilences and earthquakes in diverse places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted and shall kill you, and you shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended and shall betray one another and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come. This isn't referring to the [00:19:01] gospel of God's grace that we preach now. This is the gospel of the kingdom, that God's faithful witnesses, the true Jehovah's witnesses, not the false ones that we have now, the true Jehovah's witnesses will be the godly remnant of Israel who will preach the gospel of the kingdom in that day. And there'll be a witness to all nations. Verse 15, when ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, whoso readeth, let him understand. Then let them which be in Judea flee to the mountains, and let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house. Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days. But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day. For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world till this time, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be [00:20:07] saved. But for the elect's sake, those days shall be shortened. Now I read this because it refers here to the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, which we saw in the last chapter of Daniel. And in scripture, an abomination is always an idol. The Lord, whatever the Lord refers, uses the word an abomination, it means an idol. And this is speaking of an idol that is going to be set up in Jerusalem, in the place where the Lord should be worshipped. Now from other scriptures we learn that after the Lord takes the church away, he's going to begin working again with Israel. Now we have lived to see the nation of Israel established in their own land. A thing that the prophetic writers of the last century said had [00:21:05] to take place from scripture, so that there could be Jews there in the land of Israel, in order for these things to be fulfilled. We've lived to see that first step. And we can see that the stage is set, we might say, for what will take place the moment the Lord were to come. Supposing the Lord were to come tonight and to take away the church, catch us to be with himself, as we have in 1 Thessalonians 4. Can't we see how very easily,

very quickly, things could develop there in Israel? The nation's already there. The people already recognize them as a nation. God would begin to exercise some of these Jews there who've not heard the gospel of God's grace, and they'll be converted. The work of God's Spirit will begin among them. There'll be a moving among the dry bones, and they'll come together, as Ezekiel tells us. God will work in Israel, [00:22:02] and souls will be saved there. But there will be the great mass of the Jews who will run after Antichrist. And we find that eventually, we'll see this in a little more detail as we go further on in the book, but eventually an idol will be set up there in the holy place, because the head of the Roman Empire will allow the Jews to re-establish their religion. That's why you can see that this is referring to Jews in the land of Israel. It refers to the holy place, and to Judea, and the Sabbath day. You see, they're back in their land, they're keeping the Sabbath, they have the temple built, and they have their sacrifices being offered in the temple. And those that are godly among them will realize the spiritual background of these things. But in the middle [00:23:02] of that week, that seven years that's yet to run, the sacrifice will come to an end.

The religious, the political leader in Rome, and the religious leader in Palestine will stop the sacrifices. And instead of that, an image will be set up. Now let us turn over to the 13th chapter of Revelation to fill this in. You say, well where do we get this? Where do we get that, that an image is going to be set up there? Well, we are told here that there's an abomination of desolation in Matthew. Now in Revelation 13, we get what coincides with this. Here in Revelation 13, we have the two beasts. We have, first of all, in the first verse, I stood upon the sand of the sea, and I saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his [00:24:01] horns ten crowns, and upon his head is the name of blasphemy. This is the political head of the revived Roman Empire. This man is typified further on in our, in our studies by this little horn.

When we get on to take up the account of these beasts here, we'll see this little horn that comes up, that speaks great swelling words against the Most High. Then we go on to verse 30, verse 11, and we have another beast. I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. This is the Antichrist. The first one is the, we might call him the anti-god, the beast, the Roman head, the political head of the revived Roman Empire. The second one will be the religious leader in Israel, and he will claim to be Christ. And you notice what it says of him. It says, he has two horns like a lamb. That is, he, he comes [00:25:08] along very innocent looking. You know, when people see a lamb, and they see a lamb with two horns on it, they think, why what? That's a, that's a nice innocent little lamb, because he, he's professing to be Christ. Christ is set forth in the book of Revelation as the lamb, right through, from the beginning to to the end of Revelation. The Lord Jesus is the lamb. This man comes up as a lamb, and if you just went by the appearance, you'd be deceived. Isn't that true today? You know, there are many anti-Christian systems in the world, and if you just went by the outward appearance, you'd be greatly deceived. Along comes the Christian scientists with all their lovely talk, you know, if you just got carried away by the appearance, you'd be deceived. Oh, but don't go by just by what, by your eyes. You listen to what they say. What, how does it say he talks? He looks like a lamb, but how [00:26:04] does he speak? It says he speak like a dragon. Ah, that's, that's where we get the, to learn really where the truth or where the error is. The Lord says of his people in the 10th of John, my sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. Yes, and you know, if we get, if we get our ears accustomed to listening to the shepherd's voice, beloved, we won't be deceived by the false voices. We'll discern. Do you know that the, that the sheep, that the sheep knows its master's voice and won't be deceived by any other? That's a well-known thing among, about sheep. The sheep knows the voice of its own shepherd. They say that in Palestine, when the, the shepherds are out on the Palestine hills, every shepherd has its own sheep. And at noontime, several shepherds with [00:27:03] their sheep will

gather together at a certain place, under a tree perhaps, and rest for the noon hour. And the sheep will all mingle together. But when the time comes for the shepherds to go off to their pastures again, one shepherd will stand, and he'll begin calling his sheep. And all of his sheep will separate themselves from the flock, and they'll go off after him. The other shepherd will call his sheep, they'll all go after him. The others will call his, and they'll all go after him. And so each shepherd will go off, and not a single sheep will go after the wrong shepherd. Each sheep knows the shepherd's voice. We need to know the shepherd's voice. How we need to read the word, how we need to be in prayer, how we need to be before the Lord, and become accustomed to the shepherd's voice. Why is it that so many people are led off after false things? It's because they don't [00:28:02] get, learn to know the shepherd's voice. And they don't discern. And when this man comes up, it says he'll speak like a dragon. Now notice what else it says about him. It says in verse 12, he exercises all the power of the first beast before him. And he causes the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he hath power to do in the sight of the beast, saying to them that dwell on the earth that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by the sword and did live. And he hath power to give life unto the image of the beast. That's not life in the sense of, of life as, as receiving life from God that we have. The margin says breath. That is, apparently, by some satanic means, he'll actually make this image speak. Perhaps by, perhaps [00:29:10] it'll be by a demon dwelling in the image and speaking. He'll give breath to the image of the beast and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand or in their foreheads, that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark or the name of the beast or the number of his name. Now we have three things here. We have, first of all, that he causes the people to worship the beast. Now that we're going to see in more detail when we come to this chapter, that will be the worship of man. The Antichrist will cause people to worship the Roman beast. But further than that, he will cause them to make an image to the beast [00:30:08] and to worship the image. And that's what we have typified here tonight in this, the worship of this abomination of desolation. They'll worship the image to this beast that is set up there in Jerusalem. And many, many will worship that image. But there'll be those who will be faithful and won't worship the image. What will happen to them? Well, some we know, as we read there in Revelation, there will be many of the Jews who will be reading their Bibles at that time. And when they see that abomination of desolation set up there in Jerusalem, they'll flee. They'll say, now that's the warning that God gives us in the book of Matthew. You know, we have two very remarkable scriptures in the New Testament with regard to Jerusalem. [00:31:03] The one is in the 24th of Matthew. The other is in the 21st of Luke. And if you'll carefully read, and I would counsel every one of us to read these portions at home to get the full benefit.

And to read the chapters in Daniel as we go along and even before the meeting on the chapter. But if you'll read carefully those two chapters, the 21st of Luke and the 24th of Matthew, you'll notice that they generally speaking deal with the same time. But there's a big difference.

Luke speaks about the destruction of Jerusalem back in the beginning of the Christian era.

Luke says, and Luke gives us the Lord's words to the Christians of that time, way back about 70 AD. He says, when you see Jerusalem compassed with armies, know that the desolation thereof is mine, and then let them which be in Judea flee to the mountains. And then it mentions there that the [00:32:07] Jews would be led captive unto all nations, and Jerusalem would be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And of course that's what's referred to here, the

times of the Gentiles, you see. And it's a matter of history that that's what took place.

That when Titus brought his armies against Jerusalem, he surrounded the city of Jerusalem with his armies. This was the year 70 AD. And the Christians that were in Jerusalem, when they saw the army, the Roman armies around the city, they said, this is just what the Lord said, we've got to flee. But how could they flee if Titus had the city besieged? Well, what happened was, history tells us this, there was some disturbance somewhere else, and Titus had to take his armies [00:33:03] away to quell this disturbance. The Christians had their sign, they fled. And history also says this, that when Titus came back shortly afterwards, and put his armies around the city again, there was not one Christian left in the city of Jerusalem. The city was besieged, the people were starved out until they were eating their own children, and finally when the city was taken, even though the Roman general had given orders not to touch Jerusalem, touch the temple, a soldier threw a firebrand into the temple and set fire to it, and the gold all ran in between the cracks of the stones, and the soldiers became so excited about getting this gold, that they tore the whole temple down. Even though the general had given orders for the temple not to be torn down, the Lord's word, the Lord had said to his disciples, do you see these stones? Not one stone shall be left upon [00:34:04] another that shall not be thrown down. And that's exactly what happened. And as the Lord said, the Jews shall be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. Well, some say, well, the times of the Gentiles must be fulfilled now because the Jews are back in the land. No, not yet. Jerusalem, the old city of Jerusalem is still trodden down of the Gentiles. Isn't that a remarkable thing? Although the Jews have a large slice of Israel, they still don't have the old city, because the times of the Gentiles are not fulfilled. And they will not be fulfilled until, after the Lord takes the church away.

I don't believe we're going to live to see Jerusalem, the old city of Jerusalem, in the hands of the Jews. It's still in the hands of the Arabs. The old part of the city of Jerusalem is still in the hands of the Gentiles. Now, that was what it mentions in Luke, but in Matthew, we don't find [00:35:06] it says anything about Jerusalem being encompassed with armies. In the portion that we read, it says when you see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, because Matthew is referring to what's yet future. Luke refers to, in Luke, God gave his sign to the faithful Christians in those days. In Matthew, the Lord gives the sign to the faithful Jews in the day that's yet future. Luke doesn't say anything about the Sabbath day, but Matthew mentions the Sabbath day because the Jews will be keeping the Sabbath day, as they're now keeping it in the land of Israel. So Matthew gives us the sign, and I believe that those that are in Jerusalem will flee the godly Jews in that future day, just the same as the Christians fled in the past day. But apparently there will be some who are not able to escape this. Will they then bow down to that image and [00:36:06] worship it? No. They'll be slain, rather than worship the image. And those are those, I believe, that we get mentioned there, whose souls are under the altar in the sixth chapter of Revelation, crying for vengeance. And the Lord says, you wait, there's still some of your fellow servants yet to be slain. And it tells us here that he causes all, both small and great. No, that's not it.

It says he'll cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast that they should be killed. There'll be those who'll be killed, but there'll be those who'll be preserved. And I believe that this, that these, to go back to our chapter now, and we'll read the rest of our chapter in Daniel, in the third chapter. These three men who are cast into the fiery furnace, they're a picture of those who'll be [00:37:07] preserved. Now it tells us, I think we read down to verse 21, didn't we? 22.

Well, we read to verse 23. Verse 24, then maybe you could measure 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. 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. Then maybe you could measure came near to the mouth of a burning fiery furnace and spake, and said Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came forth of the midst of the fire, [00:38:01] and the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was a hair of their head singed. Neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them. Then maybe you could measure spake and said, blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any God except their own God. Therefore I make a decree that every people, nation, and language which speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill, because there is no God that can deliver after this sort. Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon. You see, the Lord preserved these three men. It was a [00:39:04] wonderful miracle. It was a very definite miracle of the Lord. A furnace that is heated seven times hotter than it was that it's usually heated. So hot that the men that threw these three into the furnace were slain by the heat that came forth from that furnace. And yet those three men fell down in the furnace bound, and all the flames did was to burn the ropes that bound them, and free them. And what was more, the king says, he's absolutely amazed. He could apparently from where he was, see into that furnace. And he saw these three men walking around with some other person. And he says, the form of the fourth is like a son of the gods. The authorized version [00:40:05] says, the son of God. But Mr. Darby said, it really is in Hebrew, a son of the gods. Or in Chaldean is really the language that this part of Daniel is written in. That is, it was the son of God. There's no doubt that the one, the fourth person there, was the one that we know as the Lord Jesus Christ. But of course, the king didn't know him as that. He thought of him as some heavenly being. Apparently he could see that he was a different kind of a person. He says, the form of the fourth is like a son of the gods. And of course, we know who the one is. It was the Lord Jesus, with his people, in the midst of their trial. It's a wonderful comfort, beloved, isn't it? We have learned to know the preciousness of being gathered to the Lord's name, and knowing what it is to have the Lord in our midst. But you know, the Lord is in the midst of his people, even when they're going through great trials. And here these three men were cast into that furnace. The Lord [00:41:07] was with them, and he delivered them out of it. And this is a little picture of what will happen to the godly remnant of Israel in the great tribulation. They will refuse to bow down to that image. They will rather die, than dishonor their Lord by bowing down to that abomination that is set up there in Israel. And the Lord will deliver them. They will be brought through the tribulation.

The Lord will be with them in it, and he will deliver them out of it. And if some of them are not delivered and have to die, well, they will form part of the first resurrection. But these men, the way they answer, is always the answer of faith. They said, our God is able to deliver us, and he will deliver us out of our hand, naturally. Even if they perished in the flame, God was [00:42:02] delivering them out of the king's hand. He couldn't do any more to them, could he? Even if they died, they were delivered out of the king's hand. But if not, oh king, even if God doesn't deliver us out of your hand, even if you cast us into the fire and we perish, we still won't worship the image. There was no equivocation with these men. That's the language of faith. And it's referred to in Revelation, excuse me, in Hebrews 11. It speaks of those who by faith quench the violence of the flame. And I believe that that phrase refers to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. All was an example to us. Beloved brethren, isn't it true that

there are times when we are put to the test? We don't know how great a test we might be yet put to. Even Christians, even in this day, the Lord's people in Columbia, some of them, have been put to the test. A few years ago, [00:43:01] when that great persecution was going on among the saints in Columbia down there, Christians were told this. Their houses were invaded. The man, in some cases, the father of the house was brought out. And the representatives of Rome said to him, will you renounce the gospel? Will you have your children baptized in the Catholic Church? Will you go to Mass? And will you own that the offering of the Mass is the true body and blood of Christ? If you'll do that, we'll spare your life. If you won't do that, you'll be killed. And what did they answer? The majority of the Christians down there, there were a few who weakened and gave in, professing Christians, but those who were really the Lord's, they said, we'd rather die than deny our Lord. And in some instances, they were shot on the spot. There were instances down there of some of our dear brethren who were, the men were killed in the front of their wives and [00:44:02] children there. And then the wife was made to bury the grave, to dig the grave to bury the husband in. Just because they refused to bow down to an image was really what it amounted to.

And the result of that today is that we have such an interest in the gospel in Columbia. There's the old saying that the blood of Martha's is the seed of the church. And that's proving true. So these things are going on, even though it's not the day of the great tribulation. There are no doubt Christians in Russia who, rather than profess their belief in atheism, will die for their faith in Christ. And as I said, we don't know, even though we live in a land of great liberty, we don't know when these liberties might be taken from us. So let us see that we faithfully, we're faithful to the Lord, and we're willing to witness for him. And also, as we get a little picture of what's coming, let us not be surprised to see things developing the [00:45:03] way they are. God has given us the picture, beloved. So we have valuable, a valuable lesson for us to strengthen our faith today, as well as a picture of what is going to take place.

Man thinks that he's going to bring in a wonderful new world by all the great modern inventions. But God says that he is going to judge this world. This world yet has to answer to God for the murder of his beloved son, because that's what the world is guilty of, crucifying the Lord Jesus. And this world will never become, will never become great in God's sight until it's purged by judgment. And God is going to bring in the reign of Christ in his own way, but it's going to be brought in by judgment. But of course, in the present time, as long as the church is here, [00:46:02] God is still saving souls. God is not converting the world. He's calling out from the nations of people for his name. And so as long as we're here, the Lord would have us faithfully live for Christ in separation from what's displeasing to him, and he would have us to be a witness to those around us of the saving grace and the keeping power of our Lord Jesus Christ.