

Daniel

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[0 : 00] We will return to the book of Daniel, and we are engaging chapter 3. This particular passage deals with one of the most famous, I guess you could say, in all of Scripture, at least in all of the Old Testament.

And I want to inject just a few words about the miraculous before we get too far in the study. And that is, we've taken occasion in the past to point out that there is a progressiveness of revelation in the Scriptures, and perhaps between the Old Testament and the New, it is more pronounced, with the exception of the Gospels, and I'll try to explain that a little bit later, than it is anywhere.

And as we have noted, and I think this is very, very important to understand, that when creation got underway from the hands of our Creator, God's relationship and connection with His creatures was on a very face-to-face, personal kind of level, hands-on level, that we do not see today.

And this is by design, because humanity was in its infancy, as recorded in Genesis, when the human race really got underway.

And God dealt with individuals in a much more personal, hands-on, direct, confrontation, face-to-face way. We see that, of course, with Adam and Eve, and the relationship that existed there.

[1 : 44] Frankly, I cannot conceive of being a human being, and walking in the garden, daily, with my Creator.

That whole concept, you just can't get your mind around that. This is humanity in its earliest stages. And as you move on through the Scriptures, we find more of the same, with God confronting Abram, whose name was changed to Abraham, and the kind of relationship that existed there, and it extended on to other individuals, like Moses and so on, where God is in a face-to-face kind of situation.

And we talked a little bit about the Christophanies involved. And we see an interaction between the divine and the human in humanity's earliest stages that we do not see today.

I have never confronted God face-to-face. And my suspicion is you haven't either. That doesn't mean that God couldn't do it. It just means that while God Himself does not change, He is the immutable, eternal God, and nevertheless, His methodology changes.

His ways of doing things change, because the need for the change arises on the basis of what is happening in humanity, that He has created.

[3 : 19] So as you move through the Old Testament, we find one miraculous manifestation of God after another. And we could recount those with the children of Israel and Egypt, beginning with the plagues and the Red Sea crossing and the manna from heaven, the water from the rock.

All of these things were as face-to-face as you could get. And yet, as you move on through the Scriptures, while that is sustained in the history of Israel, in connection with the prophets and so on, and some of the miracles of Elijah and Elisha, etc., and you go through the four silent centuries between the Testaments, where no revelation from God was forthcoming, and you open the Gospels, we find a continuation of the supernatural, particularly beginning with the virgin conception of Christ, and the miracles that He produced that were designed to authenticate His claim to be Yeshua HaMashiach, the Messiah of Israel.

And all of this is very hands-on, very in-your-face, as it were. All of the miracles that Christ performed.

And then into the book of Acts, what did we find? We find a continuation of that. With the supernatural ability that Christ gave to the twelve apostles, we see in Matthew 10, He gave them authority, cast out demons, and heal the sick, and all the rest.

And that continues in the book of Acts. So that the dramatic thing that is added to it is the bodily, physical resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

[5 : 15] And that's got to be the absolute, ultimate miracle. And as you move on through the Acts, we find Paul involved in some supernatural manifestations, and the Philippian jailer, and all of these things.

And yet, when you go further, the physical manifestations begin to tail off. Why is that? What's happening there? And I'll tell you what's happening. It's the institution of a whole new administration. Now, we are all familiar with what happens in politics, whether it's on a state level or national level.

When a new administration comes to power, there are lots of changes that are always made. Some good, and maybe some not so good. It all depends.

But there are changes that take place. And what we are suggesting is, with the progressive revelation of doctrine, there are changes being made as you go through the Bible.

[6 : 22] So now, this is not the day and age of miracles. Now, I know, every time someone comes to faith in Christ, that's a miracle.

No question about it. But I'm talking about the kind of miracles that are dotted all throughout Scripture. And no, I'm not limiting God or putting God in a box. God can do any miracle anytime He wants to, any way He wants to.

I'm not limiting Him at all. But I'm saying, the rule of thumb, the methodology has changed. And this is why the Apostle Paul talks about we walk by faith, not by sight.

What does that mean? Well, sight has to do with the things you can see. And that's exactly the methodology the methodology under which Israel operated.

And God taught them to. Because His intervention in their lives as individuals and nations were very physical. They could see what God had done.

[7 : 29] And yet, when you come into a new administration, which means Israel temporarily set aside in their unbelief, and a whole new administration comes in and it's called the body of Christ.

And the striking difference about this body is that it combines Jew and Gentile and puts them on the same plane, members of the same body, so that there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile, between slave and free, between male and female, we are all children of God by faith in Jesus Christ.

That was a bombshell. That was really new. Because if there was anything that was so prominent all the way through the Old Testament, clear into the new in the Gospels and the Book of Acts, it was the distinctions that separated the Jew from everybody else.

And now Paul says, the middle wall of partition has been broken down. And Jew and Gentile are together in one body. Well, who in the world would have ever imagined something like that?

And that's where we are today. But, that's not where we are today. We're still in the day of miracles now because we're in Daniel chapter 3. And this is a very physical kind of thing.

[9 : 04] So, we see a continuation of what we've been talking about that started way back in Genesis. And I've just given you a brief overview. But we're going back now into the age and the time of miracles.

And who is it that is front and center in Daniel? It's the nation of Israel. The Jewish people. And even though God has surrendered them for chastisement to the Babylonians where they now find themselves in captivity, God is still working here in Daniel through the Jewish people.

And let's see this as we continue here in Daniel chapter. And let me just inject this by the way. I hope I get to the study eventually. Speaking of the miraculous, I want to give you an example of how this thing has become so derailed.

One of our most brilliant presidents, I think, that almost everybody would agree on was Thomas Jefferson. The man was in many respects of a genius mentality.

You know, if he didn't give us the entirety of the Declaration of Independence, he certainly gave us most of it and the thinking behind it. Jefferson was heavily influenced by the Enlightenment.

[10 : 34] And this was a period of time in the early 1700s. And I'm thinking exclusively of Europe. Now, you forget about the United States because in the early 1700s, we weren't even in the picture.

But what was going on in Europe was this Enlightenment thing. And it was considered to be mankind coming of age.

And one of the casualties of the Enlightenment period was the complete rejection and disregard of the supernatural as recorded in the Bible.

And one of the reasons was because they were not seeing any evidence of that. and in the 1700s and 1600s and 1500s, and what were they dealing with there?

They were dealing with just trying to stay alive. And there wasn't any miraculous manifestations with the Black Plague when literally millions of people died. And mankind was confronting all of these kind of things that portrayed the weaknesses of humanity.

[11 : 40] And there was no divine intervention. At least it wasn't obvious to anyone. And you had all of these people dying from all kinds of diseases and things like that.

And when man came to what he considered to be a period of enlightenment, he came to the conclusion that the human race is just going to have to make its own way. There probably isn't any God.

And they just pretty much wrote him out. And the miracles that were found in the Bible did not compute with what they were experiencing in Europe in the 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th century.

They didn't see any connection. And that led them to look back on the miracles and say, hey, those weren't even real then. They were just imaginations.

They were myths. They were stories that were made up. They were just things that people wished could have happened, but they didn't. And this led Thomas Jefferson to create what became known as the Jeffersonian Bible.

[12 : 51] And I've got a copy of it because several years ago I was visiting with my daughter at Monticello and fabulous, fabulous place.

And I picked up, I purchased a copy of the Jeffersonian Bible. and what he did was he took the Bible and he excised from its pages all of the miracles of Christ.

Having been convinced, they really didn't even happen. And to think that they did was actually below the dignity of Christ.

And he actually thought he was honoring Christ by removing all of these supposed miracles that Christ had done that he didn't do in reality.

So he just thought all of that stuff was just so much mythology and fairy tales and it wasn't worthy of the mild and gentle Jesus that somebody, whoever it was that wrote those accounts, just made them up.

[13 : 57] And he actually took his pen knife and cut them out of the New Testament. And what was left is essentially the kind of teachings and morals, etc.

of Jesus without the supernatural. There's no water into wine, there's no healing of lepers, there's none of that in the Jeffersonian Bible. And that ties in with what we're talking about because they could not connect what the Bible had to say about the miraculous manifestations with what was happening in their day or was not happening.

And a lot of people can't do that even today. And this is one of the reasons why there is a lot of disbelief in the Scriptures today because they feel that the miracles in the Bible didn't really happen, they were made up, and that of course puts the whole of Scripture under a cloud.

And you know something? this has been ever the objective of the adversary from the beginning.

Because, fellas, I'm going to make a statement, I've made it before many times, and I hope you log it in your mind and never forget it.

The issue, the issue is authority. Always has been, always will be. What you accept as your authority is that to which you are going to yield.

[15 : 31] And when you reject the Bible as being your authority, Katie, bar the door. And fellas, this is where we are right now.

This is where we are right now. Yeah. So, we are dealing with the miracles. This is back in a time when God was using a different methodology than he uses today.

And you see this even in action. By the way, just let me throw in this one thing. You see, the miracle of the Philippian jailer, and the earthquake, and the conversion, and the casting out of demons from that girl that was possessed, also at Philippi in Acts 16, and other miraculous manifestations by the Apostle Paul.

But even during the ministry of Paul, with this new administration in place, things began to change. And I'm just thinking of a passage that popped into my mind now. I don't know where it is, frankly, because the older I get, the more these references move around. But Paul says, Trophimus, one of

his colleagues, Trophimus, have I left at Miletus sick.

[16:56] what's that about? He's simply saying, I had to leave Trophimus at Miletus because he was too ill to travel.

Well, why didn't Paul heal him? Why didn't Paul just lay hands on him and heal him? And apparently, that time was passing away.

and we do not find that today. No, I'm not saying God can't heal and doesn't heal today. Of course he does. We've got too many cases that medically speaking, doctors simply cannot explain where divine intervention had to have occurred.

There's no other explanation for it. But what I'm saying is that is not the usual methodology. The usual methodology is you come down with whatever malady it is you have and you go to the doctor and you get medication and you treat it and you survive whatever it is or you don't survive.

And eventually, eventually, we don't survive. Eventually, we all die. Everybody that lives long enough is going to die from something. So, we don't see these.

[18:10] And you know, when people insist on demanding healing and people go to the faith healers and all the rest and you see the demonstrations and they throw the crutches down and all the rest of it.

This is simply an insistence that there is no progression in the Bible. That what they did in the Bible is what we're supposed to be doing today.

And, by the way, if you look at Acts chapter 2 and the Pentecost and the speaking in tongues and everything, where do you think this comes from? Where do you think the modern Pentecostal movement came from?

Which, by the way, did not begin until the early 1900s. passage. And it began from interpreting that passage and saying, this is what early Christians did back then, and if we only had the faith that they have, we could do those things too.

And that's the mantra under which many of them operate today, and it provides a lot of confusion, a lot of disillusionment, a lot of disappointment, a lot of, well, let's get into Daniel chapter 3. Okay. Okay.

[19:16] Here, I've got a principle here with these three Hebrew children. That are going to be cast into this furnace. And the principle that I want you to pick up on here is that we all know, I think we all understand what the natural consequence is for doing wrong things.

wrong things. But the principle that's being taught here in Daniel chapter 3 is that sometimes there is a penalty to be paid for doing the right thing.

It all depends on who is in charge of the situation. And in this case, it's Nebuchadnezzar who is in charge. So, let us read here, if we may, beginning with chapter 3, in verse 8.

For this reason, at that time, certain Chaldeans came forward and brought charges against the Jews. And they responded and said to Nebuchadnezzar the king, Oh, king, live forever.

This was a standard kind of greeting that you always made as a Babylonian. When you came into the presence of royalty, you addressed him this way. Oh, king, live forever. And the English even have that today.

[20:47] And what do they call it? Yeah, long live the king or long live the queen. Yeah, same thing. And this is just going back further. So, we've got a situation here where Nebuchadnezzar is going to be demonstrating his irrationality and his oversized super ego and the kind of brutality that existed in humanity at this time.

And, fellas, man's capability of being brutal to those of his own species is just astounding.

what human beings are able to do to other human beings by way of inflicting pain is just unbelievable. And we see the Old Testament replete with that. And by the way, we see some of that today, too, in the way people treat one another, particularly in some of the Mideastern countries.

So, we've got this ridiculous kind of situation here about this great image that has been set up by Nebuchadnezzar. And, fellas, this whole passage and this whole situation is just soaked in human irrationality.

This is some of the most stupid stuff you're going to find in the Bible. For this king makes this huge image, and it is manufactured by people, and is thought to be or to represent a deity, and the demand is going to be that everyone in the kingdom bow down to this thing and worship it.

[22:36] Is this not a perfect illustration of what we've emphasized so often that a major consequence of the fall that began in Genesis 3 is a fallen intellect, fallen reasoning, fallen logic.

Our problem as human beings is we are unable to think logically, consistently, in accordance with reality.

We manufacture things, and the Bible is replete with this, and so is present day man today. Listen, where do you get the rationale for Hinduism?

These people believe there are 330 million gods. My question is, who counted them?

What? We look at that, and I don't mean to be making fun of these people. This is serious stuff.

These people, Hindus, they are not the enemies.

[23 : 56] They are captive of the enemy. And so is everyone who embraces untruth. They are all captives of the enemy. And this is 2 Corinthians 4, our gospel behead is hid to those whose minds, whose minds, thinking ability, whose minds the God of this age has blinded.

think of that. And it's only the light of the gospel that can shed forth that beam of light that can penetrate that kind of darkness and bring a person to the truth.

And fellas, this is why we have the Bible. It is to give us God's corrective to human thinking. And nothing else will do it.

So this is the entrance of thy word gives light and understanding. It's just amazing. So we've got a situation here that is just so bizarre it's just hard for us to get our brains around it.

So they've got this statue that has been made up and in verse 10 it says, You yourself, O king, have made a decree that every man who hears the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe, all kinds of music, fall down and worship the golden image.

[25 : 21] Now that really sounds intelligent, doesn't it? And yet this is the kind of warped thinking that people are capable of.

And by the way, fellas, these people as they existed back then were among what the world would consider the intellectual intelligentsia. these people were in charge of what at the time was the only world power.

That was Babylon. They were the superpower. They were the only one. Now they're going to be displaced by the Medes and the Persians in chapter 5, but right now they're the cock of the walk.

They are the ultimate. the Babylonian society as it existed here in the book of Daniel was the absolute ultimate in learning, knowledge, and everything that went with it at that time.

And yet this is what they come up with. Verse 11, but whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire. How's that for brutality for your fellow human beings?

[26 : 34] Just because they do not comply with falling down to this stupid statue. Now, fellas, you're going to look long and hard to find something that is more irrational than this.

And yet, this is what they were capable of coming up with. And by the way, let me just inject something here because we're in a political sphere now, but the election has just finished. And I think mankind throughout the world, the United States of America included, has demonstrated from Genesis 3 onward we have demonstrated that humanity is not capable of governing itself with equity and justice on a sustained basis.

Can't do it. We cannot do it. Just can't do it. We are not capable of doing it. And this is why you see, as you see, governments and men all throughout the world in various states of chaos.

chaos. And we've got our own here. We've got a more sophisticated chaos. But it's still chaos. And look at what's happening on our southern border and all these people.

What's going on there anyway? It is these people, for whatever reason, and I'm sure there are multiple reasons, they are fleeing the place where they were born because of threats on their life, because of crime, because of corruption, because of persecution, because they're looking for a piece of the pie, the American pie.

[28 : 09] Can you blame them? Boy, but what's going on? What's going on in their country? Why would they want to leave? Well, things are miserable there. This is the world over.

I don't care where you go on the globe, you're going to find human inequity and injustice. It is in our DNA. DNA. And our DNA is a fallen DNA.

So, we've got a situation here. Whoever does not fall down and worship this image. And in verse 12, and there are certain Jews, oh boy, hey, listen, I don't care where you go in history, the Jew is going to have a bullseye on his back.

It has always been that way. Started in Egypt. with the attempt to eliminate the male species of the whole Jewish race.

And it continued even up through the Holocaust. And now, now we are seeing, we are seeing a rebirth of anti-Semitism in Europe and throughout other places too.

[29 : 23] Joe? And I think that's because Satan knows in order to get into power, he wants to take power from God. because you get into Revelation, it talks about his prophet who is the Holy Spirit and all that.

He gets this trinity just like we've got, like God and Jesus and the Holy Ghost. And he can see that if I get the Jews out of the picture, then I can be in control and take over.

So it's Satan that's doing this anti-Semitism to everybody. And it's going to flourish. Yes. Absolutely. And of course, during the tribulation period, the time of Daniel's 70th week, which will be coming up in Daniel chapter 9, we are going to see how that during World War II, in the Holocaust, Hitler succeeded in eliminating one-third of the Jewish people in the world.

Six million plus. but during the tribulation period, the Antichrist is going to succeed in eliminating two-thirds of the world's population of Jewish people.

And it will be just the remnant that will come through, and we'll look at that later. So let's go on. Certain Jews, verse 12, certain Jews, whom you have appointed over the administration of the province of Babylon, and why did he appoint them?

[30 : 53] Because, remember, it was Daniel that interpreted the dream and told the king what the dream was, and the king was so impressed that he elevated Daniel to this exalted position, and he asked him, probably asked him, is there anything else I can do for you?

And Daniel says, well, actually, your majesty, I have three good friends who are really outstanding young men, and they would serve you well also. Their names Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And the king says, alright, and he tells his assistants, see to it that these men are placed in responsible positions, and they were. So these men surface again in chapter 3 and verse 12, and there are men that you have given responsible positions to, and these men, O king, have disregarded you.

They do not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up. Now, a little bit of thinking here on the part of Nebuchadnezzar, which by the way, he's not really all that capable of at this time, but you would think that he would say, well, now wait a minute, I need some more information here.

These three guys, these were the ones recommended by Daniel. I have great confidence in Daniel because of his interpreting the dream, and I assume that Daniel knew what he was doing when he recommended these three men for responsible positions.

[32 : 21] I need to talk to Daniel, or I need to interview these people, I need to get more information. No, no, no, no, no, no. He's just riding roughshod through the situation. Everything is black and white.

Black and white. And in this case, he issues this ridiculous decree that anybody that doesn't fall down and worship this image, and by the way, he takes this really seriously.

These people are going to be thrown into the fiery furnace. And one thing that's going to do is it's going to set an example for anyone else who may even entertain the idea of not complying with the king's requests.

This is the price you were going to pay, and it is a severe price. So let's go on. Let's go on. The Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger. I can see the blood vessels in his neck popping out, and his face turns red, and it is, how dare they?

I mean, this is a super ego responding to a refusal to cooperate. What, Joe? Mark, don't you think that Nebuchadnezzar was here, see?

[33 : 40] And don't you think, because he interpreted the dream and saw the Medes and Persians and the Greeks and Russians were all going to come after him. If I do this, you know, if I get this image of gold of me, maybe I can change what's going to happen.

Make the whole image gold. Yeah, well, make the whole image gold, and maybe then I'll have power all the way through history, nobody else. I mean, that's what he did. So he's trying to change history or trying to change the dream.

We don't know that that is exactly what his motive was, but it does fit. It does fit. It does fit. In case he's thinking of being passed off the scene and replaced by whoever the silver is, and we know that silver is going to be the Medes and the Persians represented by the chest and the two arms, one the Medes, the other the Persians, and then he's going to move on down to Rome and then to

Greece and then Rome.

Don? Well, I get to thinking when I read this passage which is dangerous to me thinking, but anyway, where's Daniel? He wouldn't have bowed down. The other thing, what are the rest of the Jews?

They wouldn't have bowed or they shouldn't have bowed down because they did. I don't know. These questions you can't really answer because it's not here. But you do wonder about it. Yeah, of course you do. Of course you do. And you've got the same thing in the book of Esther with Haman when Mordecai will not bow down and worship Haman when he comes by.

[35 : 03] There were other Jews there too. There were a lot of Jews. And we don't know, we aren't told what their status was. And it may very well be that they bowed down too.

But Mordecai says, uh-uh, I'm not going to do that. And here are these three Hebrew children. And what is behind all of this? It is the intensity of their commitment to the one true God, the God of Israel, who already gave us His demands.

And that leading the list is, Thou shalt not make any graven image or any likeness and use that to represent deity. And all these three Hebrew children are doing, all they're doing is honoring their God as opposed to the contrived God of the Babylonians.

And they are going to have to pay a price for doing that. Fellas, this is where, this is where conviction, the rubber that meets the road, this is where, this is where people find out what they're made of.

And you'd better have your values and your norms and standards in place well before the crisis comes. Someone has said, woe unto anyone who tries to learn doctrine in a crisis.

[36 : 36] You've got to have your standards and values predetermined so that when the crisis comes, you can swing into action with your best plan.

And many people wait until the crisis comes and then try to make up their mind. And the tendency is to go with the flow. You know? And that's exactly what so many do. Well, these men, verse 12, have disregarded you.

They've disrespected you. They do not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up. Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders, bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Then these men were brought before the king. And you're right, Don. It doesn't say anything about Daniel. We don't know where Daniel is here. We don't know why he isn't in this particular picture. But he isn't. And who knows? Maybe he was away on some diplomatic mission or something. We just don't know. The scriptures don't tell us. Or maybe the Chaldeans just had it in for these three men.

[37 : 43] Who knows? Yeah, well. Maybe it could have been a big thing. That could be. Because sometimes sometimes when someone takes a specific position like, for instance, a modern day believer and they unapologetically state their position of their confidence and their faith in Jesus Christ and especially, especially if they make the point that Jesus Christ is not only the Savior, He's the only Savior.

Listen, that's what the world has a problem with. They'll let your Jesus be your Savior. But just don't go around saying that He's the only one.

That's where you're going to get in trouble. Because when you do that, if you do that, if you make that statement, the exclusivity of Jesus Christ and that He is your Savior and that He is the only Savior, where does that put them?

If they do not have like faith, they've got a problem. Either you're wrong or they're wrong.

And they much prefer to believe that you are wrong, not them. And that's where a lot of the conflict comes in. This is one of the big sticking points in Christianity.

[39 : 24] And as I pointed out before, Jesus Christ is the only way to God. But that is not a Christian idea. We didn't think that up.

That's what God said. It's God's heaven. He can decide who's coming and who's not. That's His prerogative, not ours. All we're doing is saying that's what He said. And if you don't like it, take it up with Him.

Don't take it up with me. It didn't come from me. All I'm doing is repeating what He said. So, now they've got a situation where their God is actually in a confrontational position with the God of the Babylonians.

It's a showdown time. And we're going to see what happens. Nebuchadnezzar says in verse 14, he at least gives them an audience and he says, is it true? I want to hear it from your own lips. Is it true? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up?

[40 : 30] And by the way, these are the same three guys that Nebuchadnezzar has already given an exalted position to. Is this the way you show your thanks and gratitude to me? By rejecting my God after all I've done for you?

After raising you up and giving you this exalted position and this nice fat salary and all of these perks that go with it? And then you respond by slapping me in the face and refusing to worship my God.

Wow. Well, like I said, Nebuchadnezzar has an ego. I expected to get through chapter 3, but maybe we'll make it next week. Alright. Thank you guys.

Yeah, Joe? He did. He did. He did. He did. He did. He did. He did. He did not make that assumption. He wanted to hear it from them and that denial.

And I don't have any doubt at all that when they said what they did, they probably said it with fear and trembling, knowing what it was going to cost them.

[41 : 29] But when push comes to shove, you have to decide you're going to be loyal to your God or you're going to be loyal to the demands that others make upon you at the time.

Of your government. Yeah. Are you going to do what your government says or are you going to do what God says? Yep. Yep. Well, guys, thanks for being here and enjoy your breakfast and the day ahead.