

Remnant Life Church
May 1, 2016
Sunday School Stories Revisited:
Bow or Burn
Daniel 3:1-30

- The challenge of the familiar is that we often stop paying attention
- Now that's okay when it's a familiar movie that comes
- Not okay if it's your husband/wife or a passage of Scripture that you've heard or read countless times
- Begin a series that will revisit the stories we heard in Sunday School or that we're so familiar with that we have stopped paying attention to their message
- The stories remain the same but the meaning can change as we change
- **READ Daniel 3:1-30**
- A brief history of how that time came
- Three great dynasties that influenced much of that world for over 1200 years
 - Babylonia/Persian empire
 - The Greek Empire
 - The Roman Empire
- Babylonia/Persian
 - Begins at the Tower of Babel in Gen 11
 - An area settled by Nimrod (possibly the grt-gndson of Noah but certainly a direct descendent)
 - Established and thriving nearly 2000 years before Jesus was born
 - Nebuchadnezzar ruled for 45 years beginning in around 605 BC
 - + Built the Hanging Gardens of Babylon for his Median wife Queen Amytis (ie – moving from Colorado to Kansas)
 - Upon his death and after a brief time of incompetent rulers Belshazzar becomes co-regent until 539
 - Cyrus the Great of Persia conquers Babylon and it is he who begins to allow the Jews to return to Jerusalem
 - Eventually his grandson Darius the Great becomes king
 - Followed by Xerxes (Esther) and Artaxerxes (Ezra and Nehemiah)
 - Finally Darius III is the last king and is eventually conquered by Alexander the Great in 334 BC solidifying the prominence of the Grecian Empire
- Greeks
 - Another ancient civilization who were always battling with the Persians
 - 5th century BC it is in its golden age
 - + Pericles (political leader); Herodotus (father of history); Hippocrates (father of modern medicine); Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle (father of secular philosophy)
 - Short-lived; battle between Sparta and Athens
 - Philip of Macedonia ruled briefly before being assassinated
 - Replaced by his 20 year old son – Alexander the Great
 - Died at the age of 32
 - The land was divided equally between his 4 generals to rule

- Roman
 - The time from its founding in 753 BC it was involved in wars and civil wars until united by Julius Caesar in the mid 50's BC
 - Caesar was assassinated on the Ides of March in 44 BC and replaced by Octavius also known as Augustus
 - Defeated Antony and Cleopatra as well as Brutus and Cassius Rome comes into its zenith of power
 - During this time Jesus is born in approximately 5-3 BC
 - Famous names of history continue to rule – Caesar Tiberius (John the Baptist and Jesus ministered during his reign)
 - Caligula; Claudius; Nero; the general Vespasian (ordered his son Titus to burn Jerusalem to the ground in 70 AD)
 - Fast forward to 313 when Constantine ends the persecution of Christians by being baptized and making Christianity the state religion
- Come back to the time of Babylon
 - Nebuchadnezzar invades Jerusalem on 3 separate occasions
 - + In the first one he carries off nobles to be assimilated into the Babylonian culture – among them are Daniel and his 3 friends
 - + The third time he burns the city to the ground in 586 BC
 - In our story Nebuchadnezzar builds a golden statue 90' high and 9' wide
 - Why?
 1. Daniel had just interpreted a dream for him where Nebuchadnezzar is the head of gold on a statue
 2. His vanity led him to be the entire golden statue
 3. To draw the kingdom into unity under one religion
 - + This is the second of man's attempts to institute a one-world religion
 - + The first was at the tower of Babel ([Gen 11](#)) the second is here and the third will be during the tribulation ([Rev 13](#))
 - Daniel is apparently not present during this time so the 3 Jewish men are on their own
 - While the story is well known what can we learn from the faith and commitment of these three?
- They could have easily avoided the punishment
 1. If we get ourselves killed who will look out for the welfare of the Jews living here? (He who learns to run away lives to fight another day)
 2. They do things differently here than back home. "When in Rome..."
 3. We'll fall down but we won't really worship the statue – we'll just make it look that way (YOGA)
 4. We'll do it just this one time then ask God to forgive us. Surely He'll understand
 5. The king has been good to us so we really do owe him one besides Daniel's not here to help us with this decision
 6. This is nothing that our ancestors didn't do and they set them up in the temple – God will forgive us too
- These are all pretty good excuses but even a great excuse cannot condone sin

- These young men had the Word of God burned into their hearts and in particular one verse
 - *Ex 20:4-5 - You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God,*
- Like these three you are presented today with the same command to bow or burn
 - Like these three you are going to be faced with a decision
 - Will you compromise or will you stand for Jesus Christ regardless of the consequences?
- We are faced with these circumstances every day
- While those temptations and worldly opportunities will change one thing remains consistent – God’s love and protection over His children who are faithful
- *Dan 3:27- the fire had not harmed them; not a hair on their heads was singed; their clothes were not scorched; they did not smell of smoke*
- God is asking of us today, “Will you trust Me?”
- That incredibly difficult situation you’re dealing with...
- That person you live with, work with, want to have in your life...
- Your health, your finances, your job...
 - *Romans 8:38 - For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*