

Altar Of Government

5-17-20

Daniel 3:15b (ESV)

But if you do not worship (my image), you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands?

God clearly tells all believers to submit to authorities. However, what are we to do when government makes ungodly demands or requires us to implement godless practices? This is the situation three young Jewish men faced when the King demanded that they worship a golden image.

Daniel 3:16–18 (ESV)

¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. ¹⁷ If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. ¹⁸ But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”

These young men were competent and obedient in every way. However, they refused to worship the golden image. We are living at a time where our religious freedoms are being undermined and attacked every day. Therefore, the response of these young men is very instructive for believers who must deal with government overreach and control.

#1 Devotion: “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter.” Their devotion to God was already known to the king. This is like saying, “We don’t have to say anything, you already know our answer.”

#2 Majesty: “If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and HE will deliver us out of your hand, O king.” They are saying, “If you throw us into the furnace, God is fully capable of saving us.”

#3 Conviction: “But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.” They are saying, “If God does not choose to save us from the furnace, that’s okay, but we want you to know for a fact, we will not serve your gods or golden image.”

Government with unrestrained authority will require complete submission by its people. Group think is required, and any dissension is not tolerated. The early church faced the same dilemma when ordered to stop talking about Jesus.

Acts 5:29 (ESV)

But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men.”

Christians have a higher authority than government. This is why those demanding worship at the Altar of Government hate Christianity. We have a perfect example of this hate!

Daniel 3:19, 21 (ESV)

¹⁹ Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury, and the expression of his face was changed ²¹ Then these men were thrown into the burning fiery furnace.

As believers we may face the fiery furnace, but God will use our faith as an avenue to show HIS majesty to the world.

Daniel 3:24–25 (ESV)

²⁴ Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. “Did we not cast three men **bound** into the fire?” ²⁵ He said, “But I see four men **unbound**, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods.”

An absolute truth in all circumstances: Jesus is always in the fire with us! The intense fire did not have any effect on these men. The only thing that got burned was the ropes that bound them.

Daniel 3:26-27 (ESV)

²⁶ Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the burning fiery furnace; he declared, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here!” Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire. ²⁷ The hair of their heads was not singed, their cloaks were not harmed, and no smell of fire had come upon them.

Interestingly, when Nebuchadnezzar called them out of the fiery furnace, he called them “servants of the Most High God”. This is why we don’t worship at the Altar of Government. Our obedience always glorifies God.

Daniel 3:28 (ESV)

Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king’s command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God.

As Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in these godless days we are called to be godly, to be recognized as those who trusted in God, and set aside the king’s command, and yielded up our bodies rather than serve and worship any god except our own God.

As the Apostle Paul, we do not worship at the Altar of Government, but stand with conviction for Jesus!

Acts 24:21 (ESV)

It is with respect to the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you this day.