

The Old-Time Evangelistic News

Evangelist W. Paul Redmond Sr.

Volume 12, Issue 11

April 2016

Stand or Compromise: What Will You Do? (Part 4)

Daniel 3:16-18

Last month we left off considering how Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to compromise even though many of their countrymen may have been in the crowd that was bowing before the image. It had to be a great provocation to them to stand up for right even though their fellow Jews were bowing before the image. In their situation, there was not enough time to get into a discussion with the Babylonians or with their fellow Jews. Maybe that made it somewhat easier to stand up because it was just a quick reaction to the command. In our day, fellow Independent Baptists are compromising and enticing others to go along with them. They want to defend their compromise in writing, either in book and pamphlet form or in posts on Facebook. Most of their “defense” is a dismissal of Scripture by saying “It does not apply now,” “It does not apply to me,” or “I have not been convicted about it.” In other cases, their “defense” is just a total rejection of Scripture by ignoring the clear teaching of Scripture. Some will even attack those who still hold strong convictions by accusing them of being “legalists,” “narrow-minded,” or “modern day Pharisees.” But those who still want to be obedient to the Bible cannot be upset, afraid, or intimidated by those who want to conform to the world. We must make up our mind and be determined that we will not be swayed by those who have changed. God’s Word is still the same. If others want to change, then so be it. Let them change. Grieve that they have, but determine that you will not follow the path that they have followed.

I mentioned a few things briefly at the end of last month’s issue. I will not elaborate on them extensively, but a few more words on them will be necessary. These are not the only things that could be written about, but they will suffice to prove the point about not being

-2-

provoked to compromise by our own countrymen—in this case, our own fellow Independent Baptists. The first thing I mentioned concerns clothing. Many have followed the world’s pattern of wearing indecent clothing. Many times my wife has shown me pictures that people have put on Facebook. It is a shame and disgrace at how they dress, or as I said before, how they do not dress. At one time, they dressed modestly with clothes that covered their body. Then something happens, and they think it is all right to cover just enough, so they are not completely unclothed. What happened to them? They conformed to the world. Others see them and may be enticed to begin looking just like them. May we have enough courage to resist that provocation to compromise. Just because someone who used to dress right has changed does not mean that it is all right to change. Our standard cannot be based upon what other people are doing even if they are Independent Baptists. Our foundation of belief and practice must be based upon God’s Word which has not, and never will, change.

In connection with the indecent dress of people, I must comment on the shabbiness of our modern clothing. It is very disappointing to see how many believers follow the pattern of the world in dressing, as my parents use to say, “like a slob.” Many times people will come to church looking like they are going to just any other social gathering, and what they wear to those places is not very nice. Many may think that I am nit-picking and harping upon something that is unnecessary, but I will do it anyway. Whatever happened to wearing our “Sunday best”? That term was used years ago because people had their regular every day work clothes, and then the men had their suit and the women had their best dress for church on Sunday. What is wrong with looking and dressing nice for church? Often people will say, “I do not have the money for church clothes?” On some rare occasion that may be true, but often it is not. You look at what they are wearing, and it is not cheap clothing. Most of it boils down to the reality that most people do not care to look their best for God. They treat church just like anything else. They dress shabbily for church because, to be honest, they have no respect for God and His place of

worship. That is not popular and will not make many people happy, but it is the sincere truth. God deserves our best in every aspect of life.

I may mention some more about clothing at the end of the message, but for now I must move on to a few comments about some other things that are becoming more accepted among Independent Baptists which may cause some to be tempted to compromise. I mentioned this last month, and I have mentioned it in other messages, but I will repeat it as often as necessary—Drinking alcohol is sin! That comment was readily accepted and declared as truth years ago by every true preacher of the Gospel. I have read biographies about Robert Sheffey, Billy Sunday, Bob Jones Sr., Monroe Parker, J. Frank Norris, and others who repeatedly and forcefully denounced the drinking of alcohol. It was not popular to preach against it in their lifetime, and many of them were ridiculed and some threatened with death by the liquor traffic. But they did not back down, and several people were saved out of a life of drunkenness because men like them preached against the sin of drinking alcohol. In our day, some are backing away from preaching against it, and others have begun to accept and propagate the lie that it is all right to drink alcohol as long as you do not get drunk. Do not believe that lie! One drink is a sin against God and may just ensnare you into a life of drunkenness. The warnings given in Proverbs 20:1 and 23:29-32 alone are enough to show us the dangers of drinking alcohol. No one has ever benefitted from drinking even one drop of alcohol. Stay away from it completely. As Proverbs 23:32 says, it is like a poisonous snake. It may just kill you if it has the chance. Stay away from it and never drink alcohol regardless of who says it is all right now. They have become a servant of Satan by saying that. They are lying! Do not listen to them! Listen to God's Word and do not drink alcohol.

There is much more that could be said about what our countrymen are accepting now, but I must move on to our third provocation to compromise. It is The Consequence. Before the music played, the entire crowd was told what would happen to them if they did not

bow. Daniel 3:6 says, *“And whoso falleth not down and worshippingeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.”* To many, this seems an extreme thing to do to those who may not bow, but it is the pattern that many nations of that time period, and of others throughout history, have followed. We speculated at the beginning of the message as to why Nebuchadnezzar may have fashioned the image. Pride was no doubt a big reason, but he also may have been wanting all of the rulers to pledge total allegiance to him. If the idol was a likeness of Nebuchadnezzar, as many commentators believe, then total allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar may have been what was being required. Regardless of the reason for it, the command was death if one refused to bow.

For some, maybe many, the fear of execution may have been the reason that they bowed. Some may have not bowed if the threat of death would not have been issued. No doubt, Nebuchadnezzar knew this and issued the decree. Worshiping of idols was not unusual in that day. In fact, it was very common. Practically every nation had a number of gods that they worshiped for different reasons and on different occasions. We can see that in the nations that are described throughout the Old Testament. Perhaps that is why Nebuchadnezzar had the idol made on this occasion—to eliminate all other gods and make everyone pledge complete allegiance to him. With the threat of death, Nebuchadnezzar probably thought that no one would resist him. For the most part, he was right. Of all those gathered there, maybe in the thousands as we suggested earlier, everyone bowed but Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. The plan had worked. Out of fear for their life, everyone did what was ordered, even if they did not totally mean what their bowing indicated. They may not have fully revered and worshiped the idol, but they bowed anyway. To them, rejecting the command to worship was not worth it. That should not surprise us. To replace one idol for another was not really a big deal for most of these people. They often replaced idols. To do so again did not matter much to most of them. They certainly were not going to die for their false god. Nebuchadnezzar, being a worshiper of idols himself, probably realized that. He may not have expected anyone to

refuse his command, especially under fear of death.

However, in spite of being told what would happen if they did not bow, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did not bow. Perhaps those around them pleaded with them to bow. Perhaps they whispered; perhaps they spoke in normal tones and said, “Did you not hear? You must bow, or you will be burned to death.” The Hebrews responded, “We heard, but we are not bowing. That is an idol. We will not replace our real God with one that is not real.” Perhaps, as we speculated, some of their fellow Jews were nearby and begged them to fall down, so they would not be thrown into the fiery furnace. But to them, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego said the same thing—“We will not bow before that image.” The threat was real, but the threat of death did not cause them to sin against God.

Later when brought before Nebuchadnezzar, the threat was reissued. Nebuchadnezzar himself said that they would be thrown into the fiery furnace. When given a second chance to bow before the image, the Hebrew men stated that they would not bow, even if it meant death. May we have the same conviction as they did. We will talk more about this next month.