

The Old-Time Evangelistic News

Evangelist W. Paul Redmond Sr.

Volume 12, Issue 10

March 2016

Stand or Compromise: What Will You Do? (Part 3)

Daniel 3:16-18

Last month we began considering some thoughts about The Crowd as the first Provocation to Compromise. We closed out with the idea that the same temptation to “Just fit in” can enter our mind whether the crowd is large or small. Most people have faced this temptation. The flesh for the most part just wants to get along with everyone else. But the Holy Spirit inside of us will not allow us to fit in with the crowd unless we totally reject His leading. The world and the Spirit are in total opposition to one another. The world will not change to be like the Spirit, and the Spirit will not change to be like the world. We must decide which side we will follow—the world or the Spirit. The flesh will tempt us that we will not make much impact if the crowd is small, so we can wait for a bigger opportunity when more people will see what we are doing. If the crowd is large, the flesh will tempt us that there are too many people to notice what we are doing, so just wait till you can have a bigger impact with a smaller crowd. In both instances the flesh is wrong. Doing right should not be influenced by how many are around nor how few are around. If the occasion arises where we are tempted by a small crowd to fit in, may we respond to the Holy Ghost’s leading to do what is right. If the crowd happens to be large, and they desire to do wrong and encourage us to fall in with them, may the Holy Ghost have His way in our lives and may we resist the temptation of the flesh and follow the Holy Ghost. We must see clearly that the crowd is not what dictates right and wrong. People’s opinions do not dictate right and wrong. God’s Word tells us what is right and wrong. May we follow God’s Word and not worry about what the crowd is doing.

There is a second aspect in this Provocation to Compromise. It is actually a part of the crowd, but in that crowd may be and probably

-2-

were The Countrymen. Back in Daniel 1:3-6, we find that Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were not the only Jews brought to Babylon. Those verses read, “*And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes; Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king. Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.*” Verse 3 says that the king commanded that certain of the children of Israel, etc., were to be brought to Babylon, and verse 6 says that among them were Daniel and his three friends. These other Jews knew the law just like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. They could not plead ignorance when confronted with the wine and meat. They knew that they were not to partake of that because they were Jews. But when confronted with fitting in with everyone else, they chose to forsake what God said for the convenience of going along with what they were told to do. None of these other Jews took the stand like Daniel and his friends when confronted with the choice in chapter 1.

Now go forward about twenty years to chapter 3. I cannot say for sure that there were other Jews in that crowd. But I do not think that it would be a great stretch to say some of these Jews that had come to Babylon with Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were in that crowd. For the sake of argument, we will say that in this crowd of perhaps 2,000 leaders of Babylon, there were some other Jews. When the music sounded they bowed before the image. They knew the dietary laws that they were to obey, but they had refused to obey them 20 years earlier. Now when confronted with a direct violation of one of the ten commandments, they were bowing before the image and worshipping a false god. Some will say that the issue in chapter 1 was

a small thing and really of no consequence. But if God's Word says that it is wrong, it does not matter if we think it is a "big" thing or not. It is wrong and will probably lead us to doing more things that are wrong later on. If one does not take a stand on supposed small things, they will probably not take a stand on the bigger things later. They will be just like these Jews that bowed before the image.

Put yourself again in the time period of Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Place yourself right in the plain of Dura along with this vast crowd. You are not sure exactly why you are there. The orders came from the king to assemble there, but they did not say what was going to happen. Obviously, the image can be seen, if it is not covered by some large curtain. However, Babylon is a pagan country and idols may have been in many places. You see some of your fellow Jews who were deported with you twenty years ago. You were very sad that they ate the meat when commanded to do so, but you have tried to stay friendly with them when you have seen them over the years. You greet them and talk to them for a little bit until the ceremony is called to order. When the announcement is made to worship the idol, you know what you will do. God explicitly stated, "*Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*" The command is very clear. There are no exceptions of any kind at any time. To bow before an image is clearly forbidden. You know what you will do—you will not bow regardless of what anyone else does. You look at your close friends and, as one, you all shake your heads letting the other two know that you will not bow. Perhaps you say to each other, "It is idolatry. It is wrong. We will not bow." As the music begins to play, everyone bows. You look over and see the fellow Jews, that you had just spoken to, bowing just like everyone else. You had hoped that they would not commit this sin. They had not agreed with you concerning the meat and wine, but surely they would not bow to the image and commit idolatry. But they bowed just like the idol-worshiping Babylonians and others who had not received the law of God forbidding the worship of idols.

In the time while the music is playing and maybe just after it

finished, perhaps some of those other Jews are close enough to say something to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. (I do not know if this was even possible, but allow me to follow through with this to prove a point.) They said, "Come on. Bow down. Just fit in." But Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego all say firmly, "Absolutely not. It is a violation of God's law. It is sin. We will not bow to that image." Perhaps even Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego plead with the other Jews to stand back up. But the pressure is too great, and they remain on their knees before the image. Everyone else begins to notice that three men did not bow, but these three Hebrew men refuse to bow just because the crowd did it, and they will not bow even when their own countrymen are bowing.

It would have been easy in the flesh for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to reason that if their own fellow Jews are bowing, then maybe they should reconsider. But from what happens later, we can see that there is never even the thought of reconsidering. They know what is right; they know what is wrong; and they have determined that they will do right even if their own countrymen follow the path that is wrong.

There are great and meaningful applications to make from the countrymen bowing. In our day, it seems that Fundamental churches, schools, and mission boards that once took a strong stand are becoming less firm in their stand. The badge of Fundamentalism, with strong convictions and separatist practices, that once was an honor, has become something that many who claimed that title are now disowning. I know there are some around who have never liked the term Fundamentalist. But I have always liked that term and do not disavow it. I cannot go into a lengthy discussion of what it means in this message, but the term arose years ago when men were combating liberalism in the denominations. The Bible-believers declared that there some things fundamental, or essential, to the Biblical, Christian faith. They would stand for them, fight for them, and separate from those who denied them. I agree with what those men declared years ago and determine, by the grace of God, to stand

where they stood, fight how they fought, and separate from things that should be separated from.

Even among independent Baptists there are those that are allowing and practicing things that our forefathers preached against. Obviously, I cannot elaborate extensively here because there is much more to write about in this message, but I will mention a few. One of those is the clothing that is worn, or more appropriately, the lack of clothing that is worn. People used to cover up, but in our day, many professing independent Baptists expose their body just like the world does and are seemingly proud about it. That is a shame and disgrace. We should be different from the world, and our clothing is one way that we can easily be distinguished. Many churches have also changed their music to conform to the world's idea of what music should be. That is sinful. The world's music does not even make a good sound. It is not fit to listen to outside of church let alone in the church house. But many have taken the world's sound and mixed in some words about Jesus and claim it is good. It is not good! It is sin! Others have accepted the world's philosophy of socially drinking alcohol. That is sin as well! Only a fool, according to Proverbs 20:1, drinks wine or strong drink. There is more to say, but we will have to continue next month.