

Buck the Regime

From an earlier, more sane era comes this gem: ‘During freshman orientation the college dean presented the rules to the new students. “The male dormitory is off-limits to all female students, and the female dormitory is off-limits to the male students. Anyone caught breaking this rule will be fined \$20 the first time”. He continued, “Anyone caught breaking this rule the second time will be fined \$60. Being caught a third time will cost you a fine of \$180. Are there any questions?” At this point, a male student in the crowd inquired, “How much is it for a season pass?”’

How’s that for trying to buck the system? How? By throwing gobs and gobs of money at it! Seems just about the way things are run in this country nowadays, doesn’t it!! If there’s no money to be made, there’s one set of rules. If there’s gobs of money up for grabs, there for the stealing, taking, then there’s a whole other set of rules. Turns out that just about everybody’s bucking a regime, because there’s two regimes working at the same time. So the question becomes, which regime deserves to be bucked?

While there are myriad variations, one regime is what we can generally call the world’s. It’s the regime whose author and master is the devil. It’s, by far, the most prevalent regime on earth. To some degree or other, just about everyone on planet

earth is affected, if not totally, beholden to it. The world's regime we can also describe simply as anti-Christ. It is dark and evil and overflowing with never-ending sin, depravity, darkness and death. The other regime is the Kingdom of God. It is everything the world's regime is not. This Kingdom of Heaven, is literally Heaven on earth, for those of us who still physically live on this physical earth. It's life and truth and light. Because we're here to liberate this world, this earth, from the devil who gained dominion over it because of Adam's sin, our physical lives are hardly a walk in the park. Every inch of territory we gain for Christ Jesus the Lord is hard won. And gaining, that is, enforcing Lord Jesus' lordship over this world already won on the Cross of Calvary, takes prayer, effort, courage, and prayer. Did I say prayer?

Consider the examples before us in today's lessons, particularly from Daniel 2 and 3. Picking up from last week, where King Nebuchadnezzar had a disturbing dream, it was so intense that it literally haunted him. He could not shake it. He could not get it out of his mind. So vivid it was, and so oppressive, he ordered all of Babylon's astrologers, wizards, enchanters, "psychics", "holy men", to not only interpret it for him, but to first relate to him what he had dreamed. That, of course, would require telepathy, reading the king's mind. This is not an ability that has ever been granted to human beings. However "good" or evil all the wise men may have been, they were correct in asserting that telling the king what he had dreamed was humanly impossible. And so, in

an almost childish temper tantrum, the king ordered the whole lot of them, having now “proven” themselves utterly useless to advise the king in any other matter, political, economic, or otherwise, to be summarily executed. Since Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were among the “wise men”, their heads were literally on the line as well. Rather, on the literal chopping block.

Which prompted Daniel to plead with the king for a temporary stay, during which time he and his three friends would fast and pray to God to reveal the king’s dream and its meaning, if for no other reason than to save their own skins! Fast and pray they did, and to Daniel Holy Spirit revealed the whole dream. That very night. The very next morning, Daniel asked Arioch, the executioner, not to carry out the death sentence on any of the wise men, for he now knew everything about the king’s dream, and to take him into the king’s presence to explain it to him. Arioch did so immediately, and in response to the king’s question whether he could tell him the dream and its meaning, Daniel began by giving all thanks, praise and glory to the One and Only Living God, ADONAI. Daniel took not one iota of credit. This is important.

After revealing the dream to the king, this supernatural miracle of the power of God was unmistakable to everyone present. No one could deny that God had immense power and authority. That it was He who ruled over all things. And that was only because of the dream. Its revealing had left everyone speechless, even the pompous, full-of-himself king. So Daniel continued right

on to the interpretation. The dream revealed to the greatest of the Babylonian kings, the future succession of world empires that directly touched upon God's holy land and chosen people. The most cultured and refined was Babylon itself. Note that being cultured and refined does not equate with being Godly and righteous. It was the head of solid gold. Following that were empires of less and less refinement and culture, as the human species itself was slowly devolving as the poison of Adam's sin continued to degrade our being and standing in this world. The end of the statue came with the "boulder" that came crashing down upon it, rendering it into dust that blew away with the wind, as if it had never been. The boulder is Christ Jesus, Whose "mountain" grows ever larger, eclipsing and absorbing the entire world, and never ending. We now are in that era of time. For while the world's regime is seemingly approaching its zenith, its peak, in an instant, when Christ returns in His second coming, all will be suddenly changed. The toes of iron and clay, our world today, the fierce regime that is opposing everything of God, will, seemingly without warning, abruptly collapse, as if it had never been.

Suitably awestruck by Daniel's explanation, and temporarily humbled before this display of the omnipotent God of the Jews, the king himself, breaking all protocol, bowed low to the ground in front of Daniel, shocking all in attendance. He even praised God, at least for that brief time, and promoted Daniel, and his friends, showering them with great gifts and honor.

Not long afterward, with that vivid dream still bouncing around in his memory, the king decided to have a statue built, not so unlike the one in his dream, but this one of solid gold from top to bottom, and likely resembling himself. Erected on a high place in the great plain of Dura from where its gleaming could be seen for miles around, it was to be worshipped during its dedication celebrations whenever the music of many instruments was played. Daniel, for whatever reasons, remained in the palace, but Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were among the thousands of officials surrounding the great statue. Standing for their “religious rights”, they remained standing when the music sounded, conspicuous as the only ones not properly bowing in worship to this golden idol. While this might possibly be overlooked, since they were not Babylonians by birth, but some of those persnickety Jews, they were also envied by many of the other wise men. Political enemies they had in abundance. The regime was against them. Those enemies wasted no time in accusing them of “disrespecting” the king. And even when given a second chance to bow to the statue, they infuriatingly refused to disobey God’s command of having no idols before God. Thus, the king’s order of execution by fiery furnace had to be carried out. They claimed that God could save them even from the furnace if God so desired, but even if He didn’t, they would not disobey God’s word.

Probably three of the king’s mighty men, “bouncers” or special forces we might call them today, arrested and bound the

three, and threw them into the furnace, which was so hot that the mighty men were themselves burned up as the heat burst out the doors. They had bound the Lord's chosen ones, and they paid the price. But just as they instantly burned to a crisp, the three Jews were supernaturally shielded from the heat and flames, and blessed with a pre-incarnate appearance by Lord Jesus Himself, Who walked among the flames with them. When they came out, He remained in the fire and disappeared back into Heaven.

Again, God had proven Himself with a stupendous sign and wonder, verifying that He is the One and Only God, all other claims to the contrary notwithstanding. And again, for a brief time, King Nebuchadnezzar was suitably impressed and humbled, to the point of even issuing a new "blasphemy" law that no one be allowed to speak against the God of the Jews. And he promoted the three to even higher office.

So we see how Daniel and his friends all bucked the regime when it demanded disobedience to God's Word. And we also see how they did it. They fasted. They prayed. They gave all glory to God. They obeyed, caring not a whit about their own wellbeing, even willing to die for their faith. Friends, our lives today must be similarly laid on the line, on the chopping block, if necessary to properly buck the current regime and enable America's third great awakening to restore us back to God. We may be called upon to make great sacrifices, even the ultimate one, but in whatever fiery furnace we may find ourselves, Lord Jesus is right there with us!!

