**Believers in Babylon Series**

**“Standing Firm in Faith”**

**Daniel 3.1-30**

**Preaching Prelude**

Our current series is entitled “Believers in Babylon – living as exiles is a strange land.” As believers in Christ we must remember that this world is not our home. We are foreigners and strangers living in exile. (IPt.1.1a, 2.11) In this series we are looking at the book of Daniel, a divine manual that gives us insights on how to live as exiles in our own Babylon.

The book of Daniel was written in the time of the Babylonian Captivity (597 B.C.). Daniel and his three friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were taken, along with other Israelites, to be part of a select group to be trained in all the language and literature of the Babylonians with the goal of serving in king Nebuchadnezzar’s golden government.

After three years Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego graduated with honors, being ten times better than all the other wise men in Babylonian Empire. It was their covenant love for God that sustained them during this time of training and to serve for the glory of God at the highest level in this foreign government. As they served their identity was never as Babylonian officials but as children of God. Even though they lived in Babylonia, their citizenship was never in the kingdom of Babylon but rather in the Kingdom of Christ.

This morning we come to the familiar story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego being thrown into the fiery furnace. These men were faced with the decision to either bow down to Nebuchadnezzar’s newly constructed national idol or stand firm in their faith in God alone.

Our call to worship this morning comes from Psalms 135.15-20:

**Call to Worship**

*The idols of the nations are but silver and gold, the work of man’s hands.**They have mouths, but they do not speak; They have eyes, but they do not see;**They have ears, but they do not hear, nor is there any breath at all in their mouths.**Those who make them will be like them, Yes, everyone who trusts in them.**O house of Israel, bless the Lord; O house of Aaron, bless the Lord; O house of Levi, bless the Lord; You who revere the Lord, bless the Lord.* (NASV)

Let us worship God.

**Reading of Scripture**

*King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, sixty cubits high and six cubits wide, and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon.****2****He then summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the image he had set up.****3****So the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials assembled for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and they stood before it.*

***4****Then the herald loudly proclaimed, “Nations and peoples of every language, this is what you are commanded to do:****5****As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up.****6****Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.”*

***7****Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp and all kinds of music, all the nations and peoples of every language fell down and worshiped the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.*

***8****At this time some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews.****9****They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “May the king live forever!****10****Your Majesty has issued a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music must fall down and worship the image of gold,****11****and that whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace.****12****But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up.”*

***13****Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king,****14****and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up?****15****Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?”*

***16****Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, “King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter.****17****If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty’s hand.****18****But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”*

***19****Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual****20****and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace.****21****So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace.****22****The king’s command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego,****23****and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace.*

***24****Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, “Weren’t there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?” They replied, “Certainly, Your Majesty.”* ***25****He said, “Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods.”*

***26****Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, “Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!” So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire,****27****and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.*

***28****Then Nebuchadnezzar said, “Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king’s command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God.****29****Therefore I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way.”*

***30****Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the province of Babylon.*

**Introduction**

Last week we looked at chapter two where Nebuchadnezzar is being haunted by a reoccurring dream. Nebuchadnezzar called together a delegation of the wise men of Babylon to tell him details of his dream and its interpretation but they could not. So the king ordered for all the wise men of Babylon to be executed including Daniel and his three friends. Daniel quickly asked Nebuchadnezzar to give him time to seek the Lord for an interpretation and after a night of prayer the mystery of the dream was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Daniel rushes off to tell Nebuchadnezzar the details of his dream and its interpretation.

Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar that God had chosen him to be an instrument of grace and to explain the dream and its interpretation. Daniel explains that Nebuchadnezzar saw a great single statue, which was large, extraordinarily remarkable, and awesome in appearance. *The head of the statue was made of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze,**its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay.* (2.32-33)

Then Daniel reveals the mystery of the great statue.



He begins by telling Nebuchadnezzar that the Babylonian Empire is the head of gold.

Daniel continues telling Nebuchadnezzar that after him will arise another kingdom – the kingdom of silver – the Persian Empire. Then there will be a third kingdom of bronze that will rule over the earth. This is the Greek Empire. The forth kingdom is the kingdom of iron – the Roman Empire. Then there will be the Divided Nations made partly from iron and partly from clay. The Divided Nations are the nations of the world since the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As Nebuchadnezzar continued to look upon this great single statue, the scene changes to a stone cut out of the mountain without hands, and it strikes like a meteor out of heaven and crushes the feet of iron and clay causing the statue to collapse into a pile of rubble.

The wind blows all the dust partials of the statue away so that not a trace of it was found. The stone that struck the statue becomes a great mountain that fills the earth. This is the established of the Kingdom of Christ at Christ’ second coming when the earth passes away and the Lord creates a new heaven and a new earth. (Rev.21.1) The mystery revealed to Nebuchadnezzar is that God orchestrates the rise and fall of kingdoms, empires, and nations so to usher in the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ where He will reign forever and ever. (Rev.11.15)

After revealing the dream to Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel is promoted as ruler over all of Babylon and his three friends as administrators over the entire province. These promotions made Daniel and his three friends chief overseers in the golden government of Babylon but their allegiance was always to the Rock from heaven – the Kingdom of Christ!

Now, I tell you all the backstory because the first verse of chapter three will not make sense without it.

*King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, sixty cubits high and six cubits wide, and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon.*

In the dream Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, God had identified the kingdom of Babylon as the head of gold. Twenty years passed between chapter two and chapter three. These years gave Nebuchadnezzar plenty of time to ponder over the dream, consider the statue’s flaws, and address the problem it represented. If the statue in his dream was unstable, then Nebuchadnezzar must strengthen the statue from head to toe.



Nebuchadnezzar realized that the metals of the statue diminished in value – gold the most costly, and then silver, then bronze, then iron, and then those brittle feet of iron mixed with clay. Unlike Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar did not focus on the rock from heaven but rather on the weakness of the statue itself. He concluded that the problem was the disunity and instability of the Divided Nations represented by those feet of clay. So Nebuchadnezzar devised a plan to construct a statue that would be a symbol of national unity and strength. Nebuchadnezzar concluded that if the statue in his dream was unstable then why not make a new statue that represented dominion, power, might, and glory? (2.37-38) Why not construct an image of gold? Why not construct a monument to himself and his golden government of Babylon? A symbol of strength, stability, and majesty!



Twenty years is plenty of time to consider the perfect location, design, engineer, and construct a monument to himself and his accomplishments – an image of gold. Even though the Bible doesn’t give us the details of Nebuchadnezzar’s image of gold, we can assume based upon his immense pride, which we will see in chapter four, that the image of gold could have resembled the statue Nebuchadnezzar had seen in his dream.

The image of gold is described as being 90 feet tall and 9 feet at its base. These dimensions could represent the scale used to construct statue in the shape of a human. Although Nebuchadnezzar had vast wealth the image was probably not solid gold. The statue was probably constructed with bricks and mortar to provide maximum stability and then overlaid with gold plates. Regardless, the image would have been majestic.

The image was erected *“on the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.”* (3.1b) The plain of Dura was located six miles southwest of Babylon, which would make its proximity convenient for all citizen and guests. This was the same area where the tower of Babel was constructed where mankind would make a name from for them selves in an attempt to build a tower that would reach into heaven. (Gen.11.2-4) Now Nebuchadnezzar wants to make a name for him self and the location was perfect. Its location in a valley plain would make the height of the nine-story structure very impressive. There was nothing in the surrounding landscape that would rival the statue’s scope or height. One mighty king, one stable empire, and one unifying religious symbol with no competitors, this was perfect for an emperor like Nebuchadnezzar who wanted to make a name for him self on the pages of world history.

**The Command**

The day of dedication has arrived and Nebuchadnezzar calls all seven classifications of his government officials to come to the dedication of the image. (3.2-3, 24, 27) This would include Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. (2.48-49) Nebuchadnezzar puts together an international orchestra to play all kinds of music representing all the peoples, nations, and languages of the empire. (3.4-5, 7, 15)

*Then the herald loudly proclaimed, “Nations and peoples of every language, this is what you are commanded to do: As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.”* (3.4-6)

This was an exercise in empire building. Nebuchadnezzar would use the image of gold to unite the empire with national pride, with international music playing, and a command for all the people bow down in unison to worship the golden image of Babylon. As the commanded was issued everyone could see the smoke bellowing from the blazing furnace in the background. Obeying this command would be a demonstration of cultural, political and religious solidarity in a pluralistic society.

It is important for us to take a minute to understand Nebuchadnezzar’s command. In Nebuchadnezzar’s pluralistic kingdom people could keep and worship the gods of their own nations and cultures, just as long as they gave priority to the official god of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar was saying, “We can celebrate our differences, that’s why I have this great orchestra playing all the different kinds of music. We can celebrate our differences just as long as you accept the god of Babylon as being superior and you worship the image of gold for the unification of the empire.”

Like Babylon, we live in a pluralistic society where view is tolerated except the view that there is only one way. Strict biblical monotheism, the belief that there is only one God and one way to God, is totally intolerable. We live in a culture where all views are accepted – except the view that there is only one way, only one mediator between God and man – the man Jesus Christ. (ITim.2.5) Believing that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life and no one comes to the Father except through Him will get you throw into the fiery furnace of public disapproval. (Jn.14.6)

Christians of every generation have had to stand firm in faith in one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. (Eph.4.5) The Early Church faced a crisis when it was required to recite the formula “Caesar is Lord” giving a loyalty oath to the Roman emperor. Many Christians chose to die rather than utter the loyalty oath to Caesar. The words “Jesus is Lord” were on the lips of these Christians martyrs as they were fed to the lions. Today Christians living under communist regimes and areas dominated by ISIS are demand to make a loyalty oath or be put to death. My point is that Nebuchadnezzar’s command wasn’t new then and it isn’t new today. As we live in exile, Christian’s must stand firm in faith declaring Jesus is Lord! Only Jesus is Lord!

**The Conspiracy**

*At this time some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews.* (3.8)

These astrologers owed their life to Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. By giving Nebuchadnezzar the answer to his dream Daniel and his friends had saved all of the wise men from execution. But now these astrologers wanted these Jews executed. It is clear that there is a deep-seated resentment against Daniel and his three friends. Nebuchadnezzar had given them the highest positions in the golden government and these astrologers were jealous, envious that these outsiders had been given authority over the affairs of Babylon for the past twenty years. So this was their window of opportunity and *some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews.*

These astrologers would have known the Ten Commandments and especially the details of the second commandment that states, *“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.”* (Ex.20.4-5a)

Remember, it was Israel’s idolatry that had caused the exile in the first place. And these three Israelites were not going to be involved in anything that even resembled idolatry.

This word “*denounced*” is a harsh word that connotes slander or malicious accusations that devours the accused piece by piece. The point is that these astrologers were out for blood. They wanted these guys out of the way – they wanted their job – they wanted their position in the golden government of Babylon.



Maybe you have seen pictures like this one that shows Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego standing up in the midst of the bowing Babylonians. But it probably wasn’t like that. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego probably didn’t even attend the dedication ceremony.

The date of the ceremony would have been public knowledge for months. Daniel for some reason was absent. Maybe he took the opportunity take a diplomatic trip to one of the other provinces. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were conscientious objectors willing to serve the golden government without worshipping it.

The Bible tells us that if we are reviled for the name of Christ, we are blessed. If we suffer as Christians, we should not be ashamed, but know that we are glorying God. (IPt.4.14-16) The Bible tells us to *keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.* (IPt.3.16)I believe that this was Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego’s mindset as they faced this divine dilemma. They would love the Lord with all of the heart, soul, mind, and strength! They would honor the Lord above all and bow to no other!

Brothers and sisters this must be our mindset as we are faced with speculations and every lofty thing rises up against the knowledge of God. (2Cor.10.5a) We will honor the Lord above all and bow to no other!

The astrologers brought three charges against the Jewish trio. They first accused them of showing disregard for the king’s authority. Second, they did not serve the king’s god. Third, they would not bow down to the image of gold. (3.12)

***13****Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king,****14****and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up?****15****Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?”*

**Coercion**

Nebuchadnezzar gives them the opportunity to obey the command to worship the image of gold showing their allegiance to serve his gods by restating in full the command issued earlier. The repetition of the entire edict demonstrates that this was very personal for Nebuchadnezzar. Bowing or not bowing was not some abstract act – this was personal. Nebuchadnezzar was quite happy for the gods to rule heaven but make no mistake he was the ruler of the world and he would to be worshipped on earth. And since he was the ruler of the world *what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?”* So, turn or burn!

*Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, “King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty’s hand. But even if He does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”* (3.16-18)

**Covenant Commitment**

As we saw in chapter one these Hebrews would say “yes” to many things so to seek the welfare of the city but they will not deny their covenant commitment to God. They refuse to excuse or explain themselves. “*We do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter.”* Remember Nebuchadnezzar asked if it was true that they were unwilling to bow and their response leaves no question as to the answer. It is true. We will not bow! As to the blazing furnace*, “the God we serve is able to deliver us from it . . . But even if He does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”* They believed wholeheartedly that God is able to save them from the fire but even if He doesn’t they will stand firm in their covenant commitment to God. God is God. He is sovereign. *Our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases.* (Ps115.3)

Have you ever wondered why God rescues some people but allow others to suffer and die? For example, why did God rescue the Apostle Peter from prison, when Herod executed the Apostle James? (Acts 12) Why save Peter and let James die? Only God knows. Have you ever noticed that in Hebrews chapter eleven, the chapter recognizing great heroes of the faith, that at the end of the chapter there is a list of some who experienced all kinds of miracles and deliverances, while others experienced all kinds of suffering and death. But both groups were commended for their faith and all were included in the great crowd of witnesses. (Heb.11.33-12.1) The fact is that the unifying characteristic of both groups, those who experienced miracles and those who experienced death, is that they all stood firm in faith in God. It is important to remember that our focus must always be on our covenant commitment to God regardless of what we experience. Our prayer must be *“Not my will but Thy will be done.”* (Lk.22.42) “*Though He slay me, yet I will hope in Him.*” (Job 13.15)

*Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious . . . He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual* *and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace.* (3.20-21)

**Consequences**

Now this furnace was probably used to make the bricks for the construction of image of gold. It would have been nearby. Nebuchadnezzar was hot with anger but furnace was seven times hotter. The three Hebrews wearing their festival clothing were bound, carried by the strongest soldiers, and thrown into the top of the furnace. The fire was so hot that the flames streaming out of the furnace killed the soldiers. (3.21-23) Nebuchadnezzar took his seat at the bottom of the furnace to view the public burning through an opening used for fueling the furnace and an abundance of air for combustion.

*Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, “Weren’t there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?” They replied, “Certainly, Your Majesty.” He said, “Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods.”* (3.24-25)

**Companionship**

Instead of being bound, they were free; instead of screaming in anguish, they were walking around making no attempt to come out; and instead of three men there were four and the forth looked like a son of the gods. From Nebuchadnezzar point of view, this forth person was a divine person, someone beyond all human comprehension, someone more powerful than himself. Remember, Nebuchadnezzar was quite happy for the gods to rule heaven. Even his wise men had told him that the gods do not dwell among humans. (2.11) But this divine person is dwelling with His people in the midst of the furnace. Nebuchadnezzar had asked, “*what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?”* And the answer is the forth man! This is the pre-incarnate Son of God. What we call “Christophany.” Not the son of gods but the pre-incarnate Son of God, Jesus Christ. The One who will never leave us or forsake us! (Heb.13.5) *"Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them.”* (Rev.21.5)

Brothers and sisters, God dwells with His people no matter how hot the fire is! Someone here today needs to hear that again. God dwells with His people no matter how hot the fire is! “He walks with me and talks with me and tells He tells me I am His own and the joy we share as we tarry there none other has ever known.” (Hymn: In the Garden) Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego could have stay in the fire until the flames became ambers because they were in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must ask God to give us the faith to stand firm in the midst of the flames and enjoy His presence.

Nebuchadnezzar approached the opening as close as he could and shouted for *“Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out!* All of the government officials Nebuchadnezzar had invited watched as they walked out of the furnace. (3.26-27a)

*They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.* (3.27b)

This was to fulfill what the Lord said through the Prophet Isaiah, *“When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned.”* (Is.43.2) We must ask the Lord to work deep in our hearts so that when we walk through the fires of this world, we will have confidence in Christ that we will not be burned. That our hair will not be singed! Our clothing will not be scorched! The smell of smoke will not be on us!

**Celebration**

*Then Nebuchadnezzar said, “Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king’s command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. Therefore I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way.”* (3.28-29)

I don’t think Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego relished in Nebuchadnezzar’s pronouncement of punishment but the first part of his pronouncement I am sure they welcomed. Nebuchadnezzar states it perfectly, “*They trusted in Him and defied the king’s command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God.”* They stood firm in faith!

*Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the province of Babylon.* (3.30) Jesus’ promise is true, *“Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”* (Mt.6.33)

**Closing Thought**

Daniel chapter three gives us great insight as to how to live as exiles in a strange land.

1. Christian’s must stand firm in faith declaring Jesus is Lord! Only Jesus is Lord!
2. We must seek the Holy Spirit to give us faith to confront speculations and every lofty thing rises up against the knowledge of God.
3. Our focus must always be on our covenant commitment to God regardless of the circumstances that surround us. As Jesus taught us, *“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”* (Jn.14.15)
4. We must ask God to give us the faith to stand firm in the midst of the flames and enjoy His presence.

Some of you might know that I am a big Johnny Cash fan. In 1969 recorded the country classic “The Fourth Man.” I remember listening to this song as my parents played Johnny’s Holy Land album. The song describes Daniel chapter three and the chorus goes like this:

They wouldn't bend

They held onto the will of God so we are told

They wouldn't bow

They would not bow their knees to the idol made of gold

They wouldn't burn

They were protected by the fourth man in the fire

They wouldn't bend,

they wouldn't bow,

They wouldn't burn.

My challenge for us today is that as we live in exile here let’s seek the Lord for the faith to stand firm and not bend to this world’s philosophies and opinions, not bow to the idols of this world, and trust the fourth man, our Lord Jesus Christ, to walk with us in the fire.

Let’s stand firm in faith in Jesus Christ alone so that not even the stench of this world is on our clothes.

**Call to Prayer**

*It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.* (Gal.5.1)

**Benediction**

*To the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.*