

DANIEL AND THE PUBLIC AFFAIRES AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

PREACHING for the RELIGIOUS LIBERTY'S SABBATH

21st January 2023

« THE TRUE RELIGIOUS LIBERTY »

INTRODUCTION

The children of Israel were in captivity in the countries that not fear God. More precisely, countries that have had idols. It's not that they don't believe in the existence of God, but they have their god that they worship.

On the other hand, the culture of the time advocated that the power of the God you worship was measured by the struggle you face. So you can imagine the battle the children of Israel has to face when they were taken captive. A great problem since it seems mean that their God is weak. So, the conquering country uses all the means they have to force you to worship their god and to follow their rituals.

Yet the story of Daniel and his three friends seems to meet these challenges, and show us the bases of the true, authentic religious liberty.

1) FREEDOM IN THE WAY OF LIFE

We find in Daniel 1 :8 the first trial that Daniel went through. Eating at the king's table is a great privilege. Here there was no obligation. It's just a display of privilege.

However, Daniel and his friends were not even tempted to say to themselves : « It would be difficult to refuse, besides, we are captives or we are already pampered. They were not at all tempted to simplify their lives. They hadn't exchanged their ways of living according to God privileges.

First lesson : Religious freedom is about being true to your biblical way of life even if there are no direct constraints on your choices and privileges yet.

2) MENTAL FREEDOM

The way in which the second challenge presented itself before them was to have to change their names and study Babylonian ways and customs. The Babylonians had prepared them to become seers, sages and fortune tellers according to the traditions.

Names according to the culture of the time reflect characters and personality. But they could only change their names but not their characters. They proved that neither the change of name or the studies made could change their faith.

Second lesson : religious freedom is based on the steadfastness of your character in the face of the challenges and influences that the outside world places before you. Your faithfulness to what you believe in the face of all kinds of teachings. Your courage to say, as Paul did, while saying : « I know what I believe ! »

3) FREEDOM TO PRAY

The last challenge that we will see are the two identical cases experienced by Daniel and his friends. They hadn't been tested together. On one side Shadrac, Meshach and Abednego and on the other side Daniel was alone.

Both has been pressed to pray to another god, an idol. For the three friends, it was the golden statue. But for Daniel it was to pray only to the king during 30 days. It was really a challenge. There was no more demonstration of advantages to be gained here, no more attractive influences by the change of names, no more philosophical and scientific teaching, but it was really an irrefutable obligation. Yet their reaction was commendable. Even though they were no longer together but separated, they remained faithful where they were. We can still stand firm where we are.

Third lesson : The religious liberty is the fact of remaining faithful in the fire of the trial and in the fact of forcing you to deny your faith and God !

SUMMARY

As these three lessons, the religious liberty begins by the « conscience liberty ». Your feeling that no one can dominate your mind, or your thought and above all your choices. Someone may oblige your body by making you suffer in many ways but he cannot oblige your mind or your thought.

So the battle for the religious liberty doesn't begin by our request to the State or to the place where we work or another thing. The religious liberty and our relation with our state are our readiness to show our faith with courage but by wisdom before them. The world needs a person who is firm in his faith. We can show that to our different leaders as Daniel did it, so they will accept that « there is no Great God than the Daniel's God who is your God. »