

God is Judge

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[0 : 00] Jesus. Please, if you would, turn your Bibles this morning to the book of Daniel.

! You say, Chris, you've forgotten. It's Easter season.! Daniel is not an Easter season sermon. I do understand that is the case. However, I have made it my goal to preach from the Old Testament every time I stand in front of you.

And so I will continue to do that. And I think that we can tie Daniel in very easily to the Easter message. And so this morning we're going to be in Daniel chapter 6.

This is a familiar passage. Many of you have grown up hearing about this passage. It is a famous children's story, and that is of Daniel in the lion's den. Now, if you're taking notes this morning, you may be a little upset because there's no title in the bulletin.

I'm terrible with titles, and so I'll give you a title if you need one. And that is, God is judge. God is judge. And so please follow along with me.

[1 : 07] I'm going to read verses 1 through 12 in Daniel chapter 6. Darius decided to appoint 120 satraps over the kingdom stationed throughout the realm, and over them three administrators, including Daniel.

These satraps would be accountable to them so that the king would not be defrauded. Daniel distinguished himself above the administrators and satraps because he had an extraordinary spirit. So the king planned to set him over the whole realm.

The administrators and satraps, therefore, kept trying to find a charge against Daniel regarding the kingdom. But they could find no charge or corruption, for he was trustworthy, and no negligence or corruption was found in him.

And then these men said, We will never find any charge against this Daniel unless we find something against him concerning the law of his God. So the administrators and satraps went together to the king and said to him, May King Darius live forever.

All the administrators of the kingdom, the prefects, the satraps, the advisors and governors, have agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an edict for 30 days.

[2 : 14] Anyone who petitions any god or man except you, the king, will be thrown into the lion's den. Therefore, your majesty, establish the edict and sign the document so that as according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, it is irrevocable and cannot be changed.

So King Darius signed the document. When Daniel learned that the document had been signed, he went to his house. The windows in its upper room opened toward Jerusalem. And three times a day, he got down on his knees, prayed, and gave thanks to his God, just as he had done before. And then these men went as a group and found Daniel petitioning and imploring his God. So they approached the king and asked about his edict. Didn't you sign an edict for 30 days, saying, Any man who petitions any god or man except you, the king, will be thrown into the lion's den?

And the king answered, As a law of the Medes and Persians, the order stands and is irrevocable. Let's pray. Lord, I thank you for the opportunity and the privilege to declare your word this morning. And Lord, I pray that you would just open our hearts, open our ears, that we would hear from you. That we would have, that you would remove distractions from us, Lord. And that our minds would be nowhere and our hearts would be nowhere except for here in this place and in this moment.

[3 : 34] And that we would hear you speak. Lord, I pray you just bless the reading and bless the preaching of your word this morning. In this in your awesome name I pray. Amen. In 1209, there was a group of people who had split off from the Catholic Church called the Cathars.

The Cathars were a Christian group and they decided that they didn't agree with the Catholic Church. One, they didn't agree with the Pope being the mouthpiece of God. They felt like Baptists, that the individual believer could go before God.

They didn't agree with several things with the Catholic Church. And so that obviously made the Catholic Church upset. And so Pope Innocent III decided that it was time to crack down on these so-called believers.

And so he sent a crusader army to the town of Béziers in France to crack down on them. Now this crusader army was led by a guy named Simon de Montfort.

He was a French nobleman. And he was very motivated in his crusade against the Cathars. He was very motivated because the Pope promised him for every heretic he killed, he would get whatever lands and possessions they had.

[4 : 43] And so on one hand, he looks good with the Catholic Church. On the other hand, he's going to get a lot of land out of this deal. And so he travels to Béziers with his army. And with him travels a monk.

A monk by the name of Arnold Amalric. Now Arnold Amalric was basically the Pope's emissary. He was there to make sure, I suppose, that all the heretics died. And that Simon de Montfort did his job. And so the crusader army arrived on July 22nd outside the town of Béziers. And Simon de Montfort sent to the leaders of that town and he said, Listen, you need to send out all these heretics. Because we're going to kill them. And the leaders of the town were Catholic and they refused to do so because they got along with the heretics pretty well. And they were actually celebrating the Feast of Mary Magdalene at the time.

And so they refused. And so Simon de Montfort gave the order to attack the town of Béziers and kill every man, woman, and child there. And as the soldiers started marching forward, they asked, they said, How are we supposed to tell the difference between the heretics and the Catholics?

[5 : 51] And Arnold Amalric is famous for saying, Kill them all, God will recognize his own. And that saying has come down through the centuries, through the ages, and has changed slightly to the saying that we have today.

It's popular in action movies and war movies. If you are in the military, it's popular on unit patches. And that is, kill them all and let God sort them out. Now I'll say to you this morning, I think the life of Daniel has a similar, albeit more encouraging, statement.

And that is, bless them all, let God be the judge. Now to set this up for you so you kind of understand where we're going, I want to give you some background.

Some background on the book of Daniel and the person of Daniel, and several of the characters in it. The book of Daniel really goes without saying, it's an Old Testament book and therefore it is, by nature of Old Testament books, controversial.

Now not really probably with any of us here, but a lot of modern scholarship takes issue with Daniel based on the authorship, based on the date of writing, and based on the interpretation.

[6 : 59] Now you'll notice in your English version that the book of Daniel is grouped in with the prophets. That's because we follow the Greek translation, which put them with the prophets because Daniel was a prophet.

Now the Hebrew text actually groups Daniel with the writings. They did not consider him a prophet in the same way that people like Isaiah and Jeremiah were prophets.

You will not find the same type of sermons in here to the people of God that Isaiah and Jeremiah preached all through their texts. And so he is grouped in, Daniel is grouped in, with the writings according to the Hebrew text.

Now as far as authorship, most conservative scholars, and I believe they're correct, would put the date of writing and the author somewhere in the 6th century, and the author would in fact be Daniel. So in the 6th century BC, he wrote this down for us. Now some modern scholarship would like to say that it was written at a later date. They would say that it was written in the 2nd century BC during a very tumultuous time in Israel's history during the Maccabean period.

[8 : 07] And what they would say is that basically somebody writing under the name of Daniel wrote this book in order to encourage the Jews as they were suffering under a famous guy named Antiochus Epiphanes.

So this was a book of encouragement for them, and he wrote in a lot of prophetic things that would come true. That's where we get the idea of Darius the Mede, they would say, because in Isaiah and Jeremiah we know that a Median king will conquer Babylon.

And so this author puts together basically chapters 7 through 12, and then he found another text in the 3rd century of chapters 1 through 6. He put them all together, gave it to the people of Israel, and

it is the book of Daniel.

It's really making a huge problem that doesn't really exist. I think the book of Daniel stands very well on its own without all the controversy. A lot of the controversy surrounding it was based on we don't know who some of the people are.

The famous story of the writing on the wall, King Belshazzar, we didn't have any record of him until really recent times. And so these scholarships say, you know, it's not possible.

[9 : 15] These are made-up people, made-up places to encourage Israel. But in the 20th century, archaeologists actually found a cuneiform tablet that talks about Belshazzar. And so the Bible, though it didn't need to be proved, was proved by archaeological evidence.

I think it stands as a historical account written by Daniel. Other hints as to it, it uses a lot of the vernacular of the Persians, something that would not have been used in the 2nd century or 3rd century.

But most importantly, and I think this, for me, it solves the argument, and it should for you as well, the New Testament affirms the authorship of Daniel. It affirms it in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and it also speaks of Daniel in the book of Hebrews.

Now, Daniel is a person. His name means God is judge. God is judge. Now, Hebrew names are important. They mean something for a reason.

A lot of times, their names give us clues to the text. One of my favorite examples of this is the text of Jonah. Jonah and the whale. Everyone's heard this text.

[10 : 20] Well, his name means dove. So when you read the story, what happens when you approach a dove? Well, they take off, fly away. What happens when God approaches Jonah?

Take off, fly away. And so it's a hint. It carries meaning in our story this morning. God is judge. He was most likely of noble birth as far as his Jewish heritage.

He was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar. He was trained according to the Babylonian education and lifestyle. He was probably transferred to Babylon somewhere around 605 B.C.

And also, the cool thing is he lived a very long time. History tells us that Daniel probably was 100 years old when Darius I came to power. So he served many kings.

He served both Babylonian kings and Persian kings. And so that's Daniel. Now, Darius. Darius is kind of different. Darius the Mede.

[11 : 22] There is no historical mention outside of the Bible or archaeological mention of this guy, Darius the Mede. And so there's lots of different theories surrounding him.

I'll give you four this morning. They're pretty much the four main theories. I think some of them have merit. Some of them don't have merit. The first theory is they made them up. It doesn't have any merit.

I don't think the Bible's going to lie to us. I know the Bible's not going to lie to us. And so obviously that theory's not going to work. But they say they made Darius the Mede up so that they could help God out with his prophecy in Isaiah and Jeremiah.

Because a Mede is supposed to conquer Babylon. Therefore, Daniel writes about a Mede and made him up. The second theory is that he is Darius I or Darius the Great.

But Darius the Great, we know from history, comes along a little too late. And he also didn't conquer Babylon. In fact, what he's most famous for is the Battle of Marathon where he is defeated by the Athenians and the Greek army.

[12 : 20] The third idea that people put forward is that the Darius of Daniel chapter 6 is in fact one of the generals or governors of Cyrus the Persian. And Cyrus, according to history, sent this guy.

His name was Gubaru. Sent him. He was a Mede. He led a Mede army. And he sent him to take over Babylon. And so that's the third theory. But I think the theory that's probably correct, the one that I believe, is that Darius was in fact Cyrus the Persian.

We know from history that Cyrus the Persian died at age 70, around age 70, after reigning in Babylon for nine years. We know from Daniel chapter 5 verse 31 that Darius the Mede was 62, around 62 years old when he took over Babylon.

If you do the math, the ages match. Not only that, but it is not without precedent for there to be dual titles when it comes to people in the book of Daniel.

Daniel has two names. Daniel and Belt Shazzar. You have Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They have two names. Daniel writes the book of Daniel in both Jewish and Aramaic.

[13:31] Both Hebrew and Aramaic, sorry. Hebrew and Aramaic, depending on who he's trying to target as his audience. And so for Daniel to write about Cyrus the Persian, it would make sense for him to refer to him by another name he was known by, another title, Darius the Mede.

Because he's writing to a Jewish audience that is familiar with the prophecy of Isaiah and Jeremiah that says, Amid will conquer and take over Babylon. And so the Israelites, the Jewish people, would read it and say, oh, man, our God is a great God.

He prophesies and it comes true. And so I think that he was indeed Cyrus the Persian. Now moving on, as far as the text. I want to do it a little differently this morning.

Usually I'll kind of work through the text and then provide application. But I want to do application as we go through the text because I want to separate the text from the application. And so starting in just the first couple of verses, we find out that Darius has conquered Babylon.

Now it's time for Darius to consolidate his reign. He is a new ruler in this area. He is the ruler of the Medo-Persian Empire, the largest empire the earth has known to this point.

[14:46] And so in consolidating his reign, he needs to set up a system of governing. And so what does he do? Well, the Bible tells us that he sets up 120 satraps. And these are basically, they're somewhat similar to our governors of today, except their job was probably much more financial.

And so they would basically make sure, as it says in the text, that the king was not defrauded. That he got all the tax revenue from his various provinces. And so these men are set up, 120 satraps, and over them he sets three administrators.

I think the King James calls them presidents. Three administrators, commissioners, or presidents. And of these administrators, Daniel is one. Now as far as why Darius or how Darius knew Daniel, the text isn't clear.

It doesn't say. But it's Daniel we're talking about. We can read chapters 1 through 5, and you read about him interpreting dreams, interpreting the handwriting on the wall.

This guy is most likely, by the power of God, his name has been elevated to great prominence in this area. And so it would not be strange for Darius to come in and put him to work, because he would have been trustworthy and a prominent individual.

[16:01] And so that's basically your first two verses. In verse 3, we come to the fact that Darius is impressed with Daniel. Darius is impressed with Daniel, and he plans to elevate him to an office that is basically above everyone else.

And so Daniel may very well, in effect, was going to be elevated to second-in-command under King Darius. And why, and I think that's the question, I don't think we should miss it, why would Darius do this?

In what seems like a very short time frame, why would he suddenly decide to elevate Daniel? And the text actually tells us there in verse 3, It says, Daniel distinguished himself above the administrators and satraps because he had an extraordinary spirit.

Some of your Bibles refer to it as an excellent spirit. An extraordinary spirit. Do not miss it. Daniel, by the power of God, is a blessing because of his extraordinary spirit to this godless nation and this godless king.

He had an excellent spirit as he performed his civic and administrative duties. He was not a grumbler. He was not a complainer. He didn't complain about the sad state of governmental affairs in the Medo-Persian Empire as it's beginning to grow.

[17:24] There was no rebellion in him. And he allowed God to use him to bless an empire that had taken him from his homeland, had stolen his national identity, and taken him to this strange place where the name of their Hebrew god wasn't even known, much less worshipped.

Daniel was a man of character, of extraordinary spirit. Now take a moment and consider it. What has Daniel's faithfulness, his extraordinary spirit, done up to this point?

Well, I'm glad you asked because you can actually turn back one page. One page in chapter 4. It's one page in my Bible. In chapter 4, starting in verse 34, this guy, Nebuchadnezzar, a king, has something to say about the Hebrew god.

And it says, Skip to verse 37.

Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt, and glorify the king of heaven because all his works are true and his ways are just. And he is able to humble those who walk in pride.

[19:08] Nebuchadnezzar has this dream in this chapter. And this strange dream that Daniel interprets for him. And Daniel basically comes to him and says, Listen, king, this is what your dream

means.

You're going to become a wild man. You're going to lose your kingdom and you're going to eat grass for a while. After that's over, the kingdom will be restored to you. This isn't necessarily good news that Daniel is telling him, but it's faithful.

It's a faithful and right interpretation of his dream. And so the prophecy comes true. And Nebuchadnezzar says this. Not Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar, a godless, polytheistic, self-worshipping little god king, has that to say about the Hebrew god, about Yahweh, about your god.

Because of the faithfulness and blessing of Daniel. You turn back another page. You can read in Daniel chapter 3. This isn't necessarily Daniel, but definitely followers of Daniel.

In Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. In chapter 3, verse 29. Therefore, I issue a decree. This is Nebuchadnezzar speaking again, by the way. That anyone of any people, nation, or language who says anything offensive against the god of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego will be torn limb from limb and his house made a garbage dump.

[20 : 27] For there is no other god who is able to deliver like this. Because of faithfulness and blessing of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. A godless, polytheistic, self-worshipping little god king praises the Hebrew god.

But if that's not enough, you can turn back yet another page. Nebuchadnezzar, once again. We find Nebuchadnezzar in chapter 2, verse 47. This is after yet another interpretation by Daniel of one of Nebuchadnezzar's dreams.

The king said to Daniel, your God is indeed God of gods, Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries since you were able to reveal this mystery.

Dear people, Daniel's obedience and faithfulness and blessing of a godless nation has these godless kings praising Yahweh God.

That is huge because of his faithfulness, because of his blessing. And so I ask you, and I ask myself, what if we were a blessing to the nations around us?

[21 : 39] What would happen if you made it a point to be a blessing, one, in your church? If you made it a point to be a blessing in your home? If you were a blessing at your work, where you had your recreation at, in your community?

What if you made it a point, like Daniel, to be an obedient blessing to the world? I'm not talking about financial or physical blessing, though that may have a part in it, and our church takes a very important part in that as far as our giving.

But a blessing, an obedient, faithful blessing like that of Daniel, I think there's a biblical precedent for us being a blessing to the nations.

I think first it's laid down in Genesis chapter 22. You can turn there if you want, but let me read it. I will indeed bless you and make your offspring as numerous as the stars of the sky and the sand on the seashore.

Your offspring will possess the gates of their enemies, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed by your offspring because you have obeyed my command. God says, I will make you a blessing.

[22 : 47] Well, you say, Chris, that's Old Covenant. That's talking about Israel. Well, I'll agree with you there, but look in 1 Corinthians 2, 1-5. Listen to this. This is what Paul says.

When I came to you, brothers, announcing the testimony of God to you, I did not come with brilliance of speech or wisdom, for I didn't think it was a good idea to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

We just sang about that. Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Verse 3, I came to you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. My speech and my proclamation were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with powerful demonstration by the Spirit, so that your faith might not be based on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

Let me ask you, is there any greater blessing than that of Christ crucified? That should be at the forefront of our minds this week as we approach Good Friday.

Christ crucified, there is no other blessing. And I'll tell you this, Paul communicates that best in Romans chapter 5. Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into the grace in which we stand, and we exult in the hope of the glory of God.

[24 : 11] And not only this, but we exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance, and perseverance, proven character, and proven character, hope. It certainly did in Daniel and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts to the Holy Spirit who was given to us. For while we were still helpless, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly.

For one will hardly die for a righteous man, though perhaps for a good man, someone would die. But God demonstrates His own love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

That's a blessing. That's a blessing to the nations. The message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I'm reminded when I was in the car business, I used to try and sell cars.

We would go through training, we'd go through workshops, where we would learn the art of selling cars. It's actually a lot harder than just going out and asking the first person who walks in the law, Hey, you want to buy a car?

[25 : 18] Because they don't trust you. And so in these workshops by a guy named Grant Cardone, a famous car salesman, very wealthy guy from selling cars, he would tell us this catchphrase, their lives are in the trunk.

Their lives are in the trunk. And the whole idea behind this catchphrase was to build rapport with the person that was going to buy a car from you, or you hoped would buy a car from you.

And so the first thing you would meet them, and you would notice, what did they pull up in? What's their car look like? And you say, Hey, you know what? Let's see how much we can get you for your car. How much is it worth?

We can make that a down payment for your new car. That's a great idea. And so you take their keys, and you walk around their car, and you start it, and then finally what you do after you look at it, and kind of feign interest really, you pop the trunk.

And that's where their lives are, and that's where your lives are, in the trunk. And so you pop the trunk, and maybe I see golf clubs. Well, this person probably enjoys golfing, or they're still someone's golf clubs.

[26 : 23] Maybe you see hunting gear. Maybe you see military gear. Whatever you see, you strike up a conversation. And so if I see golf clubs, I'm like, Yeah, I noticed you like to golf.

Where do you golf at? Oh, you do? Well, that's wonderful. I'm a terrible golfer. And you just kind of joke about it, and what happens is, they begin to, maybe even slightly, begin to trust you.

Who here trusts car salesmen? We've got one. One person trusts car salesmen. I wish you had bought a car from me.

And so you begin to build this, trust, this rapport, where you move from this kind of standoff relationship, because you invested time figuring out what they did, to where suddenly you're trustworthy enough, when you sit down, and you put a price in front of you, and you're like, Listen, this car's going to be \$30,000.

It's a lot easier to buy a car from someone you trust, than it is to buy a car from someone you don't trust. And that was the idea. The idea of building rapport.

[27 : 30] We're not offering an expensive product as the church. We're telling the good news of Jesus Christ. Christ crucified a free gift.

Absolutely free. What would happen if we built rapport with our neighbors, with our community, with nations? What would happen if we set our hearts on being a blessing to the nations, just like God tells us to do?

I think oftentimes we're the opposite. I know in my life I am. Instead of blessing, I tend to sometimes be a curse.

Instead of knowing nothing but Christ crucified, like Paul told us, I arm myself with skillful debate, or a compelling argument, or a moral cudgel, or maybe even the Constitution of the United States.

Instead of a blessing, I become a curse. You see, we skip Christ crucified entirely in favor of impressing our biblical and moral standards on people.

[28 : 44] Now, hear me. There's nothing wrong with our biblical and moral standards. They were set by God, and they are right, and they are just, and they are true. But when did we forget that you have to treat the problem before you treat the symptoms?

Sin is a cancer. The only cure for this cancer is the grace of God provided through Jesus Christ's suffering on a cruel cross and resurrection from the dead.

Why are we trying to treat symptoms before we treat the actual disease? I don't know if any of you have ever been through physical therapy in here. If you've broken a bone, and I pray no one has that happen to them.

If you've broken a bone, if you've broken your leg or your ankle, usually after the doctors have fixed what's wrong in there, you have weakness, maybe stiffness, and you go through physical therapy to strengthen that bone, that joint, so that you can walk on it again.

Some of you understand what I'm talking about. Now, how ludicrous would it be for you to walk in the doctor's office, and he looks at it, man, that ankle is just in pieces. Well, let me get you a prescription for the physical therapist, and we need to start you walking on that right away.

[29 : 59] We need to build strength in that right away. We need to treat the symptoms. You can't walk on it now. Well, you'll walk on it later. Would that not be ludicrous? You say, wait a minute. You have to fix this first, and then we can worry about the symptoms.

You're people. We need to offer the cure first, and then in our church, bravely and courageously fix the symptoms in ourselves, in our brothers and sisters around us.

I think there's precedent for it. I think Paul affirms it in 1 Corinthians 5, verses 9 through 12, when he said, I wrote to you in a letter not to associate with sexually immoral people. I did not mean immoral people of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters.

Otherwise, you would have to leave the world. But now I am writing you not to associate with anyone who claims to be a believer, who is sexually immoral, or greedy, an idolater, or verbally abusive, a drunkard, a swindler.

Do not even eat with this person, for what business is it of mine to judge outsiders? Don't you judge those who are inside, but God judges outsiders.

[31 : 09] Put away the evil person from among yourselves. We should be reaching lost with Christ crucified, and then treating the symptoms of sin when they come in these doors, and teaching them how to live according to a biblical and moral code that is right and just.

And we should not get that turned around. We should not get that backwards. And like Daniel, because of our faithfulness, and our humility, we would become a blessing to the nations.

A blessing. And maybe, just maybe, maybe not. But maybe like Daniel, godless kings and nations would proclaim the glory of Yahweh God, of your God, and my God.

I think that's what Daniel's teaching us. Well, that's three verses down. We've only got nine to go. Moving on, we hit verses four and five, and these are very quick.

They're just kind of story. They're filling it out. We hit verses four and five, and the other administrators are a little upset with Daniel. Now, before you're like, oh man, that's terrible of them.

[32 : 20] You would be upset too, because Daniel's about to be put over them. He can interpret dreams. They can't interpret dreams. He's Darius's favorite.

How are they supposed to compete with that? Well, they can't. And so, what do they decide to do? Well, they're going to find wrongdoing in him. They're going to find a charge against him according to the laws of their nations.

And so, they begin to look at Daniel. Is he corrupt? Nope. No corruption. Is he trustworthy? Yes, he's trustworthy. What about negligence?

Maybe he doesn't know how to do his job. Nope. No negligence. And so, not only can Daniel interpret dreams, not only does Darius really like Daniel, Daniel's pretty much, according to their knowledge, perfect.

Now, how do you get a perfect guy to break a law? Well, it's easy. You just change the law. And so, you find what Daniel is doing, and you make whatever he's doing against the law.

[33 : 22] And so, what is Daniel doing? And they say it, he's being faithful to God, to the law of his God. And so, they decide to make that against the law.

And so, the administrators, and the satraps, and these prefects, and these governors, it's like everybody gangs up on Daniel at this point, and goes to King Darius, Oh, King Darius, may you live forever.

we've got a great idea. Now, us as an audience reading it, it seems like a stupid idea. We can't believe that they're mentioning this, and one, we think Darius is kind of dumb for accepting this idea.

Why in the world would he say this? But understand what they are saying here in these verses. This is what they're saying. This is what they're communicating to Darius. Darius, remember how you're a God king?

Like, you're the physical representation of gods on earth, because that was their pagan belief. Remember that? And remember how you've got this new kingdom that you're trying to consolidate? There's probably rebellion in some areas.

[34 : 27] The people may or may not like you. We've got an idea for fixing that. And so, what we want to do is make it against the law for anybody to pray and ask for anything from the gods unless they go through you.

Unless they offer that prayer for you. And so, it's not this silly, stupid thing that Darius is saying. Oh, that sounds like a good idea. What they're saying is like, Darius, for the next 30 days, man, love your people and be a priest.

Be a mediator between them and their gods. What a wonderful idea. And Darius, because he's a self-worshipping little god king, that is a wonderful idea. Why wouldn't I do that?

And so, Darius signs the document. And listen, what Daniel does in verse 10. When Daniel learned that the document had been signed, he went into his house.

The windows in its upper room opened towards Jerusalem and three times a day he got down on his knees, prayed, and gave thanks to his God just as he had done before.

[35 : 34] We don't read about Daniel going to the king and saying, hey, I have my rights. We don't read about Daniel going to the king and saying, listen, this is not fair. This just targets me, no one else.

You don't read that in Daniel. You don't read about Daniel saying, you know what, I'll just shut my window for 30 days and no one will see me praying. No problem. No, he goes home just as he had done before, opens his window towards Jerusalem, which would have been viewed as the very throne, the earthly throne of his God, and prays three times a day.

Apparently, the administrators are spying on him or they just understood how faithful he was. And so, they barge into his house and what do they find Daniel doing? Praying to his God.

Asking his God for mercy. And so, they run back and talk to the king and say, didn't you make this law? And how does the rest of the story go?

There he's like, yeah, I made that law. Well, Daniel is breaking your law. And so, you can't revoke this law, so you've got to throw him in the lion's den.

[36 : 50] And I hope you know from a child when you study this verse or even from an adult when you study this story that obviously God is faithful to faithful Daniel.

Hebrews chapter 11 says that he shuts the mouths of lions. So, Daniel is thrown into the lion's den and obviously God is faithful and rescues him from that.

But for a moment, going back to this verse 10, put yourself in Daniel's shoes. How is Daniel feeling right now? He hears the decree, finds out what Darius has done and is going and he has a decision. Remain faithful to God and be rewarded with a lion's den or break my faithfulness with God, be unfaithful and live and then maybe after 30 days I can ask forgiveness and reestablish that relationship with God.

But no, Daniel faces a lion's den and remains faithful. Now, if you don't know anything about lions, I think hopefully everyone in here knows what a lion is. Lion, big, gnarly creatures, lots of hair, they're powerful creatures.

[38 : 02] They're designed, like every piece of them is designed to kill large land mammals.

Mammals that are much larger than this land mammal. Right? And so lions, lions are known, they weigh up to 550 pounds, the big ones.

The big ones are 10 feet long. The small ones are 9 feet long. Either way, you're in trouble. Their claws are up to an inch and a half long.

I've got a Bengal cat at home who's got claws like not even a centimeter long and that thing has like cut me bad on many occasions. An inch and a half long claws, their canine teeth are 3 inches long.

They're designed to bite into flesh and hold on and then tear flesh. That's what Daniel faces. They have a vertical leap of 12 feet. They could be great basketball players.

Maybe if it weren't for the claws. Really, probably the only good thing about lions, the only hope that Daniel can take is lions are known to sleep for about 20 hours a day.

[39 : 11] And so hopefully if you're real quiet when you're shoved into a lion's den of hungry lions, hopefully if you're real quiet, maybe they'll just sleep the whole time and you can have like a little worship service with God.

There's not a lot of hope for Daniel. Now I'm sure that Daniel had faith. Obviously he's a man of great faith because he's mentioned or his story is mentioned in Hebrews chapter 11, the faith chapter, but there's not a lot of hope, human hope for him.

And he can't assume going into this that God's going to deliver him because God makes no such promise. He just remains faithful in the face of a lion's den, in the face of these creatures that would kill him easily and quickly.

Now I don't know about you, but it doesn't take a lion's den to wreck my faith. Sometimes I'm too tired to get up and do my devotion. And so I hit that alarm clock and I sleep.

sometimes when I feel the Holy Spirit say, hey, share Christ with this person or at the very least stand up and mention Christ, I get scared because they might say no.

[40 : 32] Not lions. It's rejection. Sometimes I'm just too busy to be faithful to God. And I know I'm not the only one.

It doesn't take a lion's den. Daniel is faithful. He is a blessing to the nation around him and is rewarded with a lion's den. But we know from the story that God is faithful, that he shut the mouths of the lions.

And that brings us full circle. Full circle on the story of Daniel. Daniel is faithful. He's a blessing to Darius. And I want you to consider at the end of chapter 6, listen to what Darius says after Daniel is taken from that lion's den.

I issue a decree that in all my royal dominion, people must tremble in fear before the God of Daniel. For he is a living God and he endures forever.

His kingdom will never be destroyed and his dominion has no end. He rescues and delivers. He performs signs and wonders in the heavens. and on the earth. For he has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions.

[41 : 46] Because of Daniel's faithfulness and because he's a blessing to the nations, a pagan, polytheistic, self-worshiping God king praises Yahweh God.

That's awesome. Thank you.