

Daniel 05-12-11b

We resume our study in the Word of God this morning in Daniel chapter 6. Daniel chapter 6. The Babylonian Empire is no more. At the time that we pick up in chapter 6, some time has passed since the end of chapter 5. The Darius, or Darius, and I don't know that I'll remember to pronounce it the same way each time, that is spoken of here at the beginning of this chapter, is Darius I. He is the father of Xerxes I. That's a real fascinating name to spell, X-E-R-X-E-S. Xerxes.

The book of Esther talks about a Xerxes, which is actually going to be Artaxerxes, but we'll take up the succession in the Medo-Persian Empire at a later time. For now, all the book of Daniel gives us is the name of the next king. There is no historical record of the fall of the Babylonian Empire as far as the fate of Belshazzar, except one, and that is Xenophon.

I had a piano teacher when I was in junior high. I took a year of piano lessons, and this lady was hoping to infuse me with culture beyond that that existed in the hay baling community there in Rogers County. One time she loaned me a book, which was a translation of Xenophon, and I dutifully slogged through it.

It wasn't as interesting as other things I was reading at the time. I just didn't have an ear for history or the magnitude of events that Xenophon was recording, and it was kind of tough sledding, but I did finish it. I did go all the way through.

Xenophon has a lot of history both in the past and in his own experiences as a warrior and different battles that he participated in. If you can get through it, there's really some great stuff in it. Xenophon has a brief account of the Persians killing an unnamed Babylonian king when they took over Babylon.

That's the only extra-biblical historical note we have. Belshazzar, nobody would even know who he is or that he existed if it weren't for Daniel. In the kingdom of the Medes, there's nobody named Darius in history.

Historical records have not unearthed any Mede named Darius. Darius itself is a Persian name, but he's called Darius the Mede. So is Darius a title that he took on when he hooked up with the Persians? A lot of critical scholars, a lot of secular historians have decided that Darius is a fiction.

He's a historical myth. He's a construct built up from different historical and scriptural elements. Cyrus is the great Persian king, and he does take over the Medo-Persian empire from a Median precursor.

The Medes get there first, and then the Persians overcome them and sort of supplant them. But when Cyrus takes over, he doesn't immediately assume the title, the king of Babylon. Instead, he puts a vassal king in place on the throne in Babylon.

Cyrus himself is in his 60s, and he may have also been Median. There's some evidence to suggest that he might have been related or had some Median blood. But Babylon itself is captured, and perhaps it was given to the general who captured it to rule as a vassal king or as an under king, so to speak.

And that's where we get this Darius of chapter 6, verse 1. But let's read a little bit about this and see where we go now in Daniel chapter 6. After Darius receives the kingdom and is 62 years old, it pleased him to set over the kingdom 120 satraps to be over the whole kingdom, over these three governors, of whom Daniel was one, that the satraps might give account to them so that the king would suffer no loss. Now, how did this happen? Darius comes in from the outside, wipes out the whole royal house there, kills a bunch of people, takes over the city, and yet Daniel bobs to the top like a cork and winds up being one of the three rulers of the kingdom. How could we imagine this taking place? Of course, from a spiritual point of view, it's the will of God, and so it's going to happen.

But in practical terms, if you've ever seen someone come in and take over a new military unit or a new CEO come into a company or a new person come into a situation where there has been a previous leader that has exited for some reason, what does a wise leader typically do? He doesn't just take a big broom and sweep everything out and say, well, I've got a crew that I'm bringing back here with me from Minneapolis or something, and we're going to use them, and completely displace and uproot all of the existing structure. This is one of the problems they're having, by the way, in Iraq, in Baghdad, because if you've got a completely evil government and you have to not only chop off its head, but chop off its shoulders and arms, and a great deal of it has to go away because it's corrupt and anti-American and everything else, it's going to take a long time to rebuild any kind of meaningful government, and that's part of the patience that the United States has to have in that area is if you have to uproot the existing government, it's going to take time to replace it. There's no other way around it.

That wasn't necessary here in Babylon, and so when Darius comes in, what does he do? He's a wise leader. He asks some questions. Well, who's been in charge here? Who's wise? Who's got the smarts? Who's got the respect of the people? Who will the people listen to? I don't want to have to sit here and quell a bunch of uprisings and a bunch of guerrilla warfare and a resistance movement.

I want the people to be pacified. I want them to be happy. So who have we got here that the people will respect and listen to that I can put in charge, and yet I don't have to worry about them stabbing me in my sleep? Well, they say, well, I can tell you one guy that's trustworthy.

He hasn't been in power for a while, but this Daniel was served for 40 years with Nebuchadnezzar, and has been around. He's wise. He's effective.

He has a wonderful reputation. He's a legend in his own time. And Darius is no fool, and he says, great, bring me the guy.

Plus, he's not a Babylonian. He's a captive of the Babylonians, so you wouldn't expect him to have excessive loyalty to the Babylonians. You'd get yanked out of his land, so he ought to work for me just like he worked for them.

Who the other two are, we don't know, but one of the three is Daniel. And you can see that this can happen in practical terms under the influence and oversight of the Lord God, of course. But it makes sense from a pragmatic point of view that Darius would try to find someone who knows where the bodies are buried, who knows how to get things done, who has a reputation for trustworthiness, and if the guy says he'll be loyal and pledge his allegiance, you can take his word for it.

People say, I'll tell you whatever else you want to say about Daniel. He's never told a lie. He's never been a part of an intrigue.

He's never helped overthrow anybody. And his word is his bond. What he says goes.

And if he makes you a promise, you can count on it. That's his reputation. The point of application for us, if we are faithful and obedient believers, it will be recognized.

We may not be popular. We may not be everybody's friend. But people will know that if you need someone you can rely on, someone who will do what they say, who will, if they say they're going to be someplace, they'll be there.

If they say they're going to do something, they will do it. They have integrity. They have character.

They are solid. They're not unpredictable. They're not flighty.

They're not scattered and disorganized. They are someone who can be counted on. And people look for that in a time of crisis.

They look for it in a time when the chips are down and you need someone you can count on. You find this even in the political world. Sometimes more or less political enemies will join up.

Look at the tsunami relief. Who did you see on TV asking for financial support for the people who got wiped out by the tsunami? President Bush, President Clinton. And you think, you know, how can you get those two guys on the same stage and sitting side by side in two chairs? Well, there's a common goal that rises above political differences and ideological differences.

And that's what those two gentlemen did. Well, this is one of those times. And Daniel has that reputation.

It has been earned through a life of consistency and faithfulness and obedience. It may be weeks and months and years before you see the fruit of your consistency and your faithfulness in the human realm. God has it all on record.

It's going to make a big difference in the eternal future. But there are times when God will also use it here in time. And you may not even know the impression that you have left and the opinion that people have of you in the area of reliability and consistency and faithfulness and loyalty and integrity.

But it is one of the fruits of obedience. It is one of the ways that we reflect the glory of God. One of the ways that we reflect the image and the character of God is being like Him.

And having justice and mercy and long-suffering and forgiveness and putting the interests of others ahead of the interests of ourselves. That's what Daniel has done. And it sustains him through his time in Babylon.

It sustains him through the take-out phase in Babylon. And now he is one of the top rulers as an old man in his nineties, by the way. He is one of the top rulers in the new government of the Medo-Persian Empire.

It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom 120 satraps to be over the whole kingdom over these three governors. Of whom Daniel was one that the satraps might give account to them. You could imagine this might divide up into forties.

Forty satraps for each governor, perhaps. Nice round biblical number. So that the king would suffer no loss.

Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps because an excellent spirit was in him. What kind of a spirit is in us? What kind of spirit is in us? What did the Lord Jesus give us as a gift when He departed? I will send you another comforter. I will send you the Holy Spirit.

We are baptized by the Spirit. We are indwelt by the Spirit. We are filled by the Spirit.

We are sealed by the Spirit. We are gifted by the Spirit. We are regenerated by the Spirit.

We are led into all truth by the Spirit. God's Word is recalled to our minds. It's applicability, it's meaning.

In the day-to-day, grist-in-the-mill situations, large decisions, small decisions, things that seem minor, things that seem major, God the Holy Spirit is there. Is God the Holy Spirit an excellent spirit? Yes, He is. Of course, you have to listen to the excellent spirit.

You have to be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit. This is not just an injunction against alcoholism, by the way. Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess.

Wine comes from grapes. Grapes are the fruit of the ground. The vine is one of those metaphors that represents prosperity.

Every man in the millennial kingdom will have his own vine and his own fig tree. Don't get your

eyes on your prosperity. Don't overdo and get caught up in the material world.

We are in the world, but not of it. Our citizenship is in heaven. Don't be drunk with wine.

Don't get caught up and soaked up in temporal things so that you lose sight of spiritual values, spiritual goals, spiritual priorities. Our spiritual perspective ought to be imposed. It ought to be the lens and the filter through which everything comes.

Well, what does this mean in terms of my walk with God? What can I do here that reflects the honor and glory of God? What does God expect me to do? How is this going to relate to God's evaluation of me? Am I going to be in sin? Am I going to be walking out of faith? Am I going to be leaving the light and walking in darkness? Am I disregarding? Am I becoming apathetic and indifferent? Am I setting the things of God aside because I have a passion or I have an emotion or I have a temptation here? Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess. You get caught up in these things and it warps your judgment, just like wine. You can't see objectively anymore.

You become subjective. Eyes on self. Eyes on people.

Eyes on things. Be not drunk with wine. Don't let the things of the earth blur your vision.

Be filled with the Spirit. Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and the satraps because an excellent spirit was in him. You and I have the same opportunity.

To an even greater extent, we have a more full and extensive ministry of the Spirit than Daniel ever had. We have more Scripture. How much of a Bible did Daniel have? Had the Law.

Some of the wisdom books. Probably had the Psalter, the hymn book of Israel. Proverbs of Solomon.

And then what? That's about it. Most of the prophetic books were not yet in circulation. Although they may have been in existence, Daniel would have had a tough time getting a hold of them.

The bulk of what Daniel knew came from the Law of Moses. I think he had a copy of Jeremiah's prophecy. There's indications that Daniel was aware of Jeremiah.

But he had a limited Bible. He certainly didn't have all 39 books of the Old Testament. Definitely didn't have Ezra and Nehemiah.

But, an excellent spirit was in him and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm. Wise move. He's done it before.

He did it for the Babylonians. Well, you can imagine what this did to the governors and satraps. You're going to take this Hebrew slave and set him over us.

It's bad enough that he's over the satraps, but you're going to put him over the other two

governors as well. Replace him with a governor and have him be above the whole shooting match. You can tell Darius I was a wise man to recognize in Daniel leadership and understanding and effectiveness.

So, the governors and satraps sought to find some charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom. You can expect to be disliked by somebody if you're doing what you're supposed to. Do not be surprised.

We sometimes think, well, if I'm a believer and I'm full of light and love, everybody should just think we're great. Why would we have any enemies? It's all about love and Jesus walking through a field of flowers with a little child by the hand and a sort of holy glow coming down from heaven and everything should be blessing and everything should be not at all. In this world you shall have tribulation.

If you do what you're supposed to, men who love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil are going to hate you. Jesus said, if they hate me, they're going to hate you. And the more you look like Jesus, the more you're going to engender hatred, opposition, dislike, disfavor, the cold shoulder, whatever it may be.

So, there's a sense in which you have to be careful because there are times when if faithful, godly individuals are giving you the cold shoulder, you need to stop and take stock. Am I being unnecessarily obnoxious? But if ungodly people dislike you, take it as a compliment. That's how they treat the Lord Jesus.

And you must be getting more Christ-like. You look more like Christ than you look like them. And as I was mentioning in a conversation earlier this week, the way of the world is like a flock of chickens.

If anybody starts acting odd and different... I used to have chickens. I started out with 60 white leggings when I was in high school. And I had a little egg business going.

I had 60 chickens. But if a chicken got too close to a rough branch or a stray piece of chicken wire on the pen or something and yanked a feather out and got a little blood spot on it, the other chickens would look at that and say, you're not white like us. You've got a blood spot.

And they would start paying inordinate attention to that chicken and they would start pecking at it. And a chicken could be pecked to death if it had an injury because the other chickens would say, you're not like us, and they would just start... they'd peck it to death. And you see this in the world.

You see it when you find yourself in the company of unbelievers that are in a group. If you stand out because of your faith and you're odd and you're different, you can expect to get pecked because conformity is the issue of the day. Why do you think they're trying to rename the Christmas tree and get rid of the nativity scenes, taking God We Trust off the money? We don't want your faith to show.

We don't want Christianity to rear its ugly head in our country. And what they really mean is re-rear because Christianity was the norm until a few decades ago. Now people act like, oh, somebody's trying to bring Christianity into our secular society.

Not at all. We're trying to keep it from being eradicated from our Christian foundations. But people characterize it as they wish.

But here's the point. If you stand out as different, you can expect that ungodly people are going to resist you and hate you just like they did the Lord Jesus, just like they did the apostles. Do not be surprised.

Peter tells his audience, don't wonder at the fiery trial that you face. There's something the matter with you if you don't stand out, if you aren't opposed. What's the matter with you that you blend in so well that nobody thinks you're any different than they are? You look just like every other godless pagan unbeliever.

Something's the matter. But if you stand out, you can expect opposition. This is what happens to Daniel.

He's got an excellent spirit. He's got wisdom. And this engenders jealousy.

This engenders a feeling of a threat. And many times people are threatened. People can be threatened by your peace.

And they can say, nobody ought to be walking around looking as satisfied as that. Nobody ought to be as happy as that. Nobody ought to be as stable as that.

You've got your Achilles heel and I'm going to find it. You're just like everybody else. Your Christianity is just a crutch.

You've got a weakness. And there are people who just develop this insane desire to bring you down. Because they're miserable and they don't want to see anybody else that looks like they're not miserable.

Not everybody's that way, but believe me, if you run across one, you'll know it. The governors in Satrap sought to find something against Daniel concerning the kingdom, but they could find no charge or fault because he was faithful. Wouldn't it be great if somebody could say that about us? You know, put me under the magnifying glass.

They could find no fault or charge because I was faithful. Nor was there any error or fault found in him. Diligence.

Attention to detail. Remember, if anybody's got an excuse, Daniel's in his nineties. I'll give you some dates next time on these different rulers and when Darius is there and how old Daniel was when he went into captivity, but the man is in his nineties.

And yet, you can't trip him up. He's sharp. He's clear.

He's on the ball. He's always there. He does everything right.

He never makes a mistake. Never fails to implement a policy or a law. Dots every I. Crosses every T. Every yode.

Every tittle. All there. They could find no charge or fault because he was faithful.

This ought to be our reputation. We have an excellent spirit. We have the power of God.

And whatever else people ought to want to say about us, they may dislike us, but they should not be able to find a charge or fault in the execution of our duties. That means being on time. That means being prepared.

That means having what you're supposed to have. That means fulfilling your obligations. If you say you're going to do a thing, you do it.

If you say you're going to provide a thing, you provide it. And your integrity is unquestioned. Nobody can ever say, well, they said, but then it didn't happen.

No error or fault in him. Then these men said, we shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God. In the execution of his secular duties, the guy is flawless.

We can't touch him and we're never going to. He's got such a pattern. He's been acting... I mean, ask people that knew him before.

The guy's been around in the kingdom for 65 or 70 years and they've never found any fault with him. So, it's not likely he's going to screw up now. We're going to have to go after his religion.

And trust me on this, if people can't find fault with you professionally or administratively or in the functions that you perform as a part of your earthly life, they'll go ad hominem. They'll go after you because you're a Christian. They'll start slinging abuse at you for your Christianity.

That's what they do. These governors and satraps thronged before the king. 122 guys go before the king.

And they said this to him, King Darius, live forever. All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree that whoever petitions any god or man for 30 days except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the decree and sign the writing so that it cannot be changed according to the law of the Medes and the Persians which does not alter.

Therefore, King Darius signed the written decree. What can it hurt? For a month, anybody that

does not worship and pledge their fealty to Darius gets thrown to the lions. Verse 10, Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home.

And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day and prayed and gave thanks before his God as was his custom since early days. Why was Daniel great? Why did he have an excellent spirit? Every day, probably from the time he was first taken captive and was under Ashpenaz, the head of the eunuchs for Nebuchadnezzar, he thought about Jerusalem. He thought about his spiritual home.

He thought about the location of the Ark of the Covenant and where the presence of God had been. And he opened his window facing south toward Jerusalem. And he knelt there in the window and prayed with his face toward Jerusalem evening and morning and at noon as was his custom since early days.

For decades, Daniel had been doing this. All that would be required of him with this plot of the satraps is to leave off for four weeks. To just move a little further into his chambers.

Daniel is one of the highest rulers in the land. Do you not think that he could go in and lock his doors and pray? Is there anything in the Bible that says you've got to face out the window and be seen praying? All he would have to do is just go in and kneel in the middle of a room where he couldn't be seen. Lock his door.

And just do that for a month and he'd be in the clear. Why make waves? Why make an issue out of it? Daniel says, the actions of unbelievers are not going to divert my course in the slightest. I am who I am.

I do what I do. And the chips can fall where they may. He could easily have avoided the conflict just by moving a few feet away from the window.

He did not. Daniel immediately went home. And in his upper room, with his window open towards Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day.

Just like he always did. The men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. Daniel is 90 years old.

He's wise. He's been blessed by God in amazing ways. And yet he still makes supplication to God.

Three times a day. These men went before the king and spoke concerning the king's decree. Have you not signed a decree that every man who petitions any god or man within 30 days except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter.

So they answered and said before the king, O king, that Daniel, who is one of the captives from Judah, notice the ad hominem there, does not show due regard for you, O king, or for the

decree that you have signed, but makes his petitions three times a day. The king, when he heard these words, was greatly displeased with himself. He realized he had been tricked.

And set his heart on Daniel to deliver him. And he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him. Called in the lawyers.

Bring me the text of the decree. Is there any whittle room? Is there any exception? Is there any way I can spring Daniel out from under this charge? And he's just kicking himself because he has a high opinion of Daniel. You get the idea that Darius has a heart much like Nebuchadnezzar where he is sensitive and appreciative.

He's not boorish. He's not a bell shazzer by any means. So he stays up all night trying to figure a way around this hasty decree.

A little side note of application. If you're going to make a commitment, consider it carefully. Pray over it before you commit.

Because once you commit, you're committed. Our word ought to be our bond. Our word ought to be like the law of the Medes and the Persians or the law of Nebuchadnezzar, which does not permit alteration.

We don't say one thing and do another. We don't commit and then back out. If we say we're going to do a thing, we do it.

And if you follow that policy, then you have to be careful to what you commit. Many times this is an issue in our lives. So the king stays up all night, labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him.

I guess all day, actually. Then these men approached the king and said to the king, Know, O king, that it is the law of the Medes and the Persians that no decree or statute which the king establishes may be changed. And they're coming up, wagging their fingers, saying you're wasting your time.

We bulletproofed the language of this decree before we ever hatched our plot and put it into play. So in verse 16, the king gave the command and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. But the king spoke, saying to Daniel, Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you.

Now, you think about this. This is Darius the Mede telling Daniel what God will do. And he knows that Daniel serves God.

Daniel has made no secret of this. And Darius just didn't put two and two together when he got the decree. But Daniel's testimony, the witness not of Daniel's words, but of his life, is in the mind and in the heart of the king.

And he says, Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you. Darius has exhausted

all of the human options for deliverance and there aren't any. And it's hard to know how much Darius believed what he was saying.

But he tells Daniel, he gives him this word of comfort, Your God, whom you serve, will deliver you. A stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signets of his lords that the purpose concerning Daniel might not be changed. Well, this is a familiar story to us.

Let's go ahead and read the rest of it. Now, the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting. No musicians were brought before him, and his sleep went from him.

The king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions? Daniel said to the king, O king, live forever.

My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before him. And also, O king, I have done no wrong before you. Now the king was exceeding glad for him and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den.

So Daniel was taken up out of the den and no injury whatever was found on him because he believed in his God. That story hardly needs any commentary, does it? But you think of all of the excuses that Daniel could offer at his age, all of the ways that he could have avoided this conflict, and yet look what he would have missed if he had moved two feet further in from his windowsill. How much would the Bible have to say about this episode if Daniel had caved in and said, well, I think I'll just be a little less public about my faith.

And notice, even in praying to God, he says, I have done no wrong against you, O king. It was not a crime to continue to worship his God and to make petition to God even though this goofy decree had been made. There is an absolute standard of right and wrong that supersedes the laws of the land.

You have to be careful about applying that principle, but it is true. They can pass an immoral law and there is a law of God that supersedes it. If you live in a country and they outlaw the worship of the God of the Bible, are you committing a crime if you worship God anyway? You are not.

Double check that you're on solid ground and then you go with the higher law. The king gave the command in verse 24, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives. And the lions overpowered them, broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den.

Now this is kind of shocking. As goes the husband, so goes the wife and the kids. There is blessing by association in a household.

There is cursing by association in a household. Remember way back when Achan took some of the forbidden things at the fall of the city of Jericho. What happened? Not only Achan, but his wife and his children were stoned to death.

And underneath some pile of rocks over there in the Middle East, there is somewhere not too far from Jericho, there's a pile of rocks and the skeletal remains of Achan and his wife and his kids and the stuff that he stole is all under there. No Israelite was ever going to go back and unpile those rocks and say, well I believe I'll get that gold that Achan stole. It's still there.

Maybe in year 333 of the Millennial Kingdom, somebody would go out there with their boy scout shovel and dig that stuff up. But it's out there someplace. I've often thought of all the archaeology that you could do.

I'd like to go find the place in the Red Sea where all the Egyptian soldiers and chariots are buried. Somewhere, probably under the canal now, are the remains of all of those who were drowned in the sea when the Israelites crossed. Certainly there's got to be some bronze chariot fittings and spearheads and things under there.

If you just know the right spot, you can find all kinds of great artifacts. But these 122 families are destroyed. Then King Darius wrote.

Now remember what we talked about in the government. When Darius came in, he wanted to try to maintain stability and he wanted to ensure a smooth transition. So when he picked these 120 satraps and when he picked the three governors, he consulted and he looked around and he found people that were supposed to be trustworthy and supposed to be good.

Daniel has proven himself faithful. And Darius says, look, when this guy makes a commitment, he keeps it. He's committed to his God and nothing stops him from being faithful to his God.

I respect that. I admire that. And his God has followed through and delivered him.

These individuals, look at them. They're devious. They're crafty.

They're underhanded. If they've done this to Daniel, who says they won't do it to me? So as a wise leader, Darius says, fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me.

You're not going to get the chance to fool me again. And he wipes them out. And he's going to rebuild the superstructure of the government from scratch.

And this is going to send an electrified message throughout all the land. You better not mess with Darius. Don't show yourself devious and crafty or he'll get rid of you.

And Daniel is his right-hand man. King Darius wrote, To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth, peace be multiplied to you. I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom, men must tremble in fear before the God of Daniel.

People talk about Constantine making Christianity the religion of the Roman Empire. Well, men were commanded by Darius to tremble in fear in the empire of the Medes and the Persians. For he is the living God and steadfast forever.

His kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed and his dominion shall endure to the end. He delivers and rescues. And he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian. Well, it's an amazing chapter and as I say, I won't even diminish it by making a commentary on it. You can dwell on those words.

You see the impact in the mind and in the heart of this Gentile king because Daniel did not compromise. And we have that song that the kids learn in Good News Club called Dare to be a Daniel. Our challenges are much less severe.

The consequences are much less catastrophic. Why do we lack the courage to stand on our principles and to persevere in our faith? Whatever people say, whatever people threaten, whatever people think, we ought to have an identity that is known and is public and we shouldn't sacrifice it for anything. We don't have to go out of our way to club people on the head.

Daniel didn't go out and pray in the middle of the market square. But in his window, in his house, in an upper room, he faced Jerusalem and prayed three times a day for decades and he never stopped even at this juncture. And it's a wonderful example and a reminder of why God honors Daniel even today and will in the ages to come.

Well, we're out of time for this morning. We'll pick up our study in Daniel chapter 7 next week. Father, thank you for the privilege of studying your word.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will minister it to our hearts. Help us to live in the light of your word and the power of your spirit for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. We ask it in his name.

Amen.