

Behind The Curtain

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[0 : 0 0] Please take your Bibles and open them up this morning to Daniel chapter 10. Daniel chapter 10. If you're just joining us for the first time this morning, we are almost at the end of our series in Daniel. We've been preaching through the book of Daniel for the past several weeks and then earlier in the year as well.

And we've been walking straight through and we made our way past the stories in the first half and now we're in the visions in the second half. And really what the second half does is it lets us peek behind the curtain of the physical and lets us see the spiritual truth and spiritual reality that undergirds everything that we see. So what we're going to do this morning is read from Daniel chapter 10 verse 1 all the way through 11 verse 35. It's a big chunk this morning and if you're wondering if I'm really going to read all of that, yes I am. So if you would, if you're physically able, let's stand in honor of the reading of God's word this morning.

In the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia, a word was revealed to Daniel whose name was Belshazzar. And the word was true and it was a great conflict. And he understood the word and had understanding of the vision. In those days I, Daniel, was mourning for three weeks. I ate no delicacies, no meat or wine entered my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all for the full three weeks.

On the 24th day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, that is the Tigris, I lifted up my eyes and looked and behold a man clothed in linen with a belt of fine gold from Ufaz around his waist. His body was like barrel, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude. And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision. For the men who were with me did not see the vision, but a great trembling fell upon them and they fled to hide themselves. So I was left alone and saw this great vision and no strength was left in me. My radiant appearance was fearfully changed and I retained no strength. Then I heard the sound of his words and as I heard the sound of his words, I fell on my face in deep sleep with my face to the ground. And behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. And he said to me, O Daniel, man greatly loved, understand the words that I speak to you and stand upright, for now I have been sent to you. And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling. Then he said to me, Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you have set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard and I have come because of your words. The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me 21 days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision is for days yet to come. When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and was mute. And behold, one in the likeness of the children of man touched my lips. Then I opened my mouth and spoke. I said to him who stood before me, O my Lord, by reason of the vision, pains have come upon me and I retain no strength. How can my Lord's servant talk with my Lord? For now no strength remains in me and no breath is left in me. Again, one having the appearance of a man touched me and strengthened me.

And he said, O man greatly loved, fear not, peace be with you, be strong and of good courage. And as he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, let my Lord speak for you have strengthened me. And then he said, do you know why I've come to you? But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia.

[4 : 05] And when I go out, behold, the prince of Greece will come. But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth. There is none who contends by my side except against these, except Michael, your prince. And as for me, in the first year of Darius the Mede, I stood up to confirm and strengthen him. And now I will show you the truth. Behold, three more kings shall arise in Persia.

And a fourth shall be far richer than all of them. And when he has become strong through his riches, he shall stir up all against the kingdom of Greece. Then a mighty king shall arise who shall rule with a great dominion and do as he wills. And as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom shall be broken and divided towards the four winds of heaven, but not to his posterity, nor according to the authority with which he ruled. For his kingdom shall be plucked up and go to others besides these. Then the king of the south shall be strong, but one of his princes shall be stronger than he and shall rule. And his authority shall be a great authority. After some years they shall make an alliance. And the daughter of the king of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement.

But she shall not retain the strength of her arm, and he and his arm shall not endure. But she shall be given up and her attendance, he who fathered her and he who supported her in those times.

And from a branch from her roots, one shall arise in his place. He shall come against the army and enter the fortress of the king of the north, and he shall deal with them and shall prevail.

He shall also carry off to Egypt their gods with their metal images and their precious vessels of silver and gold. And for some years he shall refrain from attacking the king of the north. Then the latter shall come into the realm of the king of the south, but shall return to his own land.

[5 : 51] His sons shall wage war and assemble a multitude of great forces, which shall keep coming and overflow and pass through, and again shall carry the war as far as his fortress. Then the king of the south, moved with rage, shall come out and fight against the king of the north. And he shall raise a great multitude, but it shall be given into his hand. And when the multitude is taken away, his heart shall be exalted, and he shall cast down tens of thousands, but he shall not prevail. For the king of the north shall again raise a multitude greater than the first, and after some years he shall come on with a great army and abundant supplies. In those times many shall rise against the king of the south, and the violent among your own people shall lift themselves up in order to fulfill the vision, but they shall fall, fail.

Then the king of the north shall come and throw up siege works and take a well-fortified city, and the forces of the south shall not stand, or even his best troops, for there shall be no strength to stand. But he who comes against him shall do as he wills, and none shall stand before him. And he shall stand in the glorious land with destruction in his hand. He shall set his face to come with the strength of his whole kingdom, and he shall bring terms of an agreement and perform them. He shall give him the daughter of woman to destroy the kingdom, but it shall not stand or be to his advantage.

Afterward he shall turn his face to the coastlands and shall capture many of them, but a commander shall put an end to his insolence. Indeed he shall turn his insolence back upon him. Then he shall turn his face back towards the fortress of his own land, but he shall stumble and fall and shall not be found.

Then shall arise in his place one who shall send an exactor of tribute for the glory of the kingdom. But within a few days he shall be broken, neither in anger nor in battle. In his place shall arise a contemptible person to whom royal majesty has not been given. He shall come in without warning and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. Armies shall be utterly swept away before him and broken, even the prince of the covenant. And from the time that an alliance is made with him, he shall act deceitfully, and he shall become strong with a small people. Without warning, he shall come into the richest parts of the province and he shall do what neither his fathers nor his father's fathers have done, scattering among them plunder, spoil, and goods. He shall devise plans against strongholds, but only for a time. And he shall stir up his power and his heart against the king of the south with a great army. And the king of the south shall wage war with an exceedingly great and mighty army, but he shall not stand, for plots shall be devised against him. Even those who eat his food shall break him. His army shall be swept away, and many shall fall down slain. And as for the two kings, their hearts shall be bent on doing evil. They shall speak lies at the same table, but to no avail, for the end is yet to be at the time appointed. And he shall return to his land with great wealth, but his heart shall be set against the holy covenant. And he shall work his will and return to his own land. At the time appointed, he shall return and come into the south, but it shall not be this time as it was before. For ships of Kittim shall come against him, and he shall be afraid and withdraw, and shall turn back and be enraged and take action against the holy covenant. He shall turn back and pay attention to those who forsake the holy covenant. Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall take away the regular burnt offering, and they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate. He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant, but the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action. And the wise among the people shall make many understand, though for some days they shall stumble by sword and flame, by captivity and plunder.

When they stumble, they shall receive a little help, and many shall join themselves to them with flattery, and some of the wise shall stumble, so that they may be refined, purified, and made white until the time of the end, for it still awaits the appointed time. All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete and perfect for every good work. Let's pray once more. Father, this is your holy word, and so we pray, God, would you help us to see truth as you intend us to see it?

[10 : 32] Help us to see the world as you see it with spiritual eyes. Lord, would you help us to understand our lives in light of your truth, Father? Help us to trust you in your sovereignty and in your goodness. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. Our passage this morning is long, and so I will get right to the point this morning. Christians, I don't know if you've noticed this or not, are strange people. We are a little bit weird. Christians see and perceive the world differently than other people who don't know the Lord see and perceive the world. We understand the world and all the things that happen within it a little bit differently. I'll give you a couple of illustrations to help make my point. One is at Christmas time. I don't know if you've ever seen these little glasses that you can pick up at the dollar store. They're these cheap little paper glasses with a lens on them, and when you put them on, you can look at any light, Christmas tree light, or the lights in this room, and instead of just seeing a plain light, you see snowflakes or little

Santa heads or snowmen or reindeer. If you don't wear the glasses, of course, you just see what's physically there, but with a new lens over your eyes, you get to see something that other people can't see. Another illustration. When you go watch a play, it's one thing to sit in the audience in front of the curtain, but it's another thing entirely to sit off to the side and to be able to peek behind the curtain where you can see what's in front, what everybody gets to see, what the audience gets to see in front of the curtain, but you also get to peek behind and see all the different moving parts that make the play happen. You see all the props being moved from place to place and things being moved here and there. You see costume changes going on and off. You see what's visible to everybody, but what's veiled and only visible to some. Here in our passage this morning, in this final section of the book of Daniel, we get to peek behind the curtain, and we get to see the world from a spiritual, through a spiritual lens. If you're just visiting with us this morning and you are not a believer, this morning you get to see how Christians see the world. And what we're going to see is that

Christians understand the world in two distinct ways. This is going to be our outline this morning if you're taking notes. We're going to see two distinct ways that Christians understand all of human history. The first is that raging underneath all human history is a spiritual battle. Look there with me to the beginning of chapter 10, and right away here in chapter 10, I noticed two strange details. I wonder if you noticed this as well. We shouldn't overlook this. The first strange detail is that Daniel is fasting and praying. And that's not a strange detail, is it? Because all through the book of Daniel, we've seen Daniel be marked as a man of prayer. But what's strange is when he's praying. Verse 4 kind of gives us a time stamp here, doesn't it? Verse 4 says he was fasting and praying for three whole weeks until the 24th day of the first month, which would put this time of fasting right in the middle of the

Passover. Right in the middle of the feast of unleavened bread. So Daniel is fasting during a time that's meant for feasting, and we should ask why. Well, the second odd detail is that all of this is happening in the third year of Cyrus's reign. Well, what's strange about that? Well, again, you remember Cyrus in the first year of his reign, what did he do? He gave the proclamation that allowed the Jews to return back to Jerusalem. But here's Daniel fasting and mourning and praying, not in Jerusalem, but here by the Tigris River, it says, when he receives this vision. So what's going on here? Well, we have to speculate a little bit. We kind of have to guess a little bit. But it could be that he's mourning the relatively small number of Jews that wanted to return back to the promised land.

Or it could be that at his age, at this point, remember Daniel is 80 to 90 years old at this point in the book. It could be that he just didn't have the strength or the stamina to make that trip and go back and help rebuild the city of Jerusalem. And so instead, what does he do? He spends his time fasting and mourning and praying. I just want to make the point here as we begin our time in this passage this morning that this is not second-rate service. Daniel knows, of course, he can't go and lift heavy beams anymore or fight off the opposition anymore. Those days are long behind him. But what can he do at this late stage in his life? He can humble himself and get on his knees and pray.

[15 : 53] How did Daniel contribute to the cause of rebuilding the promised land? He prayed. And I just again want to make this point that if you are an older saint and I will let you self-identify, okay? I'm not going to put you in that bucket. But if you self-identify as an older saint and you feel like you have nothing to contribute to the work of the church, if you feel like that your days of heavy lifting are long gone, listen, let me let Daniel prove you wrong this morning, that you have a wonderful way to contribute to the work and the mission of the church through your prayers. If you would humble yourself and get on your knees and pray, your prayers are vital for the health of this church and for the advance of the gospel. And God shows Daniel this, in fact, because what he does next is he peels back the curtain and shows Daniel that his prayers are being used as spiritual ammunition in an invisible war. Look there to verse 5 with me. After mourning and fasting and praying for three weeks, three weeks, church, three weeks of persisting in this, he lifts up his eyes and he sees this glorious man. He's not just an ordinary being, is he? And Daniel, he struggles to find words to describe this being. He's clothed in linen. He's wearing a belt of fine gold. He compares his body like barrel. His face is like lightning. His eyes are like flaming torches. He's like these things.

It's like nothing Daniel's ever seen before. And when he speaks, it sounds like the sound of a multitude of people. Now, I am not certain who this being is. It doesn't tell us. Some say that this maybe is Gabriel. Others say maybe this is Michael. Others say maybe this is the pre-incarnate Lord Jesus himself.

I'm not confident enough to say with certainty who it is, but I know this. The fact that a being like this actually exists in reality, in the same reality that you and I live in, the fact that a being like this exists ought to humble us, church, that ought to cause us to marvel at the unseen spiritual world that is all around us every single day. This is a spiritual vision of a spiritual being. And when Daniel sees him and when he hears him, what happens? He's overwhelmed and he falls down on his face and he is knocked out cold. He is impacted by the spiritual vision. But notice this. Daniel says that the other people around him that were with him, they didn't see him at all, did they? Why not? I'll tell you why. They couldn't see or perceive this spiritual being because spiritual sight is a gift of God's grace. No one who is of the flesh can see or comprehend spiritual truth apart from the gracious revelation of God. So here, God, again, he graciously peels back the curtain to let Daniel peek into the spiritual realm and to see what's been happening over the past three weeks as he mourned and he prayed and he fasted. Look there to verse 12. The being says, fear not Daniel for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard. And I have come because of your words, because of his prayers, this being has come to make known to Daniel this truth. But three weeks of this, right? Three weeks of mourning and praying and fasting and laboring over this prayer with the Lord. Three weeks. And Daniel might have been tempted at some point over those three weeks just to think, well, God doesn't hear me. What's the point in continuing in prayer? God doesn't hear me.

Or even worse, well, God doesn't, God doesn't love me. God doesn't hear my prayers. He doesn't care about my, my mourning. God doesn't care about my issues. Why in the world should I continue to pray if I'm not receiving any sort of answer? Have you ever felt like that? But here, God graciously sends him an answer to say, Daniel, you are loved. You are heard. And your prayers are being used in ways that you cannot even begin to imagine. So why in the world, God, did it take three weeks for him to come with an answer? That's my question. And this is absolutely fascinating. Look there with me to verse 13.

This being, spiritual being, he says, for 21 days, Daniel, how long is that? It's three weeks. The same length of time that Daniel has been praying and fasting for 21 days, Daniel, the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me. In other words, the reason that there was a delay is because of a very real spiritual opposition. Unseen and unknown to Daniel before this very moment. There is a very real spiritual battle beneath the surface happening all the while Daniel is praying and fasting and mourning on behalf of the people of God. He says, the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood this angel. He opposed him, prevented him from coming to Daniel. And then it says that he was able to get out and come to Daniel because Michael came to his help and they, I guess, tag-teamed this prince of the kingdom of Persia. And he was able to get out and come and tell Daniel what's written in the book of truth. And then he says, well, I'm going to go back and I'm going to fight against the prince of the kingdom of Greece next. That's what verses 20 and 21 say. What in the world is happening here?

[22 : 25] It seems to me that the best way to understand this, if we can begin to understand this, is number one, that there is an unseen but very real spiritual world all around us.

What we are a part of here in this universe is not simply physical. There is more than what we can see with our eyes and more than what we can touch with our hands. And in that unseen spiritual realm, there are principalities and powers of darkness. And apparently some are assigned specifically to darken and deceive certain areas or territories of the world. That's what I understand here from this passage. There was an earthly king of the kingdom of Persia. There was an earthly physical king of the kingdom of Greece. And under the surface of the physical, behind the curtain, there were spiritual powers, warring, raging, and waging war. And what's the aim of their war? It's not physical. What is it? It's preventing the spread of the truth. What did this prince of the kingdom of Persia? Why was he preventing this angelic being from coming to Daniel? Because this angelic being was coming to Daniel with the truth to the end that Daniel might continue to pray on behalf of the people of God. You know, this is strange to our modern ears, isn't it? We don't often think about things like this, do we? But again, Christians are strange. Christians have a strange, different, unique perspective on the world. We understand, again, that what we can see with our eyes and touch with our hands is not all that there is in the world. There are very real spiritual forces at work.

You might think of the story of Elisha and his servant from the Old Testament. They looked out with physical eyes and saw that they were outnumbered by a physical army. And the servant says, Elisha, there's no way we can do war against this army. We're outnumbered. And what does Elisha do?

He prays and he asks the Lord, Lord, open up his eyes. And the Lord answers the prayer. And what happens? It says the mountains were full of the army of the Lord. Unseen before that moment, unknown before that moment, but real nonetheless. What did we read earlier from the book of Ephesians? Paul says, We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil and the heavenly places. We are in a very real spiritual battle.

Abraham Kuyper, the famous Dutch theologian, he said, If once the curtain were pulled back and the spiritual world behind it came into view, it would expose to our spiritual vision a struggle so intense, so convulsive, so sweeping, everything within its range that the fiercest battle ever fought on earth would seem by comparison a mere game.

[25 : 59] I wonder if we live with this battle in mind. I wonder if we wake up tomorrow morning and go to work with this spiritual battle in mind.

Or, I wonder if it's an afterthought for us. It's so easy for us to get caught up in our daily lives and our busyness and whatever's next to do on our to-do list that the extraordinary, the spiritual, it barely crosses our minds.

And listen, that is exactly how the enemy wants it to be. The enemy does not want you engaging with spiritual truth. He does not want you humbling yourself and getting on your knees to pray.

He doesn't want you here right now listening to the word of God preached. He hates what we're doing right now. And he will do anything and everything he can to keep you from these things.

So how do we do battle against these spiritual forces of evil? How do we wage war against these beings? If they're anything as strong as what Daniel saw, how do we even begin to fight against them?

[27 : 10] You do as Daniel did. You commit yourself to humble, persistent prayer. Church, prayer is joining the spiritual fight.

You know, we often talk about prayer as if it's a last resort. If I can't do anything else, maybe at least I'll pray for you. Prayer is powerful ammunition against the forces of darkness.

God uses the prayers of the saints to accomplish his purposes in the world. Do you want to know how to peel back the influence of Satan and the kingdom of darkness on our community here in Ondal?

Pray. Do you want to see your friends and family members and neighbors and co-workers finally grasp the spiritual truth that you've been trying to communicate to them, but they just can't see it?

Pray. Ask the Lord. And maybe it'll take weeks, maybe months, maybe years. But pray. Humble yourself and pray. Do you want to see the Lord grow this church and make it a beacon of the truth of the gospel for this community?

[28 : 15] Pray. Pray. Humble yourself. And pray. Christians know that underneath all the events that can be seen with our eyes on the surface of human history, underneath all of it is a raging spiritual battle.

And we join the fight when we get on our knees and pray. Is the application clear for you this morning? And we pray with confidence because of our second point this morning.

Second, Christians understand that reigning over all of human history is a sovereign God. Raging underneath all of human history is a spiritual battle, yes, but reigning over all of human history is a sovereign God.

This is why we can pray with any degree of confidence, church, because we know that God is in control. And that's what sovereign means. It means in charge, in control.

Christians, we have the strange, peaceful perspective of knowing that God in His wisdom is orchestrating all of the events of human history from big to small for the good of His people and the magnification of His glory.

[29 : 36] This is what we see in chapter 11, if you look there with me. Chapter 11. Chapter 11 gives us some of the strongest and clearest examples of biblical prophecy and historical fulfillment in the entire Bible.

This chapter is impossible apart from a completely sovereign God. One who can tell history in advance because He is the author and the director of all of human history.

So what I want to do here in chapter 11 is just show you the connection, the link between prophecy and fulfillment. Prophecy and fulfillment.

And you may be pleased to hear we will not get to all of it this morning. There's a lot in there, but I just want to show you some, just so you can see just how exact these prophecies are.

Look there at verses 2 through 4, chapter 11. These verses give us some prophecy about Persia and Greece. In fact, these verses span just about 200 years worth of history.

[30 : 38] It says, Three more kings will arise in Persia, and the fourth shall be richer, and through his riches he shall stir up against the realm of Greece.

That's the prophecy. Is there anything like that in history? This fourth king is King Xerxes. This is the fourth king from Cyrus, and history shows us that Xerxes spent a fortune raising up his army, and then he took that large and expensive army, and where did he go with it?

He brought them against the Greeks. Prophecy, fulfillment. Verse 3 tells us a mighty king will arise. He's going to rise to power, and then his kingdom is going to be broken and divided, but not to his own posterity.

Is there anything like that in history? We already have a sense of who this is. This is Alexander the Great. Alexander the Great from chapter 8. And again, history shows us that Alexander was mighty.

He did as he pleased, and his children, his sons were assassinated. Alexander fell, his sons were assassinated, and his empire was divided, not to his posterity, but it split into four less powerful kingdoms.

[31 : 48] Prophecy, fulfillment. This next long section, verses 3 through 35, it focuses in on two of these divisions, two of these kingdoms, the Seleucid kings in Syria, and the Ptolemaic kings in Egypt.

These are the kings of the north, and the kings of the south. But we should really ask, well, north and south of where? These are over in the Middle East somewhere, and if you look at a map, they're pretty close together.

North and south of where? Well, these two close countries are geographically close to each other, but right there in between them is the glorious land.

These directions are north and south of the promised land. But again, remember, this isn't history from a secular perspective. If it was, Alexander the Great would get much longer than a verse or two, right?

This is history from God's perspective. And he's focusing in on his covenant people and his covenant promises. The kingdoms of the world are warring and raging, and the city of God is right there caught in the crossfire.

[32 : 58] That's a pretty good summary of all of human history, really. So let me try and give you a quick summary here. Again, kings of the south here in verse 5, that's Egypt under Ptolemy.

Kings of the north is Seleucus in Syria. And look at verse 6, prophecy. Prophecies that the daughter of the king of the south will go to the king of the north and make an agreement, but it won't last.

That seems oddly specific, doesn't it? And we should ask, does anything like this happen in the pages of human history? Listen to this. This is better than your soap operas.

Okay? Seleucus and Ptolemy attempted a marriage alliance. And they paired up Ptolemy's daughter, Berenice, beautiful name, and Seleucus' grandson, Antiochus II.

But they didn't live happily ever after again. History shows us that shortly after this marriage, Ptolemy died. Antiochus divorced his new wife. He went back to his old wife who got jealous and paranoid.

[34 : 03] And so she poisoned him and had her son murder the new ex-wife so that he could now become king. Are y'all following here? Everybody with me? Safe to say the alliance was off.

So prophecy, verse 7, one arose in his place, came with an army to go deal with the king of the north. That would be sweet Berenice's brother, Ptolemy III. He rose up, killed the old wife, overtook the northern kingdom.

So Lucas Kellynicus came and he came against Ptolemy, but as verse 9 prophesied, he was not successful. And so his sons, verse 10, kept the war going and Antiochus III went so far as reaching Ptolemy's fortress.

Are y'all following this? You know, as I planned to read and preach through the book of Daniel, one of the reasons why I did so was because there were several pages. I take notes in the margins of my Bible and in Daniel, there were several pages that didn't have any notes.

And these were some of them here this morning, full disclosure to you. But as I studied this week for this sermon, what I realized was that it's not because I was a poor student of the Bible.

[35 : 10] It's because I was a poor student of history. Take these prophecies here in verse 11 and lay them directly on top of the pages of human history and they are identical.

But it's not history here in the Bible, is it? This is prophecy. Any historian can look backwards in the pages of history and see what's happened.

God here is revealing to Daniel what is to come. Verses 11-20 give us more of the same. Verses 21-35 give us another look at Antiochus Epiphanes.

You remember Antiochus Epiphanes? Deceived the Jews, obtained the kingdom by flatteries, verse 21. And once he gained a stronghold there, he went and he attacked Egypt while he was there.

A rumor spread amongst the Jews that he had died. And apparently, the Jews celebrated that fact. So when Antiochus came back to Jerusalem to see them celebrating and to see his former followers had been killed, his heart was set against the Holy Covenant.

[36 : 21] Verse 28. So he plundered the temple, desecrated it, set up idols in it, and murdered thousands of the Jews exactly as God has prophesied here in Daniel chapter 11.

Now, that's enough history for today. What's the point for us? The purpose here isn't just to give Daniel tomorrow's news today, is it?

The purpose here is to deepen Daniel's trust in a totally sovereign God. That's the purpose for us as well this morning as we read this prophecy.

The point of these prophecies is to remind Daniel and to remind us this morning that even in the midst of the raging chaos of the world, that there is a God who reigns and rules over all of human history.

When these nations rage and war against each other and the people of God are right there caught in the middle of the crossfire, the natural response is panic and distress and anxiety, but that's the natural response.

[37 : 39] The Christian response is trust in a holy and sovereign God who says, Daniel, none of this is catching me by surprise. In fact, all of it is according to my sovereign plan for your good and for my glory.

Church, when storms come through and rage destruction on the upstate and take out entire towns with floods and with water, when wars break out all over the world, when election cycles come up every four years and it seems like the sky is falling, Christians remember and trust that our God is sovereign over it all.

Yes, there is a spiritual battle. Yes, the nations rage, but we have by the grace of God been given eyes to see that our sovereign God has triumphed over the powers of sin and darkness by sending His own Son to live and to die and to rise in victory for all His people.

He has triumphed over the powers of sin and darkness. So then come what may, if we are in Him by faith, we can rest and be at peace and trust our sovereign God knowing that our greatest needs have been met and our future is secure.

Whatever happens here and now, it is well with our soul. Amen? Church, this morning, we've been given a peek behind the curtain to see the spiritual battle underneath and the sovereign God above all things.

[39 : 23] so how should we respond to these things? I read one commentator this week who, on Daniel 11 especially, he said, I don't see how anybody could preach this chapter. And at times, I understood what he meant.

But I want to prove him wrong, so I have six applications for you this morning as we close. Six applications. Because God is sovereign, number one, church, trust him in your perplexity.

Because God is sovereign, trust him in your perplexity. When you don't understand what's going on out there, when you don't understand what's going on in here, trust that the Lord does.

He knows. He understands. He knows what's best. Trust him in your perplexity. Number two, trust him over your plans. Church, would you hold your plans loosely?

I know some of y'all are control. I won't call you freaks, but that's how I am sometimes. Trust him over your plans. Did you notice how many times the word but shows up in this passage?

[40 : 31] You notice that? Verse 4, verse 6, verse 7, verse 9, verse 11, verse 12, verse 14, verse 18, verse 19, 20, 21, 25, 27, and 29.

And every time it shows up in this passage, you know what it is? It's when a king makes a plan, but God has something different planned. Trust him over your plans.

Number three, trust him over your princes. Because God is sovereign. Trust him over your princes. Let Antiochus be another reminder for you again this morning.

Put not your trust in princes. Leaders, politicians, teachers will come with smooth words of flattery and they will attempt to deceive you.

Trust them to the extent that they lead you to love and follow the Lord who is the Lord of all the authorities on the earth. Amen? Number four, trust him in your problems.

[41 : 38] Trust him in your problems. Because God is sovereign, church, we know that our trials are never wasted. If we mourn for three weeks in a row, we trust there is a sovereign God who rules and reigns over all things and who's working out even our darkest moments for our good, for his glory.

Trust him in your problems. Number five, trust God's perspective over the world's perspective. We're back to seeing through the lens now, aren't we? You know, the news you watch, the articles you read, the people you talk to are seeing the world through a certain lens.

We trust the word of God and what he has to say about the world we live in. Trust his perspective over the world's perspective. And lastly, we'll end where we started this morning.

Church, trust him in your prayers. Trust him in your prayers. Those who see the spiritual battle that we're in, pray.

Those who trust in a sovereign God, pray. Those who want to see the Lord move and work in their lives and the lives of their friends and the lives of this community and in their church.

[42 : 57] Pray. So we pray now. Father, we praise you, God, that while there's much that we don't understand, especially about this spiritual world all around us, God, we trust you.

And we trust that you are working all things for our good and for your glory. While there's much chaos in the world around us, Lord, would you remind us and teach us to respond to these things as Christians who know that there is a good and sovereign God.

And Father, we pray in all this that we would live and walk in the confidence of knowing that Christ Jesus has already triumphed over the powers of sin and darkness. We love you, Father.

We pray this all in his name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.