

GRACE CITY CHURCH

Pastor Josh McPherson

March 7, 2021

Grace City Church

Series: Daniel 12 | Week 15

"This Is The End"

(00:00:00):

Daniel chapter 12. It's a 12th chapter book. Has it been good?

(00:00:04):

Yes.

(00:00:04):

Has it been helpful? Has it enlightened you up? Relevant to the days we live in, 2,500 years old, irrelevant? No, right on time. Daniel chapter 12, we're going to look there in a moment. As you open your Bible, as you're going to notice, that when you look at chapter 12, verse one to the end, you're going to look and you're going to say, "Hey, it's only 13 verses." And then you're going to reflect on last week. And you're going to think last week was 45 verses, that must mean that this week sermon is going to be shorter. See, if you're thinking that, you're new here. So, grab your Bibles. We're going to pray and dive right in.

(00:00:40):

Father in heaven, we're grateful for your word. We're grateful that it is right and true, and timely, and on time, that it speaks into the chaotic moments of our personal life and our cultural day. And it brings truth and light, and faith and hope. It brings direction. It brings revelation. It brings correction. Father, would you open the ears of your people, those watching online and those here in this room. And would you do in our heart, the intended purposes for your word in this revelation. We ask in Jesus' name. Everybody say it together, amen.

(00:01:16):

Before we dive into Daniel chapter 12, verse one, which you should be turned there and ready to go, I want to give us a running start at it. And so, we're going to start back at chapter one, and we're going to take the next three minutes, maybe four, and we're going to review what we've learned to date. Because you'd be tempted to think, "Daniel, I understand story of the lion's den, that was exciting. The horn of the eyeballs, creepy." And we want to lose sight of the magisterial truth and vistas of glory and practical help that we've been given from the Book of Daniel. You don't need anything else other than the Book of Daniel to know how to follow Jesus. It's one more piece in this amazing story we call the Bible.

(00:01:58):

And I want to just recall for us a few of the memories or a few of the lessons we've learned recalled to our memory, as we move our way to this last installment of our series in the Book of Daniel. In chapter one, we learned that God is in charge of those who are in charge. Isn't that helpful? Oh my goodness sakes, that's so helpful. God is in charge of those who are in charge.

(00:02:21):

We learned that God punishes evil, and disciplines his children. So, I want you to hear this. You could be having the same experience and it be one thing or another, if you're in Christ, you're not in Christ. If you're not in Christ, this same experience could be punishment. And if you are in Christ, that very same experience is God's discipline. Excuse me, God doesn't discipline or punish his children, God disciplines his children. So, you could be going through the very, very same experience as your neighbor, and if they don't know Christ, it could be a form of God's passive judgment on rebellion. And as a son of God or daughter of God, it's God's discipline and love for you. God punished evil. Thanks be to God. And he disciplines his children. Thanks be to God.

(00:03:07):

We're learning that behind the ancient City of Babylon is the spirit of Babylon. And behind the evil we see today in the seen realm, there is an unseen realm, working through policies and world leaders to bring about evil in the world. We learned that we live in a binary world. There is right, there is wrong. There is God, there are Satan. There is holiness, there is unholiness. There are angels, there are demons. There are boys, there are girls. We live in a binary world.

(00:03:40):

And the goal of our life is to live on the right side, not of history, but of eternity, right here all the time, right? Like "Oh, you want to be on the wrong side of history?" I could care less about being on what side of what history, if you're writing it, I want to be on the right side of eternity, because God is the one writing that.

(00:03:58):

We learned that if you live for the king, who is not in danger of being overthrown, your world is much more secure. And there's only one king, who's not in danger of being overthrown.

(00:04:11):

We learned that it's possible to live in the world and not be of the world. We learned that you don't have to be old to make a difference. Daniel was 14 when he was human trafficked into Babylon.

(00:04:25):

We learned that the Book of Daniel is like a playbook for living a wartime missional lifestyle in the face of a culture gone crazy. We learned that the spirit of Babylon wants to conquer you, capture you, inculcate you and compromise you. But the spirit of God wants to give you conviction and courage, and send you into culture, and then carry you to the end.

(00:04:47):

We learned that you're never too young for things that matter. That you should never underestimate the global ripple effect of a small obedience to God when all around seems lost. Think about it, Daniel is facing certain death with the option of opting out through compromise. He's 15, 16, 17, 2500 years ago. He's got no concept and no ability to grasp what his little decision to stand in the face of what appeared to be a big enemy, how that would ripple through eternity. All he knows that it was faithfulness or compromise to God in the moment. And he had to make a decision. And 2,500 years later, we're still talking about it.

(00:05:27):

If you don't want to waste your life, live for the king, who won't lose his throne. We learned the courage comes when you live for an audience of one. And we learned that Babylon is coming for you. But thanks be to God, God has already come for you.

(00:05:47):

Daniel chapter two. Make it five minutes. This is Nebuchadnezzar dream. People who are told they're gods their whole life are impossible to live with and dangerous to all around them. We learned that we are all King Nebuchadnezzar, we just differ in our varying degrees of success. That people are a big deal until they meet a big God. That no matter how many resources we have, until you have God, you will fall short. We learned that you need your team before your time of testing or trial. That if you're going to stand in public, you better be kneeling in private. That God can and does intervene in human affairs in response to believing prayers. That crisis doesn't forge character, but it does reveal character.

(00:06:45):

We learned that admiring God's power from a distance is not the same as revering him as God in your heart. We learned that obeying the laws of the land in order to be a good citizen is right up until you can't do it and be a good Christian. That Christian faith has never private. It is personal, but it has an inevitable public outward working. That we're not to seek signs and wonders, rather we're to seek the giver of the signs and wonders. That for the believer, everything has a History Channel.

(00:07:16):

Daniel chapter three, we learned that when the state becomes the church, rank abuse always results. We learned that our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities and powers of the darkness, that oftentimes present themselves through people in flesh and blood. We learned that when people think they're king, the people around them will inevitably suffer. We learned that believing in yourself is a recipe for disaster that would often

drives our desires to be big, as the [inaudible 00:07:43] knowledge we're actually quite small. That you don't get to change history by sheer force of power or personality. That idolatry is when we relativize the absolutes and absolutize the relative.

(00:07:56):

We learned that the state God always gives you something to lose, if you compromise and obey them. The state God always uses fear to control and to manipulate. The state God always demands in allegiance, the Christian can never give. The state God sets itself up as the ultimate judge to be feared and savior to be adored. That Christianity is and always will be a threat to the state God tyranny everywhere.

(00:08:18):

There's sometimes an order to obey the one true God, you have to disobey a human king. And the earthly kings can touch the temporary body, but they cannot touch the eternal soul.

(00:08:29):

Daniel four, if convenience is your highest value, compromise is your inevitable future. Conviction always requires courage. The spirit of God provides the power necessary to stand against the spirit of Babylon. Settle the bowel question now, because hesitation is not the mark of allegiance.

(00:08:48):

We will beg God not to control his will, but to discover his will. Suffering doesn't always equate to holy obedience, but sometimes holy obedience will result in temporary suffering. Jesus doesn't just rescue you from the fire, oftentimes, he rescues you through the fire. The promise of the gospel was never deliverance from fire, but deliverance from death. And bowing the needy King Jesus will sometimes require standing in the face of overwhelming pressure.

(00:09:17):

Daniel five, God sees all of the sins of all the people happening all the time in all the earth. Here it goes, God's divine patience is astounding. God's emotional capacity is mind-blowing. God is loving, patient, merciful, and he will not be mocked for his loving patient mercy. When God shows up, people sober up. They're in the party, they're all drunk, finger of fire in the wall, instant soberness in the presence of God.

(00:09:52):

Live a life of faithful obedience to God, so that when your friend's life collapsed and they probably will, they come to you. Don't make God count to three, he'll get there. God has a line, you don't want to find.

(00:10:09):

Every generation is responsible for their own response to God. God's judgment will be personal. Even the most stable of earthly heavens can be overthrown, excuse me, overnight. God is the ultimate security fortress. Daniel walks away from that night, everyone else dies. You never know how much time you have left. And judgment day is coming for us all. God is the only one who can accuse us. And thanks be to God, he's the only one who can save us.

(00:10:38):

Daniel six, this is the Daniel in the lion's den chapter. From Daniel's exceptionalism, we learned that whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might. From Daniel's integrity, we learned that your work is your witness. From Daniel's conviction, we learned know where your line is and be ready to die for it. From Daniel's critics, we learned that you should live in such a way as to make the accusations of critics baseless. From Daniel's unflinching faith, we learned that faith that pleases God isn't up for sale given the circumstances. Our job is not to check optics, but to obey God, even if it means lions.

(00:11:22):

From Daniel's deliverance, we learned that God delivers those who place their faith in him over their own ability to get around the situation. From Daniel's vindication, we learned that God will throw down our enemies and crush their bones. Not everyone is delivered. Men, and our decisions can punish our families. From Daniel's reach, we learn that compromise does not spread the glory of God. Never underestimate the far reaching effects of one act of courage. God can work with courage, compromise, not so much. And from Daniel's legacy, we learned that you're never too old for things that matter. And what you do now can ripple into eternity.

(00:11:59):

Daniel eight, the marks of the antichrist, we learned that he will be fascinating and fierce. He will be powered by the demonic. His success will be devastating. He will make war on the church. He will call evil good. He will be above the law. He will make people feel safe with promises and secure by what he claims he will do for them, right before what he promises and claims to do for them destroys them. Which means the antichrist is going to come in part through really bad policies and ideas. Promise things to people that will in turn actually crush them.

(00:12:36):

Take-aways. God's word is 100% accurate, both past, present and future. Sometimes it's good for God's word to wreck you. When you know your divine destiny, you can march with divine confidence. God is always at work, even when we can't see it, even in hardship and suffering. We are small. God is big. It's okay to be grieved and burdened by what you see. Trust God, and go back to work, Monday morning.

(00:13:03):

Daniel nine, God is more interested in your internal posture than your external posturing. Changing your external circumstances, won't change your internal reality. If you want to hear a word from God, get into the word of God. Even strong Christians need daily doses of the word. Old scripture can have new relevancy as the circumstances of your life change. Hearing from God should lead to talking with God. When you pray, start with who you are, the bad news. And as you pray, move to the good news, which is who God is. God hears your prayer. He sends you a helper and he affirms you as his beloved child.

(00:13:43):

And then lastly, in relationship to the second coming of Jesus, we saw that we are on the welcoming committee for Jesus's return. We're not on the planning committee for Jesus' return, which is helpful perspective.

(00:13:57):

Daniel ten, information overload can lead to soul overload. Grief is not a sign of unbelief. It's often a sign of your humanity. The antidote for grief is not denial, but lament. And it's okay to say, "I trust God, and I'm totally broken." Because what we need more than answers to our problems, is a vision of God who is greater than our current problems. And it's the love of God, not the details about the future that will get you through your current darkness.

(00:14:29):

Daniel 11, last week, sometimes God's people need a practical word of help. And sometimes God's people need a prophetic word of revelation. The world has always been jacked up. The decisions of our everyday lives matter and ripple. Sometime, someday, somewhere, you will have to decide whether you will offend them or him. God is in a big storyline of the world and in the details of your life.

(00:14:56):

Crisis in the culture is often God's opportunity for purity in the church. Harvest comes through hardship. Kings and kingdoms come and go. God's word remains. The centerpiece of all of history is Jesus Christ, not you or me. And all the political, economic and global upheaval in Daniel, was to get the temple open and the people holy, so they will be ready to receive the first coming of Jesus. And all the political, global and economic upheaval of our day is to get the church open and to make the people holy, to prepare for Jesus's second coming. Amen.

(00:15:33):

That's been Daniel up to this point today, and we're going to end with four declarations of good news. You need some good news? Did you come to church today and need some good news?

(00:15:45):

We got some good news today, four declarations of good news as we land the plane here on the Book of Daniel. We're going to start in chapter 12, verse one. Here we go, "At that time,

Michael, the great prince, who protects your people will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then." We've seen two divine beings named in this book, Gabriel and Michael. Gabriel, messenger of God, Michael, the warrior of God. These two divine beings are here. This is speaking of Michael. He's the divine warrior of God, who's going to act as a divine being on behalf of God's people. They are divine beings, God has assigned to act on behalf of you, his people. But at that time, your people, everyone who's name is found written in the book will be delivered.

(00:16:40):

So, Daniel is being spoken to about what's to come in his future. And what he's being told is, God has assigned divine beings to war on your behalf. And all of those whose name is found in this book, that Revelation talks to us about being the Book of Life, they will be delivered.

(00:16:57):

So, here's good news declaration number one for the people of God at Grace City Church, in Wenatchee, Washington in 2021, the year of our Lord. Are you ready? Number one, God shows up and delivers his people. God shows up and delivers his people. I said, God shows up, because many of you are wondering, where is he gone? God shows up and delivers his people. He doesn't show up and say, "Hey, how can I help?" He doesn't show up and say, "Oh my goodness, what are we going to do here?" He doesn't show up and say, "Haven't seen this before." God's going to show up and he's going to deliver his people. That's a promise. You can take it to the bank. It is irrefutable. That is your future, if you are with the King. God will show up and he will deliver his people.

(00:17:56):

How does God deliver? God delivers three ways. You write this down. Sometimes God delivers you by taking you around that what you thought you were going to go through. Now, this might just be my personal experience, but I am a gifted, false prophet. And I'm glad I don't live in the Old Testament, or I would have been dead a long time ago.

(00:18:19):

Here's how it works for me. I run scenarios out in my mind and I start prophesying all of the doom is going to happen, "Oh, this is going to happen. And that's going to happen. This person will say that. And then this legislation will pass. And then this thing is going to happen. And then this email come in." And then I just, I start prophesying do over my life. I'm the only one who's ever done that? And what's happening is guzzling down and going, "First of all, you can't find your car keys, bro, let alone, know what's going to happen at lunch today. And you're already burning all sorts of energy on all sorts of things you can't control anyways."

(00:19:01):

And then in my false prophecy, I become a false savior, "Well, I got to do this. I got to change this." And I start trying to manipulate things. And then God just takes me around it. And I'm like, "Well, that was easy. Wow." Think how much energy you've burned. And I've burned,

worrying and stressing and being anxious over things that God never even intended to come into our life. It's like, "I'm going to take you around that fire, so don't worry about it." Now, I'm not saying be responsible. I'm not saying don't plan ahead. Yes, men, lead your home. Yes, plan for the future. Yes, run the fire drills. Yes, be prepared. Yes and amen. But stop short of trying to manufacture a future that you can't control and that God hasn't put you in charge of anyways. Be faithful, walk with Jesus and stop being a false prophet. Sometime God delivers us by taking us around things. Sometimes, secondly, God delivers us by taking us through things.

(00:20:08):

Psalm 23, right? Walk through the valley of the shadow of death. Now, walk around it, not fly over it, not skip it all together. Right? We walk through the valley of the shadow of death. I'll fear no evil for thou art with me. Sometimes God delivers us by taking us through something.

(00:20:32):

Here's what you can know. If you are in something either personally, relationally, or maybe even corporately as a community or culturally, we can know that, okay, though we may have gotten here because of our own foolishness and the consequences of our own sin, there can still be designed in where we are at, even though it is hard because we believe God is sovereignly over all things.

(00:21:00):

And a good friend pointed out to me this weekend that God never punishes you twice for the same sin. Wasn't that good [inaudible 00:21:11]? Double jeopardy, right? You can't get convicted twice for the same crime in America. It's called double jeopardy. And neither two does God punish someone twice for the same sin. Meaning, Jesus Christ was punished once for all. If you are in Christ, the double transfer has taken. Jesus has taken upon himself your sin, and he has given to you his righteousness. Meaning, all of your sin past, present and future has been paid for in Jesus, which means nothing happening to you in your life is God punishing you, because God doesn't punish twice for sin.

(00:22:01):

Now, most of you didn't get the gravity of that moment, what I just said, because many times you think, "What I do wrong? This is God punishing me. What have I done wrong?" God disciplines those he loves. He never punishes his children because he's already punished Jesus for your sin. That's a big deal. That's a big deal. But sometimes God delivers us by taking us through something, to refine us, to purify us, to strengthen us. But he's always doing it for our good, and ultimately for his glory. Because as God is glorified, we are made more happy because we were made to see God glorified. So, it's never, "Oh, man, God is going to get his glory. And I'm going to get the shaft." No, no. As God is glorified over, my life is getting better. Nowhere ever, is God more glorified and as his glory grow and increase, and those who are in Christ like, "My life is getting worse." As God is glorified in our life, our joy quotient goes up and sometimes God delivers us.

(00:23:01):

And ultimately, he delivers us by taking around sometimes, through, but ultimately he'll take us from. He will deliver us from brokenness, pain, death through Jesus Christ.

(00:23:12):

Look at the text, "But at the time, everyone whose name is found written in the book will be delivered." So, it's not a question of, your name is in the book, and he'll pick a few to say, because there's only so much room in his life raft. He will save all of those who are his. So, the only question remaining is, are you his people? Look at the text, "At that time, your people, everyone whose name is found written in the book will be delivered." Question, is your name in the book? Is your name in the book? Are you here this morning, and you could tell me, "Pastor, I know that I know, that I know, that my name is in the Book of Life. Or are you like, "Well, I think it is. Did my parents write it down? A book of life. There's a book."

(00:24:01):

What is the Book of Life? Think about it this way, when you go to a party, there's a guest list, right? And you go to a party and you don't get into this party unless your name is on the guest list. Very simple. You come to the party. You're like, "Oh, that looks like a good time in there. Yeah. Are those meatballs? Oh my goodness sakes. We've got to get in there. Hey." And they're like, "Welcome, sir. How are you?" You're like, "I'm about to be great. I remember the party."

(00:24:29):

They're like, "Great. Let me check the list here. Let's see. What's your name, sir?" "Josh." "Josh, Josh, Josh, Josh, Josh. All right. No, Josh." "Try last name, McPherson." "Okay. McPherson, McPherson, McPherson Greg, McPherson Tara, McPherson Carrie. Let's see, McPherson Sharon. No, McPherson Candy or McPherson Josh." "No." Okay. "Oh, here's Candy. Okay. Candy made it. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay. No, McPherson Josh." "That can't be right." "Sorry, sir. These records are right." "No, no, no, no, no. Greg McPherson was my dad. He was my dad. Candy was my mom. The worship leader guy, that was my brother. That was my brother. That beautiful girl, who'd sing all the time, that's my wife." It was like, "Your name, sir, is not here."

(00:25:24):

Single file line to heaven. You don't get in on the curtails of friends or relatives, or people you're acquainted with. So, the question for you in your individual chair this morning is, is your name in the Book of Life? Have you said, "I see Jesus is Lord. I acknowledge that I'm the problem. He's the solution. I acknowledge that I am broken, he's the healer. I'm recognizing that I am lost in my sin, and he's the finder of those who are lost in their sin and the forgiver of those who are dead in their sin. I don't just have a sin challenge or a disease, I have been mortally wounded by sin. I am dead in my transgressions and sin." He is a great savior. And then by grace, that God awakens your eyes to see that reality. By faith, you say, "I no longer

want to try to pretend I can save myself. And I want Jesus to be my savior. I confess my sin, repent of it, turn from it to Jesus." And now your name, friend, is in the Book of Life.

(00:26:36):

You show up to that party, here's what's going to happen. I've had this experience often because, because I am like borderline, redneck white trash. But have you ever been in places where you're like, "I have no business being here." You know what I'm talking about. You're like, "If they only knew that I've owned these jeans since high school. If they only knew..." I mean, you're like, "Just hold it together and don't open your mouth and talk, because they'll realize how much of a fraud you are." Have you ever had a moment like that?

(00:27:09):

Friends, I think heaven is going to be little bit like that. And you're like, "It looks like only holiness in there. It looks like only perfect righteousness in there. I don't think that's my party." And Jesus is coming, "Hey, hey, come here. Come here. He's with me." "Well, look at him, and he's got no clothes." "He's going to wear my clothes. My righteousness goes over his filthy rags. My robe gets draped over his sin. Come on in. This is your party that I planned for you at my expense. Enter into the joy of your father." That's going to be heaven. That's going to be heaven. And we'll spend eternity going, "How did Norris get in?" You know what I mean? Are you kidding me, Norris. Wow. We going to party. We get to spend eternity in a place we got no business being. It's called grace. It's called the good news of the gospel.

(00:28:30):

We gather in a sing and worship, not to make something up, but to stir up a sense of awakening to the reality of that moment. Hey, remember, I know it was hard this week, and then it got buried in the newsfeed. But don't forget, there's a party getting thrown for the glory of Jesus and the fame of his grace. And you got invited and you got no business being there, but you're going to be there. That's why we do church every week, on Sunday, the day that Jesus rose from the dead and purchased the party invitation for you. Have you accepted it? Is your name in the Book of Life? You don't have to leave here today wondering, you could leave here knowing. You confess your sin. You repent of your sin. You turn to Jesus and your destiny, friend, is now, eternal party.

(00:29:25):

Ready for the next good news declaration? Chapter 12, verse two, "Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt." Remember, this prophetic being given to Daniel about what's going to happen as the future is coming to him. "Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise, will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever."

(00:30:00):

Here's good news declaration, number two, God comes down and raises his people up. Oh, by the way, from the dead, it's not like, "Lift your head discouraged person." It's, "Rise from the grave dead person." It's not he comes in and gives us a little boost to put us over the line. He wakes us up from the sleep of death. This is miraculous resurrection. This is the hope of the Christian, that we have hope, that we have life on the other side of death. If you are in Christ, death is best case scenario. It only invites you in a best case scenario. You're like, "What's the worst thing could happen to me? Well, I could die." What does that mean? Best case scenario.

(00:30:55):

Here's the question that people have been asking in the last 12 months in our world that they have no good answer for that's been leading to the absolute insanity we're experiencing. And the question is, what happens after you die? What happens after you die? And whether or not people know it, they have some conscious or unconscious thought about what happens when they die. And that is consciously or unconsciously guiding their ideology and guiding their decisions, and guiding their responses to events that happen out in the world.

(00:31:31):

I remember talking to one guy who was going through what I deemed to be fairly extreme to borderline ridiculous measures in the last 12 months over something that I didn't quite deem as that large of threat to him and his personal circumstance. And I asked him, I said, "Bro, what's all the things, stuff here, why?" And he said, "I could die." To which I said, "Duh, did you just figure that out? That's been on your calendar for a while." You don't get to not die. If you're a human being, that's part of your life. It's on your calendar. And there will be a day when you won't be alive anymore, you will be dead. Nobody gets to escape that. Now, yes, we want to live long lives and healthy lives. We want to put those things off. I understand all that, yes, man. I don't have a death wish. But I'm not trying to avoid the inevitable. I don't want to avoid death at the cost of not living. Right?

(00:32:47):

And so, we're talking and I said, "Well, what do you think happens after you die?" And the answer he gave me was terrible. And I said, "You better put on 10 more masks because that's terrifying, if that's what you think happens after you die."

(00:32:59):

So, here's a few bad ideas and wrong ideas about what happens when you die. The first is materialism or naturalism. This is a worldview that says, when I die, nothing, you live, you die, you're done. There's no God in heaven. There's no hell below. Right? It comes out in the songs too, by the way. And it's just, when we die, it's just over. It's done. And people actually soothe themselves with this false idea, which in actuality is quite discouraging. If you think about it, it is a dim view of life. And it breeds hopelessness because death is the great victor overall, and death has the final word in your life. It also leads to all sorts of crazy things that one pursues in the here and now, because if there is no heaven, if there is no reward, if there

is no afterlife, if there is no reality beyond the temporary visible world, we can see, then the only shot you have at experiencing any pleasure is what you can get now, so get it while the getting is good.

(00:34:16):

Materialism, naturalism, it's a world without God. You live, you die, you're done. It's a false view of what happens in the afterlife.

(00:34:28):

False view, number two, universalism. This is everyone goes to the party in the sky. We all get together, the big roundup in the sky, right? It makes for a great country song and lousy theology. We're all going to meet up there in the sky and we're going to just have a good time. Everyone gets saved. And it's false. It's a lie, bread and spread by the enemy to dim and to turn down, and to muffle your right response to fear of potential judgment.

(00:35:06):

But if universalism can work itself in, in Christianity, by people claiming to be Christians. And then, this is mind boggling, they played off of the nature of God. God as a loving God, would never condemn someone to hell. And now they're telling God who he is. And they're telling God how he should be. And they're ignoring things that God has already said about him and who he is and how he... And it's like, "No, no, no, no, God, you don't want to be like that. God trust me. God trust me. I know you've been God for eternity past, but I've been alive for 46 years, and I got a degree. And so, let me tell you how you should be God." Which God says, "Are you done talking yet?" Boom, lightning strike, right? I mean, God isn't up there worried about what professors at Christian colleges think about him or what you think about him by the way.

(00:35:52):

And so, this whole idea of universalism, here's where the rubber meets the road. You're a pastor and somebody you know or you love, or somebody that you love has someone that they know that dies, and you're asked to do their funeral. And they come to you and they say, "Is my brother with Jesus? I just need to know, is my aunt with Jesus? Is my son with Jesus?" And they fill in the blank. And in that moment, you, so put yourself in that moment, as a pastor, you have a decision to make, do you compromise what you know to be true and lie to them, so as to "comfort them" or do you be horrible in that moment and tell them the truth. First presupposition is wrong there, lying is good for people and telling the truth is bad for people.

(00:36:46):

So, do you know what I say in that moment? "Do you think my loved one is with Jesus?" Here's what I say in that moment, "You know what? I'm not the judge of men's hearts. What I do know is that God will judge rightly and justly, and mercifully. And we can trust him to do that with your loved one."

(00:37:09):

Now, let's talk about you, where are you at with Jesus? Because it doesn't do the living any good to lie about the dead, because they're dead and that's over. But if you lie about the dead in order to comfort the living, you might actually be damning the living when they could have had an opportunity to repent and turn. So, there is no, we all get together in the big roundup in the sky. Look here. Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth, those who are dead and buried, will awake, some to everlasting life, and everyone else along with them, no, some to everlasting life and others to shame and everlasting contempt or torment. So, the question becomes, is your name in the Book of Life?

(00:38:01):

And we aren't the judges of men's hearts, God is, and he will. And our job is to preach the truth to those who are living while there is still time.

(00:38:11):

The next wrong answer to what happens when you die is annihilationism, right? And this is actually been popularized by some Christian theologians. When we die, those who are in Christ, eternity forever, and the rest just end game style, and they vaporize into ashes and they're gone. They cease to exist. Because we can't wrap our mind around a loving God, eternally punishing someone for their wickedness, which means we don't have a proper view of the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man. And you trust that the affront is to a holy God to say, "No, you're not God, I'm God." The punishment is equal to the crime. The crime is measured by those who was done against, God is infinite, the holy. Crime against the infinitely unholy, therefore it's punished as such.

(00:39:00):

Annihilationism. Look, look, look, look, we're getting a lot of miles at one verse. Are we? It's like, verse two, wow, change our dinner plans here. Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some to everlasting life, others to shame. And what's the word, everlasting contempt and torment. And annihilationism, not biblical.

(00:39:22):

Number four, reincarnation. This is where, this is kind of Eastern religion, depending on how you lived in this life, then you can level up in the next, or you can get brought low, as karma counter background getting you in the face. And you got a chance to try to work your way back up out of that. So, this is a simple example you might understand. You live a good life., you might come back and your next life like as a dog. You live a bad life... You're tracking. Praise the Lord, point taken. Anyways, you come back as something less than a dog.

(00:40:16):

You're such wise people. I feel like we're really tracking it. That's reincarnation. You come back, karma hits and you come back as something better or worse, depending on how you lived your life.

(00:40:24):

Purgatory, number five. This is where you die, and then you go into this holding cell. You know what I mean? And it's like, "Oh, you're here, jump and give me 50. And if we like what you do, maybe we'll let you back out of the team." And so, it's this place you go, it's like this holding cell like in the ether, where you can do pushups, moral pushups, so earn your way back onto the team. Lot of problems with this doctrine, namely, is not taught anywhere in scripture. But thinking about the practical outworking of it, "I'm going to live like the devil because I'll get the purgatory, pretend I was sorry for it and be good to go." And appointed to man once to live, and once to die, Hebrew says. No purgatory. One shot, right now.

(00:41:02):

Six, cartoon heaven. This has come about because of really bad art on the Sistine Chapel. Okay? It's beautiful art. It's amazing. It's the glory of God. It's just wrong. You know what I mean? Look up and be like, "Oh, look at the angels. It's a marshmallow man as a baby in a diaper with a harp." Yuck. If you think about heaven as like clouds and harps, and chubby bunnies, and you in diapers, that's not a compelling sell for me. Okay? That's pretty much everything I am not aiming for in life. My life ended in diapers. I don't want to continue it for eternity in diapers. You know what I mean? She's like, I know what I'm shooting for. And so, beautiful art, it's just not very accurate. Right?

(00:41:51):

How about revivification, number seven? This is where, "I died, I saw a bright light. I was walking toward it, and then I turned. And then I came back. And then I wrote a book to make money off of suckers and airports." I have yet to walk through an airport and see on the shelf, "I died and came back. You want to hear about it?" No. So, well, it wasn't Lazarus... No, Lazarus died. God sent him back. He lived for a temporary period of time. And then he died again. And this time it was permanent. It's stuck. You don't die and come back, die and come back. Die, [inaudible 00:42:29] back? And it's like, no, when you die, you're dead.

(00:42:32):

The Christian doctrine of what happens after you die is the glorious doctrine of the resurrection. The resurrection, look at it in the text. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens. And those who lead many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever. Oftentimes, in the scripture, stars in the heavens are connected to saints who live on earth. And what Daniel is teaching us here, is that the answer to the question, what happens after you die? Is for those who died apart from God, rebelling against him, will be sent to everlasting torment. And those who died in Christ, clothed in the king's party clothes, enter into eternal reward.

(00:43:14):

And what happens is, we don't experience that reward in a disconnected non-body spirit floating around. We don't experience it in our old body. We are given a new body. You die, your body goes into the ground, to be separate from the bodies, to be present with Christ. Your soul and spirit are with Jesus. When he comes back, he reunites your spirit, not with your old body, with like a lime squeeze twist like, "Look, it's Josh old body, except his back works now. Look, it's his own body, except his knee doesn't click." It's I get a new resurrected body of what Jesus was the first new man.

(00:43:52):

It says we will recognize each other. I don't know how all it quite it's quite going to work, but there's going to be a, not like a 2.0, like a quadrillion billion .0 version of my... Think like Ironman on steroids, you can fly, you can soar. I mean, we're going to have so much fun in new heavens and new earth. That's my eternal destiny. That's my answer, what happens on the other side of death. Therefore, I can eat healthy. I can try and live a good long life to care for my wife and my kids, as long as God gives me breath. And then death is worst case scenario for Josh, son of God, because to be absent from this broken and dying and getting old body, is to be present with God, which is amazing. And then when Jesus comes back, resurrection body given, and I spend eternity testing that baby out. That's what happens in the other side of death. God comes down to raise his people up from death and give them a new body.

(00:44:53):

You want the next declaration of good news? I think you need it. Oh, first quick quote here on heaven, C.S. Lewis. I have felt personally that this series has grossly lacked quotes from C.S. Lewis. Don't you agree? So, we're going to fix that this sermon by throwing a bunch in here. Ready? And Lewis on heaven is an interesting conversation, by the way. We won't get into that now. But a good piece here from... I got to tell you this quick story.

(00:45:18):

Jim Newberry is here. Jim, what a sucker. I mean, what a brother. Jim was here on Thursday. And I'm reading from a screen right here. Right? You see it up there. I see it right here. I'm reading it. And Jim sitting right there, and Jim's like, "He has that whole thing memorized. My pastor is so smart." And he's all getting proud of his pastor. And he's like, "Hey, wait. He's reading that. Hey, he tricked me."

(00:45:44):

So, poor, Jim, I'm going to read this, Jim. So, as to not be a false pretenses here, I am reading this from a screen in front of me, a passage from C.S. Lewis, mere Christianity. Here we are, "There is no need to be worried by facetious people who try to make the Christian hope of heaven, ridiculous by saying they do not want to spend eternity playing harps. The answer to such people, is that if they cannot understand books written for grownups, they should not talk about them."

(00:46:21):

I love that quote. It's just like [inaudible 00:46:26]. Every journalist ever talked about the Bible in the news, you know what I mean? It's like, "Have you even read it?" All of the scriptural image, harp, imagery harp, crown gold, is of course, a merely symbolic attempt to express the inexpressible. Musical instruments are mentioned because for many people, music is the thing known in the present life, which most strongly suggests ecstasy in infinity. Crowns are mentioned to suggest the fact that those who are united with God in eternity, share his splendor and power, and joy. Gold is mentioned to suggest the timelessness of heaven because gold does not rust and the preciousness of it. People who take these symbols literally, might as well think that when Christ told us to be like doves, he meant that we were to lay eggs. Isn't that awesome? I just love Lewis. Oh, thanks God for making him so, so good.

(00:47:19):

Declaration number three, we'll start in verse four, "But you Daniel, roll up the seal, the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase in knowledge." So, he's saying, "This is what's going to happen at the end of all days, put it in a scroll, seal it, call it, it's in the bank. Now, many people will increase in learning and start universities, and go to college, and develop the internet. And you'll have more information in your back pocket, eventually, Daniel, than we have in antiquity. But none of that will change the fact that what I've put in this scroll is true and will happen."

(00:47:58):

Verse five, "Then I, Daniel looked and there before me stood two others, one on this bank of the river and one on the opposite bank. One of them said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "How long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?" He's calling out, "How long before that happens?"

(00:48:19):

Verse seven, "The man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, lifted his right hand and his left hand toward heaven. And I heard him swear by him who lives forever saying, "It will be for a time times and time and a half." [Donmuch 00:48:37] Snohomish County sheriff, deputy, he texted me beginning of series, "Hey, I've been reading Daniel, listening to my car on my shift and reading." He's like, "I've got a question for you, what does time times and a half-time mean?" I said, "I don't know, ask Daniel." He didn't know either. He's like, "How long before this happens?" And the guy is like, "Time, time and a half and double time and time and a half, depending on how fast the train is going." And it's just like, "I don't know. Daniel doesn't know. We don't know." God is saying, "In my time." That's what it means. "In my time, it'll happen." When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, and all these things will be completed.

(00:49:18):

Verse eight, "I heard, but I did not understand." Anybody had that experience? "Well, I heard it, but I didn't get it. Now, I didn't get it." "I heard it, but I didn't understand it." And the divine being is like, "That's okay." God understands it. And that's what's important here.

(00:49:40):

"So, I asked my Lord, what will the outcome of all of this be?" And here's what I love. Verse nine, he replied, "Go your way." "Oh, I got more questions. I'm totally confused. I didn't get the time, time, time and a half thing. How fast is the train going? And okay, what is this word again? I'm doing math equations here in the year, who, when the power and the what, and the name of the king." And he's like, "No, it's in the scroll. It's done. God's plan will come about. You are now free to go your way." I don't want to go my way. I want answers." "Go your way, Daniel." "I'd like to know the time, time and a half at a time and double half thing again." And he's like, "Go your way." "You're not, go away. Go your way. Go your way, Daniel. Because the words are rolled up and sealed until the time of the end."

(00:50:27):

What's the big idea? Here's the big idea. The declaration of good news, God holds tomorrow secure, therefore, so you can live today with hope. God holds tomorrow secure, so you can live today with hope. And we got more questions, don't we? "What's going to happen tomorrow? What's my future hold? How's this going to work out? What's this legislation going to mean? And what's this political party going to do? And where's my job going to go? How is my career going to work out? And what's that going to happen in this relationship? And what about the school I need to go to? And how many degrees do I need to get, again?" And all these questions and God's like, "Remember the end, it's sealed up, go your way. Live your life. The end is determined."

(00:51:09):

Kings of seals were placed over words written in scrolls that represented the law, the gospel reality. When a king put words on a document and rolled it up and sealed it, that was your reality, quite apart from what you thought it should be. And God is saying, "Your reality is good and secure, if you're in Christ." Tomorrow is secure. Take hope. You can live out today with hope.

(00:51:44):

Last declaration of good news, verse 10, "Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand. But those who are wise will understand. From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished, and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there'll be 1290 days. Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days." And I'm sure many of you are wondering what that means. And I'm happy to tell you. I have no clue what that means.

(00:52:17):

We'll keep reading. Verse 13, "As for you go your way till the end, you will rest. And then at the end of the days, you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance." Is it literal days? Is it figurative days? Is it metaphorical days? Nobody really knows. The point being, at the appointed time, God has a sign for history to roll up and his son to come back. It will happen. We're not on the planning committee. Thanks be to God. We'd screwed up. We're on the welcoming committee. Thanks be to God. We can do that by his power. Go your way till the end, you will rest. And then at the end of the days, you will receive your allotted inheritance.

(00:53:00):

Here's the good news declaration, for the tired and weary, there is eternal hope. God rewards the faithful. God rewards the faithful.

(00:53:12):

Last word. Two notes that I think it is important for us as we land the Daniel plane. Daniel didn't strive to be successful. He strove to be faithful. Daniel didn't make it his end in Babylon to be successful. Okay? "If I pull this lever, if I jockey this roll, if I climb this ladder, if I put my foot, my hand on that wrong, if I'm settled here, if I compromise that, if I'm not too bombastic over here about that, if I'm not too dogmatic about it, if I just slip my way through here, I could reach worldly success. And then I can be influential for God." Friends, nobody ever influenced the world for the King by compromising the truth of the King. You have nothing to say or do when you get to wherever you think you need to get, in order to do something great for God, if you've compromised who he is all the way along the road to get there.

(00:54:11):

Daniel, did not strive to be successful. He strove to be faithful. So my question for you is, what's your target? Success or faithfulness. And I'm not saying it can't be both. Work hard. Do all you do with excellence. You should be the best at what you do by who you know, because you're doing it not for them but for the Lord. Yes, yes, yes. We are big on excellence in the church because what we do is done for Jesus, not for man. Yes, work hard. Yes, plan ahead. Yes, execute. Yes, perform. Yes, plan. Do all those things you need to do, get better, work hard. But make being faithful to God, the intuit you strive, not being successful in the eyes of men, the intuit you strive.

(00:54:53):

Look at the text, 2 Corinthians five, verse 10, "So, we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due to us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad."

(00:55:09):

Here's the reality of Paul's teaching, you cannot lose your salvation. Jesus makes you his own. You are a son or daughter of the King. That is not up for grabs given any day. You may think, "Oh, I lost my salvation." My question would be, did you ever have it? So, while you cannot

lose your salvation, you can forfeit reward. You can give up reward. Paul teaches over and over, and over again, that the sons and daughters who are in Christ hands will be saved. And then they'll be rewarded according to their good works, according to the life of sacrificial generosity in service and love that they lived out, while here on earth. We will be rewarded for the life that we lived in service to Jesus Christ.

(00:55:56):

You can't lose your salvation. You can forfeit rewards. Don't make being successful in the eyes of the world your aim, make being faithful to God your aim, because therein lies the true reward.

(00:56:11):

And last word, Daniel, didn't see as longings fulfilled in this life and neither will you. Daniel was longing to return home and see the people of God brought in from all the places they'd been scattered, for the temple to be open, for the sacrifices to be made, for the word of God to be preached, and the worship of God to go up, and the witness of God to go forth. And he knew, "I probably won't see all of that in this life." Daniel's longings were not fulfilled in this life.

(00:56:40):

And if you're full of the Holy Spirit, you have long as it won't be fulfilled in this life either. And that's not to mean we don't plan and pray, and pursue and dream. I want to take as many people with me as possible, but I also realize that everything I long for in my heart might not be realized in this life. And I'm okay with that.

(00:57:03):

When we have an over realized eschatology, meaning we take what heaven's going to be, and then we put those expectations on the world we live in, we go through life constantly disappointed. And I'm not saying we lower our standard on the same and go, "That's how it's always going to be. People will be people. Sinners will be sinners. Have fun." No, no, no, no, no. We live for Jesus. We follow Jesus. We ask for strength to obey him and live for him. And then, we realized that, you know what? The world is jacked up. It always has been. And until God comes back and makes all things right, it's going to continue to be crazy and get crazier. We're promised that. Deep breath, look to Jesus. And don't think that you're longing for something better. It means that this world is a fraud and heaven is a fake. You're longing for something better, is proof positive that what God is preparing and Jesus has promised is actually true, and you were made for it.

(00:58:01):

Listen to how C.S. Lewis puts it. He said, the Christian says, "Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists. A baby feels hunger, well, there is such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim, well, there is such a thing as water. Men feel sexual desire, well, there is such a thing as sex. If I find in myself a desire, which no experience in this

world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world. If none of my earthly pleasure satisfy it, that does not prove that the universe is a fraud, probably, earthly pleasures were never meant to satisfy it, but only to arouse it, to suggest the real thing. If that is so, I must take care." He's talking about the desire for something better and more.

(00:59:05):

How many of you have ever, or are currently experiencing some form of disappointment with your life or life in general, as you're observing it right now? Am I the only one?

(00:59:15):

No.

(00:59:15):

I mean, it's like, is this as good as we can get it here? You know what I mean? Is this who we are? Is this who I am? Is this is as good as I can do? Daniel has shown us. And C.S. Lewis is reminding us that that desire shouldn't lead to your discouragement, it should lead to your ratcheted experience of your anticipation for God doing what you and your gut knows need to be done, and yet have no power to accomplish it. If that is so, I mean, if I have a desire for something that's real, but I can't experience on earth and earth has no capacity to deliver in its current broken state, if that is so, I must take care on the one hand, never to despise it.

(01:00:02):

So, never despise feeling like you were made for another reality. Don't ever despise it. I must refuse to be unthankful for it. These are earthly blessings. And on the other, I must never mistake them for something else of which they were only a kind of copy, echo or mirage. I must keep alive in myself of the desire for my true country, which I shall not find it until after death. I must never let it get snowed under or turned aside. The desire for other country, I must never allow to be buried, never allowed to wane. I must make it the main object of life to press on to that country, and to help others do the same.

(01:00:50):

Friends, I've been praying as one of the outcomes of our study in Daniel, is that it will both equip us to live more faithfully in the craziness of the cultural moments that we're in. Oh, by the way, it's always been crazy. And that it would arise in us, a desire to both live faithfully in the craziness of the here and now, and long even more so for the peace and order, and beauty that is to come when God the Father sends Jesus Christ back to establish his kingdom forever. That we would be faithful in the now, looking ahead to then, work back and live in a way that's faithful.

(01:01:34):

So, here's what I want to do, I want to invite you to bow your heads in just a moment of prayer. And we're going to prepare our hearts for communion. And in this moment of preparing our heart for communion, if you're here in the room and you know that your name is in the Book

of Life, this is a great moment. You're going to sit. You're going to reflect on your week prior. You're going to reflect on the week to come, and all the problems of your life that happened last week, and all the disappointments and challenges and uncertainties that turned your life upside down last week, and all the uncertainties of things to come in this week.

(01:02:11):

You're going to sit there and go, "You know what? This is real, and this is life under the curse in the reality of the fall. But I have been invited to the party that will never end, that I have no business being invited to, let alone attending. That is my reality. So, I'm going to regroup in this moment, allow my heart to swell with gratefulness for the gospel, to reorient my attitude and my perspective that I might set my eyes again on things above and set my mind on things above, and then work that backward to live out that reality in the here and now."

(01:02:54):

And for those of you who aren't in Christ, this meal that we're about to take, reminds you that there's a party that you've been invited to. You could attend, if you'd like. You say, "How does that work?" You say, "How does it work?" You repent of your sin. You say, "Father, I'm a sinner. I've sinned against you. I've sinned against others. I've sinned against God of the universe. I can't save myself. I now confess my sin, turn from my sin and place my faith in Jesus. I declare you to be God. I declare you to be king. I declare you to be savior. I declare you to be Lord. I'm done trying to save myself. And I'm done looking at false idols and saviors to save me. I'm turning from those to you. I'm placing my trust in you, my faith in you."

(01:03:44):

And there could be some here in this room, this morning, you've been playing the game of Christianity, "Oh, my parents went to church once. I went to a Christian school once. I went to a Bible study once. I listen to sermons every once in a while." And you're playing the game of Christianity, but you know that it's a façade. And that you are a fraud. You're not walking in faithfulness to Jesus. You're not in relationship with Jesus. You're not living the life he's called you to live. There's sin in your life. There's rebellion in your life. There's a stubbornness in your heart, whatever it is. Today is the day you stop playing the game. Today is the day that you acknowledged, "You know what? Before today, it was a game. Today, it's reality."

(01:04:37):

And you go, "I don't want to do that because then people will know that I was a fraud." Friend, you are a fraud. God knows it. So, let's just acknowledge reality. But the good news is, he'll forgive you for it, "I know you were playing before. I know you were just pretending, that's okay. I forgive you. You're mine."

(01:05:00):

So, you're here as a follower of Jesus, these moments, regroup, hope in the gospel. You're here, don't know Jesus, invitation on the table, come to the party, repent from your sin. You're here and have been a pretender, to follow Jesus, you can repent. And the games can go

away. The lies can go away. The mask can go away. The facade can go away. And you can know Jesus personally and intimately today. And it can be new start this moment.