



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Daniel 1: 1-21

Daniel

“Where is God Now”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Thank you, Mark and good morning and it is good to be back with you. And this morning we start a new series of studies in the Book of Daniel and I estimate that it's going to be a series of about 13 lessons, a chapter a lesson, but probably a couple in one chapter or more, but roughly that, 12 or 13 lessons. And this first lesson is in the first chapter. We're going to look this morning at Daniel 1:1-21. I'll read the entire chapter.

“In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the vessels of the house of God; and he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and he brought the vessels into the treasury of his god.

Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his officials, to bring some of the sons of Israel, including some of the royal family and of the nobles, youths in whom was no defect, who were good-looking, showing intelligence in every branch of wisdom, endowed with understanding and discerning knowledge, and who had ability or serving in the king's court.

And he ordered him to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans. The king appointed for them a daily ration from the king's choice food and from the wine which he drank, and appointed that they should be educated three years, at the end of which they were to enter the king's personal service. Now among them from the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. Then the commander of the officials assigned new names to them; and to Daniel he assigned

the name Belteshazzar, to Hananiah Shadrach, to Mishael Meshach and to Azariah Abed-nego.

But Daniel made up his mind that he would defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank; so he sought permission from the commander of the officials that he might defile himself. Now God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials, and the commander of the officials said to Daniel, 'I am afraid of my lord the king, who has appointed your food and your drink; for why should he see your faces looking more haggard than the youths who are your own age? Then you would make me forfeit my head to the king.'

But Daniel said to the overseer whom the commander of the officials had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, 'Please test your servants for ten days, and let us be given some vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then let our appearance be observed in your presence and the appearance of the youths who are eating the king's choice food; and deal with your servants according to what you see.'

So he listened to them in this matter and tested them for ten days. At the end of ten days their appearance seemed better and they were fatter than all the youths who had been eating the king's choice food. So the overseer continued to withhold their choice food and the wine which they were to drink and kept giving them vegetables.

As for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and intelligence in every branch of literature and wisdom; Daniel even understood all kinds of visions and dreams. Then at the end of the days which the king had specified for presenting them, the commander of the officials presented them before Nebuchadnezzar. The king talked with them, and out of them all not one was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

So they entered the king's personal service. As for every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king consulted them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and conjurers who were in all his realm. And Daniel continued until the first year of Cyrus the king.” May the Lord bless this reading of His word and bless our time of study in it together. Let's bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank you for this time together and this opportunity on this Lord's day to be together, to fellowship with one another, to be able to visit and

catch up on the week. It's nice to be with friends. It's especially nice to be with your people, gathered around your word, to be able to read it together and then consider it in some length and depth.

And Father, as we do that, I pray your blessings upon us. That's true fellowship. That's real fellowship when we feast together on your word and I pray that through our time together you would nourish us spiritually. You would teach us, you would build us up in the faith, that you would give us the lessons of this great first chapter of the Book of Daniel and that we would learn that you are sovereign over all things and you bless those who rest in that and obey you.

You bless those who talk by faith. Help us to do that. Help us to learn that lesson and help us to practice it. Help us to live obedient lives in the midst of this dark age in which we live. You've put us here. It's no accident that we live in this century and in this place. That is your sovereign will and you have put us here to be lights. Help us to be that. We can only reflect your grace and your truth to the degree that we understand it and know it and so we pray that you would increase our knowledge and understanding of it and strengthen our resolve to live. So bless us spiritually, Lord.

We pray that for this hour, we pray that you'd bless us this evening as we come back here to celebrate the Lord's Supper and remember His person and work, what He has done for us on the cross and all that we have in Him. And teach us that now in this hour. And bless us not only spiritually but materially. Lord, we have a list of names in our bulletin of people who request for prayers. That's only a small list. We know that every one of us need prayer.

We are dependent upon you for anything. We pray for those in particular though that have asked for our prayers. We pray for the sick. We pray that you give healing and encouragement. We pray for those recovering from surgery, that you'd give them rapid healing. And in all of this, all of the difficulties, help them to reflect upon you and your goodness and your grace and your good will for every one of us.

Some are you living in difficult times, either in the home or at work. There's the stress and strain of life, the pressure of life that can get to us. And then, Lord, there's just – there are the good times that we have. Those are times in which we should give you thanks and rejoice and yet at the same time know that those are times

when we can become careless as well. And so help us to keep our thoughts, our minds fixed upon you and your goodness to us and all that we have in Christ.

There's so much we can pray about, Lord. And we pray you'd bless us in this hour, certainly pray that and pray that you would build us up in the faith and that all that we do in our singing of hymns and our study of scripture that everything would be to your honor and glory. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.

[Message] In his book *Night*, Elie Wiesel tells of that first night he came to Auschwitz and the sight of the chimneys of the crematorium, the fire, the smoke, the ash, but what must have been on his mind was the question that a man asked when the prisoners were made to watch the long death of a child. Where is God now? That question has been asked by people down through the ages in times of cruelty and calamity. I'm sure it was on the minds of the Jews when Jerusalem fell to the heathens, the temple was sacked and many of their best and brightest children were taken off to a foreign land.

That happened in the year in the reign of Jehoiakim which was the year 605 B.C. That's how the Book of Daniel begins. When Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar was one of the mightiest kings of ancient times. He was proud, he was ambitious and in 605 he was building one of the greatest empires of the age.

In the spring of that year he defeated the Egyptian army at the Battle of Carchemish. Then he turned on the kingdom of Judah and captured Jerusalem. He robbed the temple of its treasures. He took captive many of Jerusalem's choicest young people and marched them off to the land of Shinar. He put the vessels of the temple in the treasury of his god and he put the young Jewish captives in college to learn the language and the ways of Babylon so that they could serve the state.

A 100 years earlier it happened to the northern kingdom, the kingdom of Israel when the empire of Assyria came down and crushed it and took it into captivity. That finished the northern kingdom of Israel. It vanished from history. Now the southern kingdom was beaten down. You can hardly appreciate the emotional trauma all of this was for the nation, but especially for these young Jewish captives.

They had been taken from their families and friends, from their homeland which later in the Book of Daniel is called The Beautiful Land. And it was a beautiful land. It is a beautiful land. But they would never see it again. They were brought to

Babylon, the capital of the empire and the greatest city of that age. Everything about it spoke gentile power and glory. It was the center of militant paganism.

Babylon was built on the Euphrates River in what is now Iraq. It was a vast metropolis surrounded by high double walls wide enough for two chariots to race side by side. The inner walls had eight gates, each named after a God. Coming from the north, the captives would have entered through the Gate of Ishtar, the goddess of love and war. It was a massive tower covered with glazed blue bricks and decorated with brightly colored lions, dragons and bulls, each representing a god of Babylon.

Through the gate the captive entered the sacred procession way. It was the ancient Champs-Elysees and it led to the Temple of Marduk the chief of the Babylonian pantheon. The street was lined with bright enamel walls, again depicting lions and gods. It was paved with limestone slabs, each inscribed with the name of their conqueror, Nebuchadnezzar.

All around were magnificent buildings, palaces and temples, 53 temples. And towering above it, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. These young people had never seen anything like it. It was the Paris and New York of the ancient world and must have left them dazzled and despairing. We get a sense of that, we get a sense of the sorrow that they must have experienced and certainly did experience from Psalm 137 when the captives sang, “By the rivers of Babylon/there we sat down and wept/when we remembered Zion.”

That’s all they did was remembering. It was nothing but a memory. Everything around them seemed to be proof that paganism was reality. And this was only the beginning. Jerusalem would continue to be beaten down. In 597 B.C. there was a second invasion. King Jehoiachin was taken captive along with the royalty and the middle class. This is when the prophet Ezekiel was taken into captivity to Babylon.

Then there was the third and final invasion in 586. King Zedekiah tried to escape; he was captured. His children were slaughtered before his eyes and then his eyes were blinded. This was when the temple was burned and the city razed to the ground and the people of the land deported to Babylon.

At each stage from all appearances it seemed that the Lord had been vanquished by the gods of Babylon and that Marduk, not Yahweh ruled the world. It

was the opposite of course. God had not been knocked off His throne; that is impossible. He was, in fact, governing everything. That’s the testimony of this book.

Verse 2 states that when Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem, the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand. The pagan king was simply God’s rod of discipline on His people. From the beginning God had warned Israel that if they rebelled against Him, if they were disobedient to His law, they would be punished, they would be disciplined. Moses told them that in Deuteronomy 28. Both Isaiah and Jeremiah warned the nation about Babylon.

But the people would not listen to their prophets. Finally God’s patience ran out and judgment came. A major theme of the Book of Daniel is the sovereignty of God. If there’s one major theme of this book, it is that God rules the nations and God is faithful to His people. And some understood that. Not everyone was disillusioned. Not everyone who was brought to Babylon was asking, “Where is God now?”

Among those taken into captivity was a remnant of believers, some young men whose faith was not shaken by the circumstances and young men who knew that the beliefs in Babylon were myths. They were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. Each of their names reflects the faith of Israel. Each name contains a name of God, even el or yah referring to Elohim or Yahweh, the Lord.

Daniel means God is my judge. Mishael means who is like God. Hananiah means the Lord is gracious. And Azariah means the Lord is my helper. And it’s clear from what follows in this chapter and what follows in the rest of the book that each one believed what their name represented and what their names declared. They were young. They were probably 15 years of age, maybe 16 years of age, but they had firm convictions, very mature convictions.

They grew up in a time of widespread unbelief, but clearly they grew up in godly homes as is reflected in the names that their parents gave them. They also would have been subjected to a lot of good preaching. They heard the preaching of Jeremiah. They heard the warnings that He gave. They heard the prophecies that He gave which they witnesses being fulfilled. The prophecies not only of Jeremiah but the prophecy of Isaiah, they saw it all. It unfolded before their eyes and it all must have impressed them deeply so that they became young men of strong faith.

They were also unusually gifted. They are described in verse 4 as handsome, healthy and intelligent. So they were admitted to the University of Babylon to be

trained for public service and one of the first things that happened when they were enrolled was they were given new names. Daniel became Belteshazzar, Hananiah was named Shadrach, Mishael was named Meshach and to Azariah became Abednego.

They were pagan names. Each one contained a reference to a Babylonian deity. They were given in order to assimilate these young men into their new society, make them a part of it. They took the names and they would become a part of that society, a very useful part of that society. But they stayed faithful to the Lord. They demonstrated their loyalty to the Lord throughout their lives. They demonstrated it immediately when confronted with the opportunity when they were challenged by a situation that violated their kosher diet.

And it's here in verse 8 that the story focuses upon one of the four, on Daniel. When he decided not to defile himself by eating the king's food. Now this took great courage. Daniel and his friends had been placed in a privileged position, refusing the royal diet might be taken as an insult to the king who was the greatest monarch on the earth. It could have cost them their lives. At the very least, it could have cost them the opportunity of a career in the greatest empire of that day.

And there was also pressure to conform from their peers. These are young people. These were people surrounded by young people. They were all strangers in a strange land. They must have wondered to themselves why keep Jewish laws in a gentile land, why keep these kosher laws in Babylon. This was the new normal. So they probably thought, when in Babylon, do what the Babylonians do. After all, we have to eat to live and we have to live, don't we?

Daniel said, “No, we don't have to live, but we do have to obey.” And he would do that at any cost, at the cost of not feasting at the king's table and enjoying the choice food. This wasn't dorm food. This was something else. This was the king's food, his choice food. This was gourmet dining. But he was willing to sacrifice that, the pleasures of that table and also the cost of many important friendships.

They had these young people been chosen to be in a select group. They were privileged. They were in an exclusive club. They were to be part of an inner ring. But by refusing to go along, Daniel and his friends risked ostracisms. They risked not being on the inside but on the outside. That's always a great challenge for a young

person. Was to them no doubt. All of these things were considerations that would have been on their minds and would have put on them strong pressure to conform. Nevertheless, they were not willing to compromise their faith for anything, for pleasure, for prestige, for whatever.

So Daniel went to the commander of the officials and asked for permission to be excused from eating the king's food. Now commander wasn't eager to grant that request. He felt that it might put his life in jeopardy. He thought when the king saw that Daniel and his friends were malnourished he would have his head. He'd wonder, what are you doing to my prized pupils here? You're undernourishing them.

Well, Daniel understood the situation and the difficulty for this official. He wasn't indifferent to the man's concerns and he approached the problem with a tactfulness that showed sensitivity to the situation and unusual wisdom. He went to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over him and proposed an alternative. He asked if they could have a different diet for a limited period of time, for just ten days.

“Please test your servants for ten days and let us be given some vegetables to eat and water to drink.” At that end of that time, he could examine them. If they were healthy, they could continue their diet. Now that showed great maturity and it's instructive I think to us on how to deal with people and situations. Daniel was not confrontation. He was not belligerent. He was polite and he was reasonable. He was no firebrand.

He wasn't the kind of person who always is spoiling for a fight. He had what's often praised today as a winsome personality. He was a pleasant person. What's the expression that we have, we sometimes speak of – we say you can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar. And I don't want flies, but I do want results. We all want results and the best way to get them is to be pleasant, it's to be a considerate person, be considerate of others and reasonable in the request that we make. And that's what we see in Daniel.

He was that kind of man. He was accommodating while refusing to compromise. He was a gracious young man. He showed great maturity in that way. And his manner got results. Now one of the themes we see, as I pointed out and will point out again, is the sovereignty of God but also the responsibility of man. And

ultimately it's the sovereignty of God that puts Daniel and his friends in the good favor of those who were officials over them.

But God uses means to achieve His ends and He always uses the means of our behavior, our effort to achieve a good end. And this matter that Daniel used to approach the problem and to address the official was well-received. The overseer listened to him. He granted the four their request and the results were good.

We read in verse 15 at the end of the 10 days their appearance seem better and they were fatter than all the youths who had been eating the king's choice food. So he continued them on their strict diet. Now that was an act of great faith on the part of this 16-year-old boy to believe that God would produce greater health in them on less nourishment.

But he and the others trusted in the Lord. That's where their faith was. It wasn't in the vegetables, wasn't in the water, wasn't in some kind of ancient vegan diet. It wasn't resting in that. He was resting in the Lord and he used his wisdom to gain this test or this opportunity to put the Lord to the test. It was an act of faith on his part. He trusted in the Lord and the Lord rewards that. The Lord rewards faithfulness in the small things as well as in the great things. And this does seem like a small thing, does it not?

We can understand how easily it would have been for these young men to have considered it a very small thing, how they might have rationalized it into something really a non-issue. That's likely what the others did. You know, there were more of these young Jewish boys than just these four. There were others that were brought into this college and we don't hear about them. They very likely rationalized this into a non-issue.

But it wasn't a non-issue. It wasn't a small, insignificant thing. It was the issue that they were confronted with and the law and their consciences forbid them from eating unclean food: pork, meat and wine dedicated to the gods, the idols of Babylon. And the fact is many of the issues that we face, the issues we face as Christians in this world, in this life are what we might consider small. But it is in the small matters that big victories are won.

That's really where the Christian life, the life of faith is lived. It's lived in the small things. If we don't deal with the small things, we will someday have to face the big ones and we won't be able to handle them. Well, the Lord taught this very thing.

In Luke 16:10 He said, “He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much. And he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.”

A person proves his or her faithfulness to the Lord in the small things of life, the daily things of life. Daniel and the others were faced with this challenge and they showed that they were faithful. And the Lord blessed them for it. Verse 17, “As for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and intelligence in every branch of literature and wisdom; Daniel even understood all kinds of visions and dreams.”

Their success was a gift from God. It was His doing. He gave them knowledge; He gave them wisdom. But you can be assured of this: He gave them that and He gave them great achievement there in the University of Babylon through their hard work. The god of the end is the god of the means. And He uses hard work and discipline in students to bring about good things.

Students won't prosper, God won't bless apart from long hours of study, just as God blesses faithfulness, each daily act of obedience and faithfulness. That's the kind of men these were that were considering these four men, these young scholars. They were faithful, conscientious and diligent and God blessed them greatly.

And God's blessing on them through their hard work paid off at the end of their three years of training. They made an impressive showing before Nebuchadnezzar. He put all of the students through an oral examination asking all kinds of questions and Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah excelled them all. They were the top four students in the class.

So we're told in verse 20 that they became the king's counselors because they were ten times better than all the magicians and conjurers in his realm. These young men went through a secular, even pagan education and not only survived it but flourished in it. And came out with their faith intact and even stronger. It had been tried and tested and was even stronger than when they were entered.

And it shows that that can be done. Moses did it. Stephen in Acts 7 speaks of Moses and he write – he said, “He was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians and became a man of power in words and deeds.” Moses was a man powerful in words and deeds in large part because of his training in Egypt. God used that in his life. In His providence He used all of that to prepare Moses to be the great lawgiver of Israel.

Now Christian young people today face great challenges in school and in the university and I would say that that situation, university, college is not for every person, certainly not for every Christian, but they can enter it and they can survive a secular education and even prosper as a result, just as these young men did.

They can prosper if they're well-grounded. The reason that Moses and these four did well spiritually in their education is because they were well-grounded in God's truth long before they entered college. They had godly parents who trained them up in the grace and the admonition of the Lord. And they experienced what the writer of Psalm 119 experienced, that through God's word he said he was made wiser than his enemies and given more understanding than his teachers.

That's what the word of God produces in the heart, in the mind of the believer, in the student of the word of God. And it did so in these young men. The Lord also gave Daniel a long life. The chapter ends, "And Daniel continued until the first year of Cyrus the king." He lived throughout the Babylonian period and into the Persian. Daniel outlived his captors and prospered in his captivity. He became a legend in his day, the prophet Ezekiel in Ezekiel 28, one of the Daniel's contemporaries mentioned Daniel there in Babylon and the wisdom of Daniel.

What all of this demonstrates is obedience leads to blessing always, usually in this life, but always in the next. And the Lord said, "Those who honor me I will honor, that is a promise." God will always honor those who honor Him, generally, as I said, in this life, but if not in this life, always in the next. But I'll end with another lesson on the walk of faith and the sovereignty of God because they go together, they can't be separated and that is the great lesson of this passage. Daniel and his friends faced a decision to compromise their convictions and defile themselves or be faithful and risk everything.

That's the choice that we all face. We face that all the time. One way or another, it's the choice that we're given, to walk the broad way or to walk the narrow way, to take the course of obedience or take the course of disobedience, to be faithful, to be holy. That's the choice that's put before us. I say the two paths are before us. Really, there's only one option for us and that's to be obedient.

One of my professors told in one of his books of a man who had asked him to confirm a job that he had taken. But it was a job that a Christian should not have taken. And so he told him that. He said he was wrong to accept that job. The man

said, “But I have to live, don’t I?” And my professor replied, “No, you don’t have to live. We are called to take up our cross and follow Jesus.” And that’s true. And that means be obedient regardless of the consequences. And there may well be tough consequences to our obedience.

We are not assured that the end, the result of our obedience will always be pleasant and prosperous. It may be hard. It may be difficult. We may, as a result of our obedience to the Lord, suffer loss. Still, we are called to obey. James wrote, “As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead.” That doesn’t mean that we are saved by our works or that we’re saved by faith plus works. We are saved by faith alone, but not a faith that is alone.

In other words, genuine faith, saving faith is obedient faith. Christians obey God. No, not perfectly, we fail often. But the tenor of our lives, the characteristic of the Christian is obedience. That’s evidence of salvation. And God is certainly able to provide for all of our needs and all of our circumstances. And that’s the next point. He is sovereign.

Dan and his friends understood that. That is the importance of the sovereignty of God in the Christian life. I emphasize it often and I emphasize it for two reasons. First of all, it is taught throughout the word of God from the first chapter of the bible to the end and we see it all through this book. God is absolutely sovereign. We’re responsible. But God is sovereign so I teach it because it’s taught in the word of God but also because it’s eminently practical.

We can’t walk by faith, we can’t live in obedience if we can’t trust the Lord God. But we can trust Him absolutely and completely because He is absolutely sovereign. So we are to trust Him and sovereignty is the second aspect of this final lesson that I give or this recapitalization of the lesson of the chapter. Daniel and his friends understood the sovereignty of God. They knew God. They knew God’s word.

It made them wise. It made them faithful. But knowing God’s word, they knew Him and they knew that He governed the affairs of life from the rise and the fall of nations to the smallest details in an individual’s life. So they were not overwhelmed by the pomp and the power of Babylon. They knew that they were there by a sovereign act of God. He had fulfilled prophecy in bringing them there.

Daniel testified to the sovereignty of God and God’s hand in all of these things all through this book. All through the book he put the definite article with the word God and that’s not just a point of grammar, it’s a significant point of theology because he demonstrates all the way through in the way that he refers to God by always speaking of Him as the God that he knew that there is only one God, that the gods of Babylon were not real gods. They don’t rule. They don’t exist. There’s only one God, the God, the Lord God, the God of Israel.

So these young men didn’t sit down by the rivers of Babylon, hang up their harps and weep. At least they didn’t weep tears of despair. They worked. They served. They became a part of that Babylonian world. They lived faithful lives, useful lives in a pagan land. As a result, Daniel lived under both Babylonian and Persian masters. And he had a great influence in spreading the truth about the Lord in a very dark part of the world.

God, in His providence, brings us all into strange places in our lives, places that we don’t want to be. Very often they’re hard places to be. Christians are sometimes put in very uncomfortable circumstances. But God is sovereign. He gives us into the hand of difficulty. But it is always, always for our good. And it is always an opportunity to do something of eternal weight and value. And He’s always with us there in those hard places.

He was there with Daniel. He was working things for Daniel’s good, verse 9 states that God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of a commander. He was a winsome kind of person. He was a pleasant young man. He was engaging. You would think he would be well-received, but that’s not the reason he was well-received, not ultimately. It’s because God granted Daniel favor. That’s divine sovereignty. And He can do that for us. He’s no different for us than He was for Daniel.

He works in the hearts of men as well as in the circumstances of life to give each of us opportunities and always answers our prayers. He’s sovereign over all of the affairs of men and knowing that to be true encourages faithfulness and obedience. It did in these four young men. Our world is not a whole lot different from Daniel’s. It is a world of militant rationalism, militant materialism; secularism is a religion. It is an anti-Christian religious zeal that inspires it. It mocks the bible, it mocks revelation. If it doesn’t do that, it simply ignores it and dismisses it out of hand.

And when we are immersed in that, and all of us are immersed in it one way or another just living in this society, we're immersed in it at work or we are immersed in at the university and we may wonder by all that we see around us, which is a great statement of unbelief, we may wonder where is God now. The answer is God is today where He was when those young Jews were brought to Babylon. He's on His throne. We should never doubt it. We should trust Him and obey Him.

Last February I think it was, I had told a proverb that he had read in a novel. I think he and I were having lunch perhaps when he told me this, but the novelist he said told a story, just a brief parable, as I said, of two ships that set sail. One set sail for the east and the other the west, they went in opposite directions. But the wind that governed the ships was the same. It blew in one direction. It blew in one direction, but the ships went in opposite direction.

And the reason they sailed in different directions was the set of the rudder. It's the same with life. The wind, the spirit of this age is the same for all of us. It is a secular, materialistic spirit. It blows and it blows in one direction. But some go a different direction because some set their rudder. They set their minds in a different direction. They set it according to the word of God. Daniel did that. He lived by faith in God's word and as the Lord assures us, “Those who honor me I will honor.” And He will, just as He did Daniel and his three friends.

Those who honor Him by believing in Him, by believing in His son, the Lord Jesus Christ are honored in the greatest way. They are honored by being made children of God, sons of God, heirs of the world to come. So if you're here and you've not believed in Him, we invite you to do that. Jesus Christ is God's eternal son who became a man and died for sinners so that all who believe in Him would be saved. If you've not believed, look to Him, trust in Him. And may God help all of us to trust Him daily in all that we do and walk by faith. May God help us to do that. Let's pray.

[Prayer] Father, we give you praise and thanks for that great truth that our lives are hid in Christ and that you are with us in every experience of life. Life can be very difficult, as difficult at times as those four young men experienced and the difficulties they had as they entered Babylon. But you're with them, you're with us, with give you thanks for that. Thank you for the Lord Jesus Christ and His death for us. It's in His name we pray. Amen.