

Are You There God?

Daniel 10: Standing Firm With God series

by Chris Famisaran

Good morning, everybody. How are you all doing? Good. Let's pray. Father in heaven, as we now open the word, Lord, be with us as we discuss, do a deep dive on Daniel chapter 10. In Jesus' name, amen.

All right, by now you should already know what's next. We're going to do a little survey. So, if you agree, please wave yes, I strongly agree. If you disagree, just shake your hand in anger. And if you're unsure, just, you know, wave. Not sure, okay?

Number one. Um... The everyone, sorry, no, let me put this. I tend to keep my guardian angel more busier than others. Okay. All right.

God's angels are stronger than the devil's angels. Oh, okay. We're going to get into that.

The spiritual battles in the Bible between God and his angels against Satan and his angels are visual metaphors and not physical battles. Oh, some of you are afraid to answer that.

There are specific angels, both good and bad, who are assigned to oversee my nation. Have you thought of that? Okay.

The last thing is God has a precise timeline for the future that he has written out in which angels fight to protect. Okay, some of you were brave enough to answer.

As a young man, I think I shared this before, but there was a book that was highly influential in my life. And it's one of the most dearest books that I hold in my heart. And it's a book called Seven Summits written by Richard Bass. He was, I believe, he owned oil companies and he was the owner of Snowbird in Utah. And that book set me on a conquest to want to learn how to climb mountains, go hiking, and specifically, I later focused on wanting to climb in the Alpine area, okay, with ice axes, crampons, ropes, rock climbing, all things that my mother just loved me to want to do. Like I said, I keep my guardian angel busier than others. And along the way, I think a couple of years later, we were backpacking and we went to the North Face store, bought me maybe some backpacks and coats and of course they've got on their mailing list. And what did... They sent a catalog, all of their awesome stuff. I remember opening this catalog and seeing Jimmy Chin. He famously directed and shot the movie Free Solo with Alex Honnold when he free

soloed El Capitan. Y'all see that before? Amazing. Even though you know he lives, you're stressed out he's gonna fall and die, right? And then two particular individuals though, not only did Jimmy Chin But Conrad Anker and Alex Lowe were in this catalog, and they went on an expedition to Antarctic. Queen Mobland is the area that they focused on, and they did these big wall climbs. And it was there that I became a fan of Alex, and especially Jimmy now as a photographer, and Conrad Anker. And then in 1999, Alex Lowe, He was 40 years old. He went with Mark Synnott and I think Jared Ogden to climb a tower called Trainer Tower. I think it was a northwest wall and it was the first. It's a massive climb. And this was in, I think, May of 1999. Spring-ish. It was just amazing. And I think NBC or CBS documented this climb. I thought, this is amazing. This is what I want to do for the rest of my life.

Flash forward, Lord, towards the end of the year September, October, Conrad and Alex had a goal with the North Face team. There was like 10 guys, they all went, they're all sponsored by the North Face to go and climb Mount Shishapangma, which is the 14th highest mountain in the world. And what's distinct about it, it's one of the collective 14 mountains that are above 8,000 meters or roughly 26,400 feet. At least I think the first Americans, maybe the first people to ski down an 8,000 meter peak. Everybody was stoked. I remember watching this series. What I did not expect, because this is what we had the internet, but it was not like it is today. On October 5, Conrad, Alex, and David Bridges, a filmmaker, were caught in an avalanche. as they were reconning a route to get to the top. Conrad was able to escape, albeit he was bandaged. I remember seeing he had bandages all over his head and he was smashed. But the question he had was where was Alex and where was David? Alex and David were swept up, not to be found for I believe over 20 years later.

This is a man that I was highly influenced by. I think he was, I think maybe 40 or 41 at the time. I'm older than him now. When he died, he had a beautiful wife, three sons, Max, Sam, and what's the third son? There's a document I believe by written, that was produced by his son, Max, I think it was Max, that you can find on the Disney Channel. And over the years, Conrad... felt grieved. He had survivor's grief, why could he survive but Alex and Conrad hadn't? Well, several years ago, it was revealed that some climbers had found Alex's body. I don't remember if they found David's, but I know for sure that Alex's body was found. And Conrad, after the expedition, he was, Alex was, sorry, Conrad was a close

friend to the Lowe family. Eventually he and Alex's wife fell in love and he, basically they got married and he continued to raise Alex's son. Believe though, after they had found Alex's body, I can't remember the timeline exactly, but I think it was just after though that Conrad suffered a heart attack. Now, Conrad is one of the fittest athletes in the world. He would have been healthy, he would have been strong. Even into his 50s, he was scaling big peaks. But he had a heart attack, why? The doctors looked at it, didn't make sense until they realized his heart attack was out of grief.

And so Men's Health did an article and they indicated that, obviously Conrad had been with Alex when he was swept off and to go up to carry his body down the mountain was a wrenching burden that weighed his soul. He says, going back up there and seeing everything was super emotional. I was stressed and I felt my heart. And then Men's Health went into deeper detail. I felt my heart. What man hasn't felt their heart? Okay, this also applies to ladies as well. I don't want to be exclusive. But for instance, you know, when you go on your first date, does that sense of pounding in your heart, is it going to go well? Or even ask this individual to go out on a date, to get on a knee, to propose, to get up here and speak. Don't get me wrong, I've been doing this for 18ish years, and I still get nervous every time I get up here.

You know, for centuries before we even stood, how does its primary job of pumping blood? The heart has been a powerful symbol of many things, love, emotion, intuition, and conviction. For instance, I believe in my heart and truth, or as we like to say, the heart of the matter. And recent studies show that our emotions can directly affect our heart health. That may be why, for example, more people seem to have heart attacks on Mondays than any other day of the week, okay? Cold Mondays are even more dangerous, amen? People who experience a sudden acute drama such as the death of a close one can suffer physical damage. Obviously, Conrad felt this in his heart.

Why do I bring this all up? Let's go to Daniel chapter 10. I want to go to Daniel chapter 10. And we're going to see here that Daniel is mourning. He is grieving. Daniel chapter 10. Are we all there? Okay.

In the third year, verse one, verse one of chapter 10, in the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia, a revelation was given to Daniel, who was also called Belteshazzar.

That was his Babylonian name. Its message was true and it concerned a great war. The understanding of the message came to him in a vision. Verse two, at that time, I, Daniel, mourned for how long? Three weeks, okay, he was mourning, he was depressed, he was sad for three weeks. I ate no choice food, no meat or wine touched my lips, and I used no lotion at all until the three weeks were over. And on the 24th day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, the Tigris.

So what has Daniel been doing the last three weeks? He's been in mourning, but why is he so sad? Now, If you lived in that time back then, you would completely understand. Unfortunately, thousands of years later, we got to do a little digging. And what's interesting, you know, when you do exegesis, okay, when you look at the context of what's happening here, you have to understand, well, what's listed here. When somebody's, when somebody of importance is listed, or just anybody's listed importance, the time of when it was written or any places, it helps us to develop clues, okay? So it mentions this is the third year of Cyrus, King of Persia. This is roughly 536-ish BC. Some will argue 537, 535, but most scholars believe in 536. What was happening at this time? In 536, roughly, it was the first time that Passover would be celebrated in Jerusalem. But where was Daniel? He wasn't in Jerusalem. Okay? And he'd been mourning. Earlier in the year, King Cyrus had allowed a handful of exiles, the first wave, to go back to Jerusalem. And of course, it was their intent to even rebuild. But at that point, the temple had not been rebuilt. They would start shortly thereafter. Okay?

And so Daniel was mourning for several reasons. Number one, he couldn't be there. You would have been roughly around 85 to 90 years old at this time. and he's by the Tigris River or Tigris River. Do you know where that is? Iraq. How close is Iraq to Jerusalem? Pretty far, okay? Nowadays you would say, I looked on the map, you would have to go through Jordan if you wanna take the direct route, and then I think halfway through Iraq, 85 to 90 years old. They have no planes, they have no Uber. Could he walk? No. Could he ride? Could he be carried? He's an important individual, but more than likely, he probably believes that he would not be able to make the trek and back without some form of a health challenge.

But not only that, there were things that lead up to Passover that were also not done. And although Daniel doesn't also directly mention it, if we go to other chapters of the Bible, we'll get some context. Okay. So the temple had been

destroyed for many years. And so Daniel, he's not going to be able to get back. But when you think about the temple, how influential was the temple in Daniel's faith experience for any Jew? It was the center of their faith experience, because not only did they come together and worship, it was kind of like you could say their church, okay? But also, what also happened at the temple that was foundational? The sacrifices. What? Why? Why was the sacrifice as important in their time? How else could they receive forgiveness? Not only that, there were some who were not as faithful and Daniel's mourning. He's also probably mourning because as some of the exiles went, not everyone chose to go back. Imagine being gone for at this point, let's say he got taken away 15 to 18. He's been gone at least 60, 70-ish years. How many of you would love to have been taken away from your home and be gone for 70 years and never go back? You would be broken, right? Maybe some of you that is your story. You left home because it was difficult to go back or maybe you cannot go back at this point for various reasons. Daniel's heart is broken.

And then as the first waves of exiles go back, they want to rebuild the temple and yet there are people who are opposing. There are some, I believe it was the Samaritans, who offered to help out. Remember, who are the Samaritans? They were Jews, but they, I think it was the Assyrians who came in, took them away. They intermarried with the Assyrians. And so they took up some of the characteristics to the Assyrians. And so the faithful Jewish community is like, eh, we're gonna rescind your offer because they didn't wanna have potential negative influences, basically, in effect. Okay. How did the Samaritans take that? Oh, really? Although even half of us still kind of were still Jewish, but not. You're going to rebuff our proposal, our help. What do they do? They sent nasty letters and emissaries to who? King Cyrus to hold up the rebuilding of the temple.

In fact, let's go to let's go to Ezra, Chapter four. OK, Ezra, Chapter four. Wasn't planning on doing this, but let's just briefly look at that. OK, Ezra, Ezra is before Nehemiah. and it's after Chronicles. Okay. So chapter four, verse one. When the enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard that the exiles were building a temple for the Lord, the God of Israel, they came to Zerubbabel and to the heads of the families and said, Let us help you build because, like you, we seek your God and have been sacrificing to him since the time of Asarhaddon, king of Assyria, who brought us here. But Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the rest of the heads of the families of Israel said, You have no part in us building a temple to our God. We alone will

build it. for the Lord, the God of Israel as King Cyrus, the King of Persia has commanded us. Verse four, then the peoples around them set out to discourage the people of Judah and make them go, make them afraid to go on building. They bribed officials to work against them and frustrate their plans during the entire reign of Cyrus, King of Persia, down to the reign of Darius, King of Persia. Okay, a little bit of context. If you want to read the first four chapters of Ezra, you'll get a better understanding. This is happening at the same time that Daniel is around. So Daniel is grieving. He gets a he gets a vision.

And then. Um, Let's go back to Daniel chapter 10 verse four. Okay, Daniel 10 verse four. On the 24th day of the first month, or if you want to be literal, some versions, I think like the New Living Translation say, it's April 23. As I was standing on the bank of the great river, the Tigris, I looked up and there before me dressed. A man dressed in linen with a belt of fine gold from Ufaz around his waist. His body was like topaz, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude. I, Daniel, was the only one, take note of this, I was the only one who saw the vision, those who were around me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves. So even though they couldn't see it, they knew that something was going on. Verse eight, so I left alone, I was left alone gazing at this great vision. I had no strength left. My face turned deathly pale and I was helpless. Then I heard him speaking and as I listened to him, I fell into a deep what? [sleep] My face to the ground. How many of you have been so exhausted and so tired that you just, you fell asleep, right?

But who could this person be? Well, if we go to Revelation, Chapter one, put a finger on Daniel because he was not letting them do what God wanted them to do. Who's being told? What is being told to Cyrus by the people who basically felt slighted? Oh, the Jewish people, they're horrible. Don't let them rebuild their temple. And while Daniel is praying at the same time, Michael the Archangel is battling and along with this angel as well. Okay, now verse 18, this is the second time that Daniel is touching. By doing so, he's allowed to speak. Verse 18, again, the one who looked like a man touched me and gave me strength. Do not be afraid. You who are highly esteemed, peace, be strong now, be strong. When he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, speak Lord, since you have given me strength. And then the third time that he's touched, he's given strength again.

Have you ever right now where you've just felt so overwhelmed physically and mentally, you're exhausted and emotionally you just have nothing left to give? Maybe you just want to take a nap or maybe even worse, you just maybe you feel like there's nothing left for me.

We go to verse 20 and 21, he says, do you know why I've come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the Prince of Persia. And when I go, the Prince of Greece will come. But first I will tell you what is written in the book of truth. No one supports me against them except Michael, your Prince. This angel is gonna continue to give and more information to Daniel. And it's gonna continue in chapter 11 and be summarized in chapter 12. Now, I'm going to hate to disappoint you. We're not going to be able to do a deep dive on chapter 11 next week, but I want to encourage you. Continue to read chapter 11 and just see maybe is there anything that we have read previously that could tie to chapter 11? OK, I'm going to do a brief overview next week. But but read ahead to so you know what we're talking about.

Okay, some of you may be scratching your head thinking, okay, Daniel was affirmed, but he's encouraged by an angel, but what is the angel saying and why is it important? Famous author, some of you may know her, a pen of inspiration, writes, While Satan was striving to influence the highest powers in the kingdom of Medo-Persia to show disfavor to God's people, angels worked in behalf of the exiles. The controversy was one in which all heaven was interested. Throughout the prophet Daniel, we are given a glimpse of this mighty struggle between the forces of good and the forces of evil. For three weeks, Gabriel wrestled with the powers of darkness. seeking to counteract the influences at work on the mind of Cyrus. And before the contest closed, Christ himself came to Gabriel's aid. The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one in 20 days. Gabriel declares, But lo, Michael, one of the chief princes came to help me, and I remained there with the kings of Persia. All that heaven could do on behalf of the people of God was done. The victory was finally gained. The forces of the enemy were held back and check all the days of Cyrus. and all the days of his son, Canvases, who reigned about seven and a half years. Amen?

Now, where we can see is... God comforted and encouraged Daniel. And in your own lives, where has God comforted and encouraged you where you have struggled? What deep struggle have you experienced and God was faithful to help

you? The other thing that we have to be mindful of here is that Daniel is in the middle again of a spiritual conflict. Who are the players? Daniel, the angel, Michael, or the Prince of Persia. And you also have the exiles and those who are struggling. trying to fight the temple being rebuilt. Have you ever experienced something that would be considered spiritual warfare? Some of us are thinking. Getting a little spookier. Now, the angels are having to fight. This angel is fighting and he could not defeat it until Michael came and helped him. Some are going to wonder that, well, are God's angels any less? No. Where do angels come from? Do they all come from the same place? Yeah, now some of them got kicked out. But are they weaker? No, they're about the same in power. But remember God is faithful. Who does he send? He sends Michael, the archangel, to help overcome. And it's here, this angel for Daniel's country, we see that the influences of the angels are helping and eventually they sway and God's temple are able to rebuild the temple and go on. And we'll continue Daniel's story next week.

I want you to think about this. We talked about what are some influences then were all influenced. Cyrus was being influenced here. Daniel's being influenced. He's being affirmed. He's being encouraged. What are some of the influences in your life? Obviously, I think the first thing that you'll probably growing up as a child, your biggest influence were your parents. Maybe your siblings, maybe a grandparent, an uncle, or an aunt, your friends, your neighbors. As you get older, Maybe you get married, your spouse is gonna be an influence on your life. Amen? Your children are going to influence you. Your children are probably gonna influence you to be a better human being. You're gonna learn from your children as well. You're gonna learn that it's not so much what you say, but what you do. But we have these square little devices that also, do they not influence us? Okay. The media, hobbies, devices influence us. You wanna drink alcohol, you become an alcoholic. Should you go to a bar? No, right. YouTube, social media, YouTube got me this week. Not gonna lie, it got me this week. I was watching a video on people, these two guys, they're from England, I think their channel's called The Jolly Channel. And they went around New York eating pizza. And you know what it told my brain? I want pizza. So you know what? I went and got pizza. And it was great. It was glorious. Now my heart and my stomach was satisfied, but my mind then revolted and said, you chose to make healthier choices. And pizza was not on that list. And what's so funny, I think it was the last week or two weeks ago, I made a pact with a friend that we would both drink more water, eat healthier and exercise and read something like nonfiction to help grow personally. And have I

been successful and faithful? No, I haven't. Okay, I'm just being honest with you. I'm doing better. But isn't it even funny when you make a pact and a commitment to try to better your life? It gets 10 to 20 times harder to do that. Whereas before... You know, I think a year or two ago, I was doing this program and I was drinking a gallon of water a day. I was eating healthier. I was exercising twice a day, at least 45 minutes. And I did really well for about, I think it was about 50 to 60 days. And then the holidays came. Right? I was much easier to be healthy and do all that stuff than it is today. And the standards... are not even half of what was expected. So what does that require? That requires intentionality. And you know what I realized I had to do? If I'm gonna drink the water, I have to fill my water bottles the night before and place them in the car so I don't forget them. I have to go to the store and I have to intentionally not look at the ice cream aisle. I have to stay on the outskirts where all the fruits and vegetables. So I'm so proud of myself. I earned this, I'm just kidding, it sounds so arrogant to me. Okay, let me rephrase that. I went to the checkout line of Trader Joe's and the individual said, you win the healthiest cart today. Because I primarily had fruits and vegetables, maybe some eggs in there. I don't think I had anything junk, but that was the first store. I went to two others afterwards and that's where I completely destroyed myself. Not really. I try to make healthier choices and I try to be reasonable. Amen. I follow the 82 principle at this point in my life. 80% of the time I'm eating healthy and 20% that leaves me three meals, friends, three meals. I could be a little more creative and adventurous. All right. I'm batting the B. Okay. All right. Instead of being miserable and making my wife mad. Don't want that. Influence.

What are you allowing to influence you? Are you allowing the election to influence you? I mean, you watch the debate. It was so funny. I was frustrated and irritated because it is what it is. Okay. I'm not going to give my personal views. I hope you haven't figured out my politics yet. And if you haven't, yes, I'm winning. What I will say is this, though. After listening, And watching to this, I had this moment of clarity that I had totally ignored everything that I had preached on four weeks before, because at the end of the day, they're just human beings. Who is really in control? God. Remember Daniel? Did he like and appreciate everything that all of the leaders he served did? Probably not. Do we love and appreciate everything that the people who oversee us, that they do? No. Do they appreciate their spending habits? Do we appreciate their leadership style? Do we appreciate this and that? No. And I realized that at the end of the day, no matter who wins or whatever, God is still sovereign. So, just a reminder. Now, being intentional.

Where in your life have you been influenced and it's had a negative impact on your life? Okay, don't say it out loud, keep that to yourself. But I want you to reflect on that this week. And as you reflect, maybe talk with somebody that you trust, such as your spouse or a good friend. Think about these things, write down those negative influence that you have reflected on and seek God in prayer to give you a plan to be intentional on how to deal with them and follow through with the plan. Okay, and follow through with the plan. Now remember too that shared with Daniel has a greater future purpose as well. We can definitely apply lessons from Daniel's experience. Okay, we've all been influenced. Be careful what influences you. Be careful what you consume with your eyes, with your ears. Because eventually that affects your body and what comes out of your mouth, what you think, what you believe.

And as disciples, as emissaries of God, I think it's important not only just to be healthy and to have a good perspective, to be balanced, to not be stressed out, to not be anxious. If all you're feeding yourself is anxiety and things that make you upset, are you going to be healthy, happy, humble person at the end of the day, or you're going to be a little riled up. And that affects our relationships, it affects our relationships with our spouse, our children, our neighbors, our co workers, our bosses. May you be faithful, and understand that although there is a bigger conflict that we may not be able to see, we have those who are working on our behalf, the lead in the guide. May we have the humility and seek the Lord just as Daniel did. But though he was mourning, he was affirmed. May the Lord give you courage to move forward. May we all be the faithful ambassadors God has called us to be.

Father in heaven, Lord, this is a challenging chapter. As we're winding down our series, Lord, as we close out next week, as we read chapters 11 and 12, give us understanding. And Lord, above all, remind us. of your great goodness and your plan for us. Be with all of us here, keep us safe until we meet again next week. In Jesus' name, everybody said, amen.

Grace and peace, everybody.