

Be Strong and Courageous: Meditating on the Word of the Lord

Preacher: Alec S.

Date: September 15, 2026

Church: 16th Avenue Gospel Chapel

References: Joshua 1, Joshua 1:1-9; Joshua 24:14-24; Judges 1:1-13; Judges 1:17-20; Judges 1:21; Judges 1:27-28; Judges 1:29-36; Judges 2:1-5; Judges 2:6-14; Daniel 6:1-14; Daniel 6:16-24; Joshua 1:7-8; 2 Timothy 3:16

Please turn with me to Joshua chapter 1, please. The book of Joshua chapter 1. That's better. The book of Joshua chapter 1 and starting at verse 1.

[Joshua 1:1-9 NKJV]

¹ After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: ² "Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them--the children of Israel. ³ Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. ⁴ From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory. ⁵ No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you.

⁶ Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. ⁷ Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. ⁸ This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. ⁹ Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

And we'll stop there.

The Command to Meditate on God's Word

There's a couple things I want to pull out of this. When God repeats a command multiple times in the same passage, it's because it's **very, very** important. So there's two things here that are repeated multiple times. The first is the phrase "be strong and of a good courage," or as this is later, "be strong and of a good courage," or "only be thou strong and very courageous," right?

That's a good command, and it's to be strong and courageous in the Lord. Now, how do you do that? That's the second thing that is repeated multiple times, right? So we see here to Joshua, we have to observe: "that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded thee; turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest." So to be strong and of a good courage in this to Joshua is to follow the Law of Moses.

All right. Now, for us today, there are things that are in the Law of Moses that we don't have to worry about—sacrifices and things of that nature, that it was all taken care of by the Lord. However, the thought here for us is to follow God's commands, right? So how do we do that?

That is answered in the next verse, right? Verse 8: "This Book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein." So the command to Joshua is the Book of the Law, which is the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. For us, it is the whole Bible, right? And we are to meditate therein day and night. We're to read it every day, and we're to think about it all the time. But not just that—you have to actually **act** upon what you read, right?

Now, I will say, if you meditate on it, you're actually thinking about it, right? So we've all been in classes in school where we have not been interested whatsoever in the topic that we were supposed to learn. But most people—I was very much like this with certain topics—I remembered enough so that I could pass the test, right? I did pretty well in school, but for certain things, I can't remember most of what it was nowadays, but I knew enough that I could do good on the test. But I didn't care for the subject. I didn't meditate on the subject. I just learned enough that I could regurgitate for the test and then move on, right?

If you meditate on it, that means you carefully study it, you carefully think about it, you read it multiple times, right? It's not just learning it; it's a focus for you, right? So if you do that, you follow what you are reading, right?

A lot of people in today's day and age can talk your ear off about sports, or comic books, or Pokémon cards, or fashion, or reality television, or books that they've read, because they read it, they reread it, they meditate on that, right? Whatever you meditate on is what your focus will be. So if your focus is on the Word of the Lord and you meditate on the Word of the Lord, you will observe and follow God's commands—or you should. Whereas if you meditate on sports, you could list off all the statistics for the Canucks for the last fifty years, but really, what good does it actually do you?

Now, at the end of verse 8, we see here there's a consequence of this, right? Which is: "for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." Okay, now that is not prosperous and good success as defined by us; that is prosperous and good success as defined by **God**.

What we think of as prosperous and good success and what God thinks of as prosperous and good success are two very different things. A lot of times we think of prosperous and success as being very wealthy, right? Make life seem like it's easy that way. A lot of times, I know some people that have quite a lot of money, and they're not saved, and they're not happy. They think they're happy, but then they've got to go get something else, and then they've got to go make more money, and they're terrified that they're going to lose it. They're not actually prospering or a good success as far as God is concerned.

And when you're prosperous, that might mean you get some money; it might not. It might mean that you're living as God provides, and you're preaching all the time, or you're having Bible studies all the time, or you're teaching people. That is prosperous as far as God is concerned, as opposed to just making money and material wealth that, when you're dead, does you no good, right? You're doing spiritual prosperity.

Israel's Covenant and the Farewell of Joshua

Right. Now let's flip to Joshua chapter 24 here. So we see that was God's command to Joshua, all right? Be strong and of a good courage, meditate on the Law of Moses, meditate on the Bible, and you will be prosperous and have good success as defined by God. So we're going to get to—this is at the end of Joshua's life here, and we're going to look at what the children of Israel did relative to those commands. So we'll go Joshua 24, and we'll go verse 14.

[Joshua 24:14-24 NKJV]

¹⁴ "Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put

away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD! ¹⁵ And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

¹⁶ So the people answered and said: "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; ¹⁷ for the LORD our God is He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, who did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way that we went and among all the people through whom we passed. ¹⁸ And the LORD drove out from before us all the people, including the Amorites who dwelt in the land. We also will serve the LORD, for He is our God."

¹⁹ But Joshua said to the people, "You cannot serve the LORD, for He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. ²⁰ If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you, after He has done you good."

²¹ And the people said to Joshua, "No, but we will serve the LORD!"

²² So Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD for yourselves, to serve Him."

And they said, "We are witnesses!"

²³ "Now therefore," he said, "put away the foreign gods which are among you, and incline your heart to the LORD God of Israel."

²⁴ And the people said to Joshua, "The LORD our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey!"

And we'll stop there in a second.

So we see here Joshua says, choose who you will serve: either the false gods of before the flood, the false gods that were in Egypt, the false gods of the people in the land that they are currently trying to conquer, or the Lord. Joshua, having followed God's instruction, serves the Lord, as does his family.

Now, the people here say they will serve the Lord because the Lord is their God. He was the God of their fathers, He brought them out of the land of Egypt, and He brought them there,

and He delivered them and drove out inhabitants of the land that were quite militarily strong, right?

Now, the children of Israel here—well, some of them might have lived through, the younger ones or the older ones might have lived through all of it; the younger ones will have heard the story. So we're just going to quickly—actually, for sake of time, we won't, but I'll just say: they know the story of the plagues in Egypt, and the Passover, and God smiting all the firstborn except for the ones that had the blood on the door, right? And then crossing the Red Sea, going through the desert...

God said He was going to do that, and then He did it. And then what happened is they send the spies into the land. They see that the people of the land are, from an earthly, material standpoint, large, strong, militarily quite powerful, walled cities. And they look at it from the standpoint of humans. They take God out of the picture. They look at it from the standpoint of humans, and they say, "We're not strong enough to go in there and deal with this"—except for Caleb, Joshua, Moses, and Aaron, right? Because God said He was going to go in and do this, forgetting that several weeks earlier, God opened the Red Sea, enabled them to cross on dry land, and then flooded and wiped out most of the Egyptian army, right? A God who could do that will have no problem dealing with the large people that live in the land of Canaan. But they forget that, right? And they get punished for that.

And all the people that are twenty years and older have to die before the children of Israel can go into the land. And so they wander in the desert for forty years. So when Joshua is making this farewell address at the end of his life, the older ones that are still alive from that time period would have been the ones that were under twenty. They lived through all of that. And the ones that were born since will have heard the story and will have gone through the fighting with Joshua in the land.

So they make this decree that they will follow the Lord. So Joshua then dies. And what do they do?

Compromise in the Promised Land

So let's go to Judges chapter 1. The book of Judges chapter 1, starting at verse 1:

[Judges 1:1 NKJV]

¹ Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass that the children of Israel asked the LORD, saying, "Who shall be first to go up for us against the Canaanites to fight against them?"

So the first thing that they do is they ask the Lord. It's a good start. And the Lord says—this is verse 2:

[Judges 1:2 NKJV]

² And the LORD said, "Judah shall go up. Indeed I have delivered the land into his hand."

So God gives them an answer. And verse 3:

[Judges 1:3 NKJV]

³ So Judah said to Simeon his brother, "Come up with me to my allotted territory, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I will likewise go with you to your allotted territory." And Simeon went with him.

So they're following the commands. They asked God who should go first; God said Judah; Judah went first. Verse 4:

[Judges 1:4-13 NKJV]

⁴ Then Judah went up, and the LORD delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand; and they killed ten thousand men at Bezek. ⁵ And they found Adoni-Bezek in Bezek, and fought against him; and they defeated the Canaanites and the Perizzites. ⁶ Then Adoni-Bezek fled, and they pursued him and caught him and cut off his thumbs and big toes. ⁷ And Adoni-Bezek said, "Seventy kings with their thumbs and big toes cut off used to gather scraps under my table; as I have done, so God has repaid me." Then they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died.

⁸ Now the children of Judah fought against Jerusalem and took it; they struck it with the edge of the sword and set the city on fire. ⁹ And afterward the children of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites who dwelt in the mountains, in the South, and in the lowland. ¹⁰ Then Judah went against the Canaanites who dwelt in Hebron. (Now the name of Hebron was formerly Kirjath Arba.) And they killed Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai. ¹¹ From there they went against the inhabitants of Debir. (The name of Debir was formerly Kirjath Sepher.)

¹² Then Caleb said, "Whoever attacks Kirjath Sepher and takes it, to him I will give my daughter Achsah as wife." ¹³ And Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it; so he gave him his daughter Achsah as wife.

And we'll skip down to verse 17:

[Judges 1:17-20 NKJV]

¹⁷ And Judah went with his brother Simeon, and they attacked the Canaanites who inhabited Zephath, and utterly destroyed it. So the name of the city was called Hormah. ¹⁸ Also Judah took Gaza with its territory, Ashkelon with its territory, and Ekron with its territory. ¹⁹ So the LORD was with Judah. And they drove out the mountaineers, but they could not drive out the inhabitants of the lowland, because they had chariots of iron. ²⁰ And they gave Hebron to Caleb, as Moses had said. Then he expelled from there the three sons of Anak.

We'll stop there for a second. So we see here that immediately after the death of Joshua, still the children of Israel, following God's commands, they ask the Lord who shall go up first. The Lord says Judah. Judah asks Simeon to come with them. They go up into the land, to the parcels of land that they were assigned, and the Lord was with them, and they beat all the inhabitants; they won all the wars, right? And then we see here, in the land that Caleb was given as a fulfillment that the Lord told Moses to give him because he was faithful when he was a spy, it was given to him.

And we see, "but," right? So they had a good start. They ask the Lord; they followed the Lord, right? But the first "but" comes here, verse 21, right:

[Judges 1:21 NKJV]

But the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who inhabited Jerusalem; so the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.

And we'll stop there. Let's see that.

So first thing: Judah followed the Lord's command; Simeon followed the Lord's command with Judah. Benjamin did not. They did not drive out the inhabitants; they co-dwelt with the inhabitants, right?

Let's skip down to verse 27:

[Judges 1:27-28 NKJV]

²⁷ However, Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth Shean and its villages, or Taanach and its villages, or the inhabitants of Dor and its villages, or the inhabitants of Ibleam and its villages, or the inhabitants of Megiddo and its villages; for the Canaanites were determined to dwell in that land. ²⁸ And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites under tribute, but did not completely drive them out.

Stop there for a second. That is a worldly view, right? The smart conqueror from the world's standpoint does not totally destroy the enemy if you can get a profit out of it. So what you do is you conquer them, you garrison the area, and you make them pay tribute to you, which would be anything from taxes—monetary taxes—food; you make them send you soldiers to fight. The Romans did that quite extensively. They'd conquer an area, and then they would make the conquered people fight for them so that they couldn't rebel because they were all busy fighting somewhere else. They did that quite a bit. That's a worldly standpoint.

You see at the end of verse 28: "and did not utterly drive them out." That was God's command. So they started following God's command, and then they stopped. And they looked at it from a worldly standpoint: "If we're strong, they're weak. We can get something from them. We can get food from them. We can get gold from them. We can get wood from them. We can get stone from them. We can get manpower from them." And while they put them to tribute, they did not utterly drive them out. They did not follow God's command.

All right, let's keep going. Verse 29:

[Judges 1:29 NKJV]

²⁹ Nor did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer; so the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them.

Here, they go a different way. Instead of putting them under tribute but leaving them separate, they now co-dwell among them. Verse 30:

[Judges 1:30-36 NKJV]

³⁰ Nor did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron or the inhabitants of Nahalol; so the Canaanites dwelt among them, and were put under tribute. ³¹ Nor did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Acco or the inhabitants of Sidon, or of Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphik, or Rehob. ³² So the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; for they did not drive them out. ³³ Nor did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh or the inhabitants of Beth Anath; but they dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land. Nevertheless the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh and Beth Anath were put under tribute to them. ³⁴ And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountains, for they would not allow them to come down to the valley; ³⁵ and the Amorites were determined to dwell in Mount Heres, in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim; yet when the strength of the house of Joseph became greater, they were put under tribute. ³⁶ Now the boundary of the Amorites was from the Ascent of Akrabbim, from Sela, and upward.

So we see here that Judah and Simeon followed God's command and drove out the inhabitants of the land, utterly destroyed them, drove them out. But we see here most of the rest of them did not, and they either put them under tribute or they just co-dwelt among them, disobeying God.

That has consequences. The consequences start coming here, chapter 2, starting verse 1:

[Judges 2:1-2 NKJV]

¹ Then the Angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said: "I led you up from Egypt and brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers; and I said, 'I will never break My covenant with you. ² And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.' But you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this?"

We'll stop there for a second. So in chapter 2, verse 1, we see here that the Angel of the Lord comes and says, "I made you go up out of Egypt. You didn't do that of your own power; I did that, right? And I brought you to this land, and I've given the land to you. And when you

follow My instructions, every inhabitant of the land was driven out utterly. That was not you doing that; that was Me—God. God did that, right?"

And again, when they came out of Egypt, they all know the story of the Passover. They celebrate the Passover every year as a specific memorial to the Passover and being brought out of Egypt, right? They all know that story, right? Some of them may have lived it; if not them, their parents definitely lived it. And a good chunk of them probably wandered around in the desert for a good portion of their life because their parents...

They knew the concept. They already had an object lesson one generation back, or two generations back, of what happens when you don't do what God says. And yet they still didn't do it. And God here said the command was simple: to take the land, and to have no league, no covenant, no relationship with the people that inhabit the lands. And you were to destroy their altars and not follow their false gods. And yet, they did not obey.

So verse 3, what are the consequences?

[Judges 2:3-5 NKJV]

³ Therefore I also said, 'I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be thorns in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you.'" ⁴ So it was, when the Angel of the LORD spoke these words to all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voices and wept. ⁵ Then they called the name of that place Bochim; and they sacrificed there to the LORD.

We'll stop there for a second. So we see here there's a consequence, which is because they did not follow God's instructions, God was not going to drive the people out. They were going to stay there, and they were going to be a snare unto them. And if you follow along through the rest of the book of Judges and through the rest of Kings, a good chunk of the people that God punishes Israel with were peoples that should not have been there if they had actually followed His instructions to begin with, right?

And one of the things that you see here is they did not keep meditating on the Word of the Lord. They did not keep that foremost in their thoughts. They got distracted by the cares of the world. They got distracted by monetary or power—being stronger than various peoples and being like, "Well, we'll just tribute them and stuff." They got distracted. They did not meditate on the Word of the Lord, and they did not put God first, right?

So there's consequence. So let's skip down to... let's go... where is it? So let's just keep going. Verse 6. Judges chapter 2 and verse 6:

[Judges 2:6-14 NKJV]

⁶ And when Joshua had dismissed the people, the children of Israel went each to his own inheritance to possess the land. ⁷ So the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD which He had done for Israel. ⁸ Now Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died when he was one hundred and ten years old. ⁹ And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Heres, in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash. ¹⁰ When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel.

¹¹ Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals; ¹² and they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger. ¹³ They forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. ¹⁴ And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies.

And we'll stop there.

So we see here Joshua dies, and all the elders of Israel that outlived Joshua died. So there goes the generation that lived it, all right? And the kids, the next generation, went away from God, and they did evil in the sight of the Lord, and they served the false gods of the nations that were round about them—the nations that were in the land that they were supposed to have gone in, driven out, and destroyed.

So not following God led to complications. It led to visible temptations that were right there, that they then fell for, which then led to God having to punish them. And that is repeated over and over and over and over and over again through the Old Testament.

Daniel: Faithful in Exile

So that's an example of what happens when you don't meditate on the Word of the Lord and don't put God first. Let's look at an example of what happens when you do.

Let's turn to Daniel chapter 6, please. The book of Daniel in chapter 6. And for sake of time, we might skip a few portions of the story just so I can get to the point. So Daniel chapter 6, starting at verse 1:

[Daniel 6:1 NKJV]

¹ It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom;

So this would be Darius the Mede, who was the king of the new Medo-Persian Empire when they conquered Babylon. And over these, three presidents—and over these, so that's over the hundred and twenty princes, three presidents of whom Daniel was first, that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage:

[Daniel 6:2 NKJV]

² and over these, three governors, of whom Daniel was one, that the satraps might give account to them, so that the king would suffer no loss.

So basically, this is a basic government setup, which is he had a bunch of provinces or states or however it was divided up, and each one of those had a prince—there's 120 of them—each over a specific region. And they reported to three presidents, of whom Daniel was the first, and then those three presidents went and reported to the king, which gave him a degree of separation between the princes and himself for political reasons. And also, so he probably didn't have to deal with as much of the day-to-day stuff, because he probably—well, one, it was way too much for one man to deal with, and two, probably because he didn't want to.

So Daniel was first, right? Then this Daniel was preferred—this is verse 3—above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him, and the king thought to set him over the whole realm:

[Daniel 6:3 NKJV]

³ Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm.

So we see Daniel was preferred because, as we'll see in a little bit, he followed God and as such didn't play politics, wasn't in it for personal power, personal wealth, personal prestige. He was preferred because he did his job, and he did his job really well, because he kept God first and foremost in his mind, and he meditated on the Word, and he prayed daily, as we'll see, and as such, just did his job, right? And the king recognized that and wanted to set him over everything, because obviously he was really good at administration work.

So we see here, this is verse 4:

[Daniel 6:4-5 NKJV]

⁴ So the governors and satraps sought to find some charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he was faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him. ⁵ Then these men said, "We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God."

Stop there for a second. So we see here, the presidents and princes didn't like Daniel; they wanted to get rid of him. So they tried to find a skeleton in the closet. They tried to find something that he did that they could use against him. They couldn't find it.

Daniel, keeping God first, meditating on the Word, followed the law of God, and he followed the law of the land when they did not conflict. And as such, they said, "The only way we're going to do this is if we find something against him concerning the law of his God," because they recognized that Daniel recognized that God was the ultimate authority, and as such he would follow God's law over the laws of the Medes and the Persians, right? So, we're going to have to do something with that.

So verse 6:

[Daniel 6:6-14 NKJV]

⁶ So these governors and satraps thronged before the king, and said thus to him: "King Darius, live forever! ⁷ All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. ⁸ Now, O king, establish the decree and sign the writing, so that it cannot be changed, according

to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter." ⁹ Therefore King Darius signed the written decree.

¹⁰ Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days. ¹¹ Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. ¹² And they went before the king, and spoke concerning the king's decree: "Have you not signed a decree that every man who petitions any god or man within thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?" The king answered and said, "The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter." ¹³ So they answered and said before the king, "That Daniel, who is one of the captives from Judah, does not show due regard for you, O king, or for the decree that you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day." ¹⁴ And the king, when he heard these words, was greatly displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him.

Stop there for a second. So we see here that they devised the only way that they could think of, which was to make a law of the Medes and Persians that was contradictory to God's law, because they knew that Daniel would follow God before he would follow the Medes and the Persians, right?

So Daniel knew that the law was signed, but it didn't phase him. He went back to his house, and he prayed as he always did. And coincidentally, they happened to just wander by the three times a day when he was praying, to catch him doing it. And then they went to the king and they reported him. And the king, when he realized what he had done, was not happy about it, but there wasn't anything he could do.

So we will go to verse 16:

[Daniel 6:16-24 NKJV]

¹⁶ So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. But the king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you." ¹⁷ Then a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signets of his lords, that the purpose concerning Daniel might not be changed. ¹⁸

Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no musicians were brought before him. Also his sleep went from him.

¹⁹ Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions. ²⁰ And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?"

²¹ Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever! ²² My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you."

²³ Now the king was exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God.

²⁴ And the king gave the command, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions--them, their children, and their wives; and the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den.

And we'll stop there.

And we see here that the king had to throw Daniel into the den of lions. And so he did—unwillingly, but he did it. And then we see here, that's like this at verse 22, right? The next day, when Daniel was found to be unharmed: "My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you," right?

Daniel had not sinned against God, and as such he was not punished for that, right? He was delivered from the hand of the lions because he kept God first and foremost: he worshiped God, he meditated on God and on the Word of God, and he prayed daily. And he also had done no hurt to the king; he had done his job there as well, right? But he was innocent in the eyes of the Lord, and the Lord protected him, right?

Now, the men who had contrived against Daniel were punished by being thrown into the den of lions with their entire families, and they were all killed immediately. So there's a punishment there.

And there's a punishment through the Old Testament, actually: every nation that God used to punish Israel, in turn, was punished by somebody else. There is a consequence for attacking

Israel; there's always a consequence for it, especially because they didn't just fight them—they tended to brutalize them, as was very common in those days. And because of that, God punished them. It wasn't always the children of Israel that did the punishing: the Assyrians got punished first by the Babylonians and others, but the Babylonians got punished by the Persians; the Persians got punished by the Greeks and Macedonians; they in turn got punished by the Romans. But there was always punishment handed out because God keeps His Word, and He has promises to the children of Israel and to Abraham that his seed would multiply to the number of stars and even to the sand of the sea, and as such they would not be totally destroyed. And He keeps His promises, right?

God's Law First

But we see here there's two different examples: one's an example of a people, and one's the example of a person.

The example of the people is when they turned away from following God, and as a people they did not meditate on the Word and did not keep God focused. They turned away from God; they were seduced by the false gods of their neighbors and the people that they were supposed to destroy but did not, and they turned away from God, and they got punished.

And we see here with Daniel: he meditated, and he prayed, and he kept God first, and he recognized God's authority over everything and followed that authority first. It was God, then it was the king of either Babylon or the Medes and the Persians. But God was first.

So God's law supersedes the law of man. But we also see here that with Daniel, he had done no hurt to the king. So if the king's law does not contradict God's law, you follow that as well. But God's law is first.

But to do that—and we'll just end with Joshua 1 here, all right? In Joshua 1:7:

[Joshua 1:7-8 NKJV]

⁷ Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. ⁸ This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

Right, so meditate on the Word, right? And I'm just going to end here actually with one verse in the New Testament in 2 Timothy chapter 3. It's a very well-known verse in 2 Timothy chapter 3. 2 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 16:

[2 Timothy 3:16 NKJV]

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

That's another way of saying to meditate on the Word, to read the Word, to pray, and to not just read, but to study and to make it your focus. Don't just pay lip service to it and read it, but actually to study it, to learn what it means, and to follow what it says.

I'm going to end in a word.

Our loving God and dear Heavenly Father, Lord, I thank You again for the example we have here of Joshua and the example of Daniel of following Your Word and putting You before everything else, Lord. And I thank You for that, Lord, and I pray that You will help us to follow the example, Lord, and to meditate on Your Word and to read it and to keep it as our focus, and You as our focus all the time, Lord. And I pray as well, Lord, that You will bring us all to our various homes safely, Lord, in the precious, holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.