

THE KING OF KINGS

DANIEL 12

OUR KING COMFORTS US



FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION

Comfort is conquering cost. As our culture becomes more emotional than logical, and more focused on feelings than facts, marketing and advertising consultants are recommending that brands appeal less to the lower cost of their products and more to the greater comfort they offer. People want higher comfort more than lower cost.

Although the verb 'to comfort' is derived from the Latin word *comfortare*, which means 'strengthen greatly' or 'strong together,' its present use is more about feeling good rather than feeling strong. When we look at the biblical use of 'comfort' we find both meanings (feel good and feel strong), but it's more frequently 'feel strong' than 'feel good.' That has consequences for our view of God because God is described as 'the God of all Comfort' (2 Cor.1:3-5), and the Holy Spirit is frequently referred to as 'the Comforter.' So, **how does God comfort us in uncomfortable times?** How does he strengthen us greatly? How does he make us feel strong and good? Daniel 12 is an example of God's comforting his uncomfortable people.

BACKGROUND

Be faithful in faithless times because:

- Our King Cares for us (Daniel 1)
- Our King Communicates with us (Daniel 2:1-30)
- Our King Conquers for us (Daniel 2:31-49)
- Our King Commands us (Daniel 3)
- Our King Condemns the Proud (Daniel 4:1-33)
- Our King Converts the Lost (Daniel 4:34-37)
- Our King Calculates Spiritual Weight (Daniel 5)
- Our King Closes Lions Mouths (Daniel 6)
- Our King Concludes History (Daniel 7)
- Our King Crushes the Antichrist (Daniel 8)
- Our King Covenants with Us (Daniel 9:1-19)
- Our King Crucified for Us (Daniel 9:20-27)
- Our King Comes to Us (Daniel 10)
- Our King Controls the Controllers (Daniel 11)
- Our King Comforts us (Daniel 12)

Daniel 11: Uncomfortable times

Daniel 12: Comforting truths



1. WE WILL AWAKE TO EVERLASTING LIFE (1-3)

We will be delivered

There shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book (1).

It's been a tough 70 years for Daniel. He's had to fight for faithfulness in unfaithful times, and serve God in stressful times. He's heard chapter eleven's warning of even worse times in the next few hundred years. He's now processing chapter twelve's warning of unprecedented persecution by the Antichrist at the end of time. But not one whose written in God's book will be lost (v. 2; Luke 10:20; Rev. 20:15). All that matters is having our name in that book.

We will sleep

And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth... (2).

'The word for 'many' here is a Hebrew word for a great number. The New Testament uses 'sleep' imagery for death, probably because to the human eye, it looks like a dead person is sleeping. When it's used of believers, it's conveying the believer's rest from sin, stress, and service on this earth. Here, 'sleep' is used to describe the death of both believers and unbelievers. However, although the same word is used, the experience is very different. Their view of death is different, their deathbeds are different, their falling asleep is different, and the 'beds' they end up in could not be more different.

We will wake

...shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt (3)

Believers may not be delivered *from* death, but they will be delivered *out of* death. All will awake at the general resurrection, but believers will awake to everlasting honor and life, while unbelievers will awake to everlasting shame and death (Jn. 5:28-29; Rev. 20:13)

CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY

How will you fall asleep? Prepared or unprepared? In hope or in despair? With comfort or with terror? Dying in faith can be the sweetest falling asleep we've ever experienced.

How will you wake up? For unbelievers, the resurrection of their bodies will be their worst nightmare as pain of body is added to pain of soul. For believers, the resurrection will be the happiest wake-up call their bodies ever heard as bodily comfort will be added to spiritual comfort.

OUR FUTURE COMFORT IS
OUR PRESENT COMFORT



How does God comfort us when it feels as dark as midnight?



2. WE WILL SHINE LIKE EVERLASTING STARS (3)

The spiritually wise will shine like the sun

And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above (3).

The wise are not the clever but the spiritually discerning. In the previous chapter they were people who continued to teach and spread light of God's Word during dark and dangerous times (11:33). They got wisdom from God and shared it with others to make them wise for salvation. Many blackened their names but God's going to polish them and change them into heaven's lamps.

When we've been there a thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise,
Than when we first begun.

The spiritual winners will shine like the stars

...and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever (3).

Those who turn many from sin to the Savior are soul winners (Prov. 11:30). They were not the world's superstars but they will be heaven's superstars. They weren't famous on earth but their names will be in lights forever.

CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY

The wise win souls and heaven. There's no greater success than winning a soul and no greater reward than heaven. If we shine God's Word on earth, God will make us shine in heaven.

The foolish lose their souls and heaven. This is a call to turn to God's wisdom and God's righteousness. They may have had a million followers but they never followed God. Instead of supernovas, they will be black holes.

SUPERSPREADERS OF GOD'S WORD
WILL BE SUPERSTARS IN GOD'S WORLD



But, like Daniel, I'm losing so much for my faith.



3. WE WILL ENJOY OUR EVERLASTING INHERITANCE (12-13)

There will be tumultuous times

But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end (4). Books were sealed to mark their authenticity and then placed in the public library for all to read. But people don't read God's authenticated Word. Therefore, instead of settling, people grow more and more restless. Is there a truer verse in our times than this one: **Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase** (4). God's given us all we need to know about the future in his Word, but people ignore it to pursue knowledge from any and every other source.

Verses 5-11 sum up the last days of the last days. Although Antichrist seems to be triumphant and untouchable, Jesus lifts both hands to heaven and swears that he will be defeated (6-7). His reign will be for '1290 days' (a known and limited period of time), but in 1335 days (a few days longer) it will all be over. Christ will outlast the Antichrist. Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the 1,335 days (12).

There will be a triumphant time

But go your way till the end. And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days (12-13).

Go on doing your work faithfully to the end. Persevere patiently and quietly to the end. Soon you will be at rest, and sooner than you think **you will stand in your allotted place (13)**. This word is used 20 times in Joshua to describe the land each tribe inherited in the Promised land. It's the prequel to John 14:1-3. There's a place in heaven reserved for each of God's people (1 Pet. 1:4).

CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY

Here's how to suffer profitably. Daniel is a manual for the suffering church and suffering Christians in all ages.

Here's how to live productively. Live faithfully in the present in the light of the faithfulness of God in the future (2 Pet. 3:11). Our King is still the King of kings.

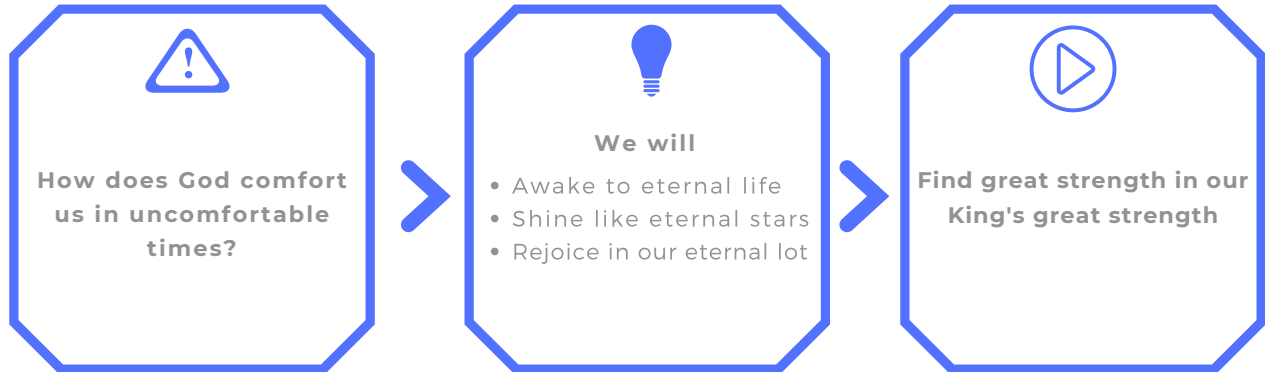
OUR ALLOTMENT WILL BE
A LOT MORE THAN WE THINK



Hear God's Story > Change your story > Share God's Story > Change others' stories



CONCLUSION



PRAYER: King of Kings, give me great strength from your great strength, and therefore great comfort from your great comfort. Amen.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Where do you (others) turn for comfort in uncomfortable times?
2. How are you preparing to fall asleep for the last time? What's your expectation upon waking up?
3. How will you spread God's Word this week?
4. What will your heavenly allotment look like?
5. How has the book of Daniel comforted you?
6. How will you comfort others with the book of Daniel?

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