

## Living Today in Light of Tomorrow, *Part 3*

A Study of Daniel 10-12

Characteristic of Completeness: Trinity

Big Idea: When you think you've had enough, know that God is enough.

Related Scriptures: 2 Chronicles 16:9; Psalm 56:8; 84:11; 116:1; Ecclesiastes 7:14; Isaiah 49:15; Matthew 10:30; John 16:33; Romans 8:18, 28; 2 Corinthians 12:7-9; 1 Peter 4:12

Introduction:

- A. Scene One. The parents hang their heads in the office of the counselor. There's no way to sugarcoat the situation. Their adolescent children have not turned out the way they had hoped. The children have an attitude of entitlement, irresponsibility, disrespect, and rebellion. They show no real interest in following the Lord. And since hitting the teenage years, the children have brought one heartache after another.

The parents know they have contributed to the problem. For years, they had been checked out, permissive parents, too wrapped up in their own selfish pursuits to do the hard work of holding their children accountable, spending time, instilling values, and training them in life skills and godliness.

Within the last couple of years, the parents woke up and rededicated themselves to proper parenting. It's been two long years of hard work and major sacrifices to try to make up for lost time. They've seen some glimmers of hope and progress in their children.

But now, one of the kids has been charged with possession of drugs. It seems like the door has been slammed on their hopes and dreams.

The mother begins to sob in the counselor's office. The father lifts his head and says, "I think I've had enough adversity. I don't know what more I can learn from my mistakes. I don't know what else I can do to make things right. I don't get this. I don't know if I can take it any more. I think I've had enough."

- B. Scene Two. The man stares at the boxes in his office. For years, he and his wife had lived beyond their means, chasing new cars, new homes, new clothes. They were deeply in debt.

They knew they had no one to blame but themselves. They bought into materialism, lock, stock, Crate & Barrel<sup>®</sup>.

They were not content to live within the means God had provided.

A couple of years ago, they finally woke up, and decided to change their ways, dedicating themselves to getting out of debt and honoring God with their finances. They managed to string together many months of hard work and financial sacrifices to

honor their commitment to make things right. And they were beginning to see glimmers of hope and progress.

But the man has just been caught up in a corporate resizing; he's been fired. It seems like the door has been slammed on their hopes and dreams.

As he packs the boxes in his office to take home, he thinks to himself, "I think I've had enough adversity. I don't know what more I can learn from my mistakes. I don't know what else I can do to make things right. I don't get this. I don't know if I can take it any more. I think I've had enough."

- C. Scene Three: A married couple sits quietly across from their pastor. Their marriage has been characterized by years of betrayal and dysfunction. Both the husband and the wife know they have each contributed to the problem. Finally, a couple of years ago, they hit rock bottom. There was nothing left. They were completely exhausted from fighting. And they were staring at a possible divorce.

It was a wake-up call for them. They rededicated themselves to the Lord and to each other. Over the last year, they worked hard at conflict resolution and making things right in their relationship with God and one another. They've seen glimmers of hope and progress.

But just when things seemed to be finally improving, there was another setback in their relationship, another betrayal of trust. It seems like the door has been slammed on their hopes and dreams.

With quivering lips, the wife says to her pastor, "I think I've had enough adversity. I don't know what more I can learn from my mistakes. I don't know what else I can do to make things right. I don't get this. I don't know if I can take it any more. I think I've had enough."

- D. What do you do when you think you've had enough adversity? What do you do when the door seems to have been slammed on your hopes and dreams?
- E. This morning, I want to learn from Daniel, a guy who had the door slammed on his hopes and dreams and lived to tell us about it in the Bible. We've been studying our way through the book of Daniel, and today, we're going to finish the book by covering Chapters 10 through 12. Chapters 10 through 12 constitute a unit that tells a single, concluding story in the life of Daniel.

1. Daniel ► 10:1 tells us that the story is about a message or vision Daniel received near the end of his life. It says,

<sup>NAU</sup> **Daniel 10:1** In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar; and the message

was true and *one of* great conflict, but he understood the message and had an understanding of the vision.

The ► “third year of Cyrus” was just a couple of years after the previous vision Daniel received back in Chapter 9. Daniel is probably in his mid-to-late 80s now.

2. In Daniel ► 10:2, Daniel describes what was happening leading up to receiving the final vision: He was in mourning. He says,

<sup>NAU</sup> **Daniel 10:2** In those days, I, Daniel, had been mourning for three entire weeks. <sup>3</sup> I did not eat any tasty food, nor did meat or wine enter my mouth, nor did I use any ointment at all until the entire three weeks were completed.

- a. The Hebrew word for ► “mourning” usually describes sorrow over someone who has died.<sup>1</sup> The form of the word suggests that this was intensive mourning.<sup>2</sup> It commonly involved things like wailing and the tearing of clothes and bowing down and going barefoot.<sup>3</sup>

We also know this was not casual mourning because Verse 3 tells us that Daniel was so distraught that he didn’t eat much and neglected his personal hygiene for some three weeks.

In ► Verse 4, Daniel tells us that he was at the bank of the Tigris River, which was well outside of the city of Babylon, where he lived. Perhaps Daniel had been so distraught that he just had to get out of town for awhile and try to collect himself.

- b. What was going on? Why was Daniel so upset? Who died?

I think his dream had died. At least he felt like it. Let me explain.

You may recall that Daniel’s people, the Israelites, had been in exile for 70 years in Babylon. They had been taken from their homes in the land of Judah and the city of Jerusalem, and the temple had been destroyed. The exile occurred because the Israelites had persistently disobeyed God, and they knew it. They had brought it on themselves.

<sup>1</sup> Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, s.v. “אבל,” (Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, The Netherlands, 1994-2000).

<sup>2</sup> It is in the hithpael stem, suggesting intensive action according to Greenberg’s verb system.

<sup>3</sup> R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke, *The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, s.v. “אבל,” (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1980).

But after 70 years, there was repentance <sup>4</sup> and glimmers of hope and progress. Cyrus, in his first year as king over Babylon, released the Jewish captives to go home.<sup>5</sup> Not only did he release them, but he also sent with them all the holy vessels that had been confiscated from the temple 70 years before.<sup>6</sup> And not only this, Cyrus agreed to fund from his own royal treasury the rebuilding of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem.<sup>7</sup>

So the Jewish exiles returned home and began working to rebuild the temple.<sup>8</sup> When the foundation had been laid, there was great rejoicing. Old men who had seen the first temple wept for joy; the younger ones shouted for joy.<sup>9</sup>

Daniel had not returned to Jerusalem with his people. He stayed back in Babylon. We don't know for sure why he stayed. Perhaps he wanted to retain his government post back in Babylon as a protection for his people. Or perhaps he was just too old to make the trip. Nevertheless, Daniel would have certainly been rejoicing right along with his people. It seemed that his dream of restoration was being realized.

So why is Daniel now so upset in our text? Here's why. Ezra, Chapter 4 tells us that some enemies soon came and put a stop to the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem.<sup>10</sup> The party was over, and the Israelites were discouraged and frightened. The door seemed to slam on Daniel's hopes and dreams for restoration. That is why Daniel is mourning. I can imagine that he may have been muttering to himself, "I think we've had enough adversity. I don't know what more can be learned from our mistakes. I don't know what else I can do to make things right. I don't get this. I don't know if I can take it any more. I think I've had enough."

What do you do when you think you've had enough adversity? What do you do when the door seems to have been slammed on your hopes and dreams?

Here is the big idea of my ► message: When you think you've had enough, know that God is enough. When you think you've had enough adversity, know that God is enough to see you through.

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<sup>4</sup> Daniel 9:3-19

<sup>5</sup> Ezra 1:1-4.

<sup>6</sup> Ezra 1:5-11.

<sup>7</sup> Ezra 6:3-5.

<sup>8</sup> Ezra 3:8-10.

<sup>9</sup> Ezra 3:10-13.

<sup>10</sup> Ezra 4:4-5, 23-24.

Well, just exactly how is God enough? What do I mean? Well, our text today gives us some things to know about God. When you think you've had enough, it's important to know some things about the sufficiency of God. Our Characteristic of Completeness for the week is ► the Trinity because the Trinity is about who God is. From our text, I glean ► five things to know about God in the midst of adversity.

- I. In the midst of adversity, it's easy to become disillusioned and demanding and bitter toward God. "Haven't I tried to turn things around? Aren't my best efforts good enough for God? What more does He want? Haven't I paid enough? This isn't fair." If we let it, adversity or the death of a dream can pull us away from God, duping us into thinking that God is not enough in our situation, that we must need something else.

But what else will be enough to satisfy our deepest longings? Will self-medicating with alcohol or drugs be enough? Will the false intimacy of porn be enough? Will money be enough? Will throwing yourself into your work be enough? Will an affair be enough? Will power and prestige be enough? Will cosmetic surgery be enough? Will psychotherapy be enough? Will a motivational seminar be enough?

Daniel didn't allow the apparent death of a dream to pull him away from God. Instead, he used adversity to push him toward God because He knew that, at the end of the day, God is the only One who will ever be enough. That's the ► first thing to know: God is the only One who will ever be enough. Let me explain.

In Daniel 10:5-11, an angel appears to Daniel in the midst of his mourning. And in Verse 12, we learn that Daniel has been doing more than just mourning. He's been seeking God. Listen to what the angel tells Daniel in ► Verse 12:

<sup>NAU</sup> **Daniel 10:12** . . . "Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding *this* and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words."

Notice that Daniel has not been demanding relief from his pain; rather, he has been ► setting his heart on understanding his predicament. He has not been shaking his fist at God; rather, he has been ► humbling himself before God. He seems to resonate with ► Ecclesiastes 7:14, which says,

<sup>NAU</sup> **Ecclesiastes 7:14** In the day of prosperity be happy, But in the day of adversity consider—God has made the one as well as the other . . .

And so Daniel has been seeking wisdom and understanding from the God who is in the midst of his adversity: "Lord, what do you have in this for me? Is there something you want me to understand from this adversity? Lord, I humbly surrender to whatever You have in store for my

life, even if it's painful; I just don't want to miss any lessons You might have for me in the midst of this hardship.”

So when you think you've had enough, seek God, knowing that He is the only One who will ever be enough. That's the first thing.

- II. Now there is ► a second thing to know about God. When you think you've had enough, know that ► God fully sympathizes with our pain. He is attentive. He is not napping. He is not too busy with something else to notice your situation. He knows and feels every detail of your adversity. In ► Verse 12, the angel says to Daniel,

<sup>NAU</sup> **Daniel 10:12** . . . “your words were heard . . .”

Nothing escapes God's notice. He has heard your every word, spoken and unspoken. Other Scriptures tells us that God is so attentive that He has numbered every tear from our eyes<sup>11</sup> and every hair on our heads.<sup>12</sup> In ► Psalm 116:1, the psalmist declares,

<sup>NAU</sup> **Psalm 116:1** I love the LORD, because He hears My voice *and* my supplications.

We generally accept this as a point of doctrine: God is omniscient. Of course He knows everything. But somehow it's easy to think of God as a detached, emotionless observer and miss the reality that He is deeply sympathetic to our plight. He feels our pain right along with us.

I can think of no better example than a mother feeling the pain of her young child. I remember when my daughter was four years old. She had a neurological disorder that was causing tremendous pressure in her skull. She was in the hospital writhing and vomiting with pain. She was lying on an examining table in a small room where I was trying to hold her still while a neurosurgeon drilled a hole in her head to perform a test. Her little glassy eyes pleaded with me. It was hard for me, but I'm convinced it was harder for her mother, who seemed to experience every pain and every fear, right along with Candace. Seems like there is nothing quite like the sympathetic mother-child bond.

But there *is* something like the mother-child bond, only tighter. Listen to what God says in ► Isaiah 49:15. He asks the question,

<sup>NAU</sup> **Isaiah 49:15** “Can a woman forget her nursing child And have no compassion on the son of her womb? . . .”

And we say, “Of course not. There's nothing quite like the mother-child bond.” But then God ► says,

<sup>NAU</sup> **Isaiah 49:15** “. . . Even these may forget, but I will not forget you.”

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<sup>11</sup> Psalm 56:8.

<sup>12</sup> Matthew 10:30.

And so, in the midst of your suffering, know that God fully sympathizes with your pain.

III. There is ► a third thing to know when you feel like you've had enough: ► God is always working to uphold His people, whether you know it or not, whether you feel it or not, whether you like it or not.

A. God sent an angel to be of support to Daniel. In ► Verse 12, the angel said,

<sup>NAU</sup> **Daniel 10:12** . . . "I have come in response to your words."

B. Daniel was already exhausted from mourning, and now, at the appearance of this angel, he is spent. Daniel says to the angel in ► Verse 17,

<sup>NAU</sup> **Daniel 10:17** ". . . As for me, there remains just now no strength in me, nor has any breath been left in me."

But the angel sent from God upholds and strengthens Daniel. Daniel says of the angel in ► Verses 18-19,

<sup>NAU</sup> **Daniel 10:18** Then *this* one with human appearance touched me again and strengthened me. ► <sup>19</sup> He said, "O man of high esteem, do not be afraid. Peace be with you; take courage and be courageous!" Now as soon as he spoke to me, I received strength and said, "May my lord speak, for you have strengthened me."

It was clear to Daniel that God was upholding him in this way. He saw and heard the angel. He felt stronger.

C. But the angel says some other things to let Daniel know that God has been upholding him and his people in ways that Daniel could not see. In ► Verse 13, the angel says,

<sup>NAU</sup> **Daniel 10:13** "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia."

This is talking about angelic conflict. "The ► prince of the kingdom of Persia" is apparently a fallen angel; that is, a demon, or perhaps Satan himself. The fallen angel had been fighting against the angel from God that now appeared before Daniel. Then another angel named ► Michael came to help.

There is an unseen world of angelic conflict in which good and bad angels are at war. The bad angels, including their general, Satan, are out to deceive, to divide, and to destroy God's people. The good angels fight to uphold us at the command of our General, the Lord God Himself.

And there is some evidence in our text to support the notion of guardian angels with different assignments to watch over people. Later in ► Verse 21, the angel describes Michael to Daniel as “your prince.” And in ► Daniel 12:1, Michael is described as “the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people.” Therefore, it appears that Michael is a guardian angel for Israel. And it’s reasonable to expect that there are angels watching over us, fighting for us, upholding us right now.<sup>13</sup>

The point is God is always working to uphold His people, whether we know it or not. And so, in the midst of our adversity, we can claim the truth of ► 2 Chronicles 16:9:

<sup>NAU</sup> **2 Chronicles 16:9** “For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His. . . .”

- D. The fact that God is always working to uphold His people does not mean that God always follows our script. God is continually upholding His people, but not always in ways that we would choose or even like.

God had been continually upholding Daniel, but as it turns out, Daniel would never get to see the temple rebuilt before he died. That dream was not fulfilled in his lifetime on earth. That’s probably not the script Daniel had in mind.

And Daniel is not alone in being a very godly person with a shattered dream. Moses’ dream of seeing the Promised Land was never fulfilled before he died.<sup>14</sup> The Apostle Paul’s dream of being healthy and rid of his “thorn in the flesh” was never fulfilled before he died.<sup>15</sup>

God has His reasons for shattered dreams. Sometimes we see them; sometimes we don’t. After Paul asked to be healed of his chronic illness and God said, “No,” Paul was able to look back and recognize that God was actually using his infirmity to uphold him. In 2 Corinthians 12:7 Paul says the purpose was,

<sup>NAU</sup> **2 Corinthians 12:7** . . . to keep me from exalting myself . . .

But even if we can’t see a reason for our suffering, by faith we cling to the truth of ► Psalm 84:11:

<sup>NAU</sup> **Psalm 84:11** For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD gives grace and glory; No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly.

<sup>13</sup> See 2 Kings 6:8-17.

<sup>14</sup> Deuteronomy 32:48-52.

<sup>15</sup> 2 Corinthians 12:7-9.

Of course our idea of a good thing may not match God's, but by faith, we trust that God is always working to uphold His people.

- IV. This is related to ► a fourth thing to know when you feel like you've had enough: ► God uses bad things to bring about His good purposes. I believe that's an underlying message that the angel gives to Daniel, but it can be easy to miss. Let me explain.

In the midst of Daniel's distress, the angel comes, and he says in ► Daniel 10:14,

<sup>NAU</sup> **Daniel 10:14** "Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet *future*."

I read this and I think, okay, the angel has come to encourage and strengthen Daniel in the midst of his tough time, and now the angel is going to tell Daniel about all the good things his people have to look forward to in this life. Keep it positive. Look on the bright side. That's what I expect the angel to do.

I suppose I expect this because our culture has conditioned me to evaluate my own well-being in terms of the circumstances of my life. We tend to define the quality of life by circumstances. Are we healthy? Are we safe? Are we comfortable? Are we independent? Are we happily married? Are we well-liked? Are we self-sufficient? Are we sufficiently wealthy? If the answer is "yes" to most of these questions, then we think God is blessing us. If the answer is "no," we conclude that God must not be blessing us, either because we messed up or because God is a cosmic killjoy.

But the angel seems to stand this quality-of-life thinking on its head. The content of the vision delivered by the angel takes up 47 verses from Daniel 11:2 to 12:3. Remember, Daniel was an exceedingly godly person. Seems like if anybody ever deserved a pep talk, it would be Daniel.

- A. But in the first 44 ½ verses or the first 95% of the vision, the angel does something unexpected and unsettling: he focuses on the absolute worst parts of the future for God's people. Let's look back at ► the basic timeline we used last week, showing the successive empires in history that represented the future from Daniel's point of view. In our text, the angel walks Daniel through this timeline, first hitting not the highlights of this life on earth, but the lowlights.

1. In ► Daniel 11:2, he says of the Medo-Persian kingdom that there will be three more kings plus a fourth who will grow rich and provoke Greece. We look back and know who those kings were.<sup>16</sup> Prophecy fulfilled.

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<sup>16</sup> Cambyses, Guamata the Pseudo-Smerdis, Darius Hystaspes the Persian, and Xerxes (Gleason L. Archer, Jr., "Daniel," *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, ed. Frank E. Gaebelain, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1985), 128; James A. Borland, Daniel, *Liberty Bible Commentary, Old Testament*, Jerry Falwell, ed., (Lynchburg, VA: The Old-Time Gospel Hour, 1982), 1654; Hobart Freeman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophets*, 17<sup>th</sup> printing, (Warsaw, IN: Faith Ministries, 1994), 289)

2. In ► Daniel 11:3-4, he says a mighty king will rise whose kingdom will be divided into four parts. This is a reference to Alexander the Great who conquered Medo-Persia. Upon his death, his Grecian kingdom was divided into four territories. We look back and know this happened. Prophecy fulfilled.
3. Then in ► Daniel 11:5-20, the angel gives a highly detailed account of conflicts between the North and South territories of Greece. The details correspond closely with what we know happened in history.<sup>17</sup> Prophecy fulfilled.

The probable reason the angel focuses on the fighting between the North and the South is that the Israelites would be caught in the middle, experiencing the ugly effects of it.

4. Then in ► Daniel 11:21-35, the angel spends a lot of time talking about what most scholars recognize as the horrendous exploits of Antiochus IV Epiphanes against the Jews during the reign of the Grecian empire. You may recall he's the guy who would assassinate the Jewish high priest and slaughter 80,000 Jewish men, women, and children. We know this happened. Prophecy fulfilled.
5. Then in ► Daniel 11:36 through 12:1, the angel talks at length about the future character and exploits of the Antichrist in the Tribulation during the reign of a future Roman regime.<sup>18</sup> At the height of the Great Tribulation, the angel says in ► Daniel 12:1,

<sup>NAU</sup> **Daniel 12:1** “. . . there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time . . .”

- B. Where in the world is the angel going with this? What's next, a root canal? Some comfort this is. What is he doing?

Among other things, I think the angel is proving that God works through bad things to bring about His good purposes. Think with me about this.

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<sup>17</sup> J. Dwight Pentecost, “Daniel,” *The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament*, eds. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1367.

<sup>18</sup> Archer, 143-149, Borland, 1657-1658; Freeman, 291; Gene A. Getz, *Daniel: Standing Firm for God, Men of Character Series*, (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 177-178; Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel, The New American Commentary*, E. Ray Clendenen, ed., vol. 18, (Memphis, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 304-306; Pentecost, 1370-1371; John F. Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971), 271-272; Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Resolute: Determining to Go God's Direction*, (Colorado Springs, CO: Victor, 2000), 129, 139; Leon J. Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1973), 304-305.

The last 2 ½ verses of the vision paint an incredibly bright future that will last forever. It's important to know that God is working toward that bright future, and we'll get to it in a moment. But why would the angel give such a lengthy, dark preamble?

Daniel had previously received a number of visions over the years, recorded in Chapters 2, 7, 8, and 9. The visions were about things that were going to happen in the future. If there was one thing that would have been very clear to Daniel from all these visions it's that God is sovereign; that is, the Lord is in complete control of the future.

Well, if God is in control of everything in the future, and if there's some bad stuff coming before the really good stuff, then we are left with the following conclusion: In God's economy, the bad stuff is somehow necessary to get to the good stuff. That's just another way of saying God uses bad things to bring about His good purposes.

In light of this, the message of the angel makes more sense. In consoling those who are hurting, it is not truly helpful to paint an unrealistically rosy picture of what the rest of life on earth is going to be like. In fact, it's misleading and can set people up for even greater disillusionment when the tough stuff just keeps coming. Sometimes this life is delightful; sometimes it's miserable. Our hope does not lie in the favorability of our circumstances in this life. Our hope lies in the sufficiency of God and in the life He will give us after this one.

In the meantime, there *will* be shattered dreams in this life. There *will* be suffering. There *will* be pain. But none of it is wasted. None of it is meaningless, even if we can't explain it. God is redeeming it all. God is using it all to accomplish His good purposes, for our good and His glory. Romans ► 8:28 has been quoted so much it can sound trite, but it's true:

<sup>NAU</sup> **Romans 8:28** And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

Jesus says to His followers in ► John 16:33:

<sup>NAU</sup> **John 16:33** “. . . In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”

Our ultimate victory is assured, which brings us to my last point.

V. There is ► a fifth and final thing to know about God when you feel like you've had enough: For ► believers, God ensures our ultimate rescue, our resurrection, and our reward.

A. In ► Daniel 12:1, the angel says of the end of the Great Tribulation,

<sup>NAU</sup> **Daniel 12:1** “. . . at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.”

At the end of the Great Tribulation, upon the second coming of the Messiah, Daniel is assured that his people will be rescued from the Antichrist. Daniel's people will be rescued. But not everyone, only those who are "found ► written in the book." Other Scriptures describe a "book of life" which includes the names of those who have believed in the Lord.<sup>19</sup> The angel appears to be referring to that book.<sup>20</sup>

This is the one book in which you definitely don't want to be unlisted. By His death and resurrection for our sins, Christ alone promises eternal life to all who will simply believe Him for it. Today, if you believe in Jesus Christ, your name is written in that book.<sup>21</sup>

- B. In ► Verse 2, the angel addresses concerns Daniel may have had about the believers among his people who had already died down through the years. The angel says,

<sup>NAU</sup> **Daniel 12:2** Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace *and* everlasting contempt.

This provides Daniel with the assurance that, in the end, the believers among his people, including himself, will be resurrected to everlasting life in God's eternal kingdom. Unbelievers will be raised to everlasting contempt or judgment. It's heaven or hell.

- C. Then in ► Verse 3, the angel speaks of the rewards of those resurrected to everlasting life. He says,

<sup>NAU</sup> **Daniel 12:3** Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever."

One scholar explains this verse this way:

*Just as stars display their beauty and glory in the sky, a bright (glorious) future and a great reward (which includes God's blessings and great honor) awaits those who were wise enough to comprehend and obey spiritual truth and who led others to repent of their sins and live a righteous life. This blessed and glorious state will continue "for ever and ever" . . . The decision to follow Christ and put his kingdom first will be rewarded.<sup>22</sup>*

On the thinking that brightness is a metaphor or word picture for reward, the angel gives to Daniel the assurance that, in the end, all the believers among his people will

<sup>19</sup> Luke 10:20; Revelation 3:5; 20:12.

<sup>20</sup> Miller, 315-316.

<sup>21</sup> John 6:47.

<sup>22</sup> Miller, 319-320.

shine like stars in heaven, each with an everlasting brilliance proportional to one's faithfulness to God on earth, particularly during the bad times. It's no stretch to assume that Daniel will be among the brightest.

So, in the midst of the sufferings of this present time, we can join the Apostle Paul in

▶ Romans 8:18, saying,

<sup>NAU</sup> **Romans 8:18** For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

Conclusion:

So ▶ what do you do when you think you've had enough adversity? What do you do when the door seems to have been slammed on your hopes and dreams?

When you think you've had enough, know that God is enough. Know ▶ that God is the only One who will ever be enough. Know ▶ that God fully sympathizes with our pain. Know ▶ that God is always working to uphold His people. Know ▶ that God uses bad things to bring about His good purposes. Know ▶ that, for us, His people, God ensures our rescue, our resurrection, and our reward.