

Courageous Hope

Daniel 11-12



When do we need courage?

- Courage = strength in the face of pain, danger, or grief
- Daniel 10:16-19: "You have given me strength"
- Acts 4:13: "When they saw the courage...[they knew] that these men had been with Jesus."
- A key sign of being with Jesus, and being touched by a messenger from God, is courage & strength

Part of the history of the Jewish People

Foreign powers

722-605	Assyria
605-539	Babylon [1]
539-333	Persia [2]
333-166	Macedonia/Greece [3]
166-63	Independent
63-135 AD	Rome [4]

And more like them

Daniel thought they were about done with struggle
Every generation thinks they should be about done!



Daniel 11

We live in a world of evil and hardship where kingdoms and powers and people rise and fall
And at some times and for some people the evil and hardship are almost unbearable
Where does courage & strength come from?

Daniel 11-12

- 2-4: Persian kings & Alexander the Great
- 5-20: North and south fight across Israel
- 21-35: Evil & powerful: Antiochus IV (north)
- 36-45: More evil and more power
- 12:1-4: Until resurrection and judgment finally come
- 5-13: Call to be faithful while waiting, even when we don't understand
Until the resurrection and judgment, at a time known only to God



Daniel struggled to understand!

"Faithful Jews (like Daniel) would readily fall into bewilderment:

- how do these circumstances display God's concern for his people?
- how will God ever use his now-insignificant people to bring blessing to the whole world?

The vision is therefore reassurance for the faithful."

The Big Idea

No matter the trouble or oppression...

God's people are to keep seeking His ways in His power

**while courageously hoping for the full experience of His victory in God's Kingdom
at a time known only to God**

Resurrection!

Some journeys are very pleasant like a day on the beach

Some journeys are very difficult like climbing a great mountain peak

It's very important to know what kind of journey to expect!

I keep thinking...

life is supposed to be pleasant and rewarding, like spending a day on the beach

So when life is challenging...

we might look for someone to blame: Self, Parents, Kids, God, Society, Technology
Or despair: "Life is hard and then you die"
But God highly values...Courage, Perseverance, Strength, Hope/Faith
Jesus said that following Him was like "taking up your cross" which leads to great glory!
In following Jesus, when might we face the hardest challenges?
Only when we are ready for them
And for the one who 'overcomes', "I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which in in the paradise of God."
Revelation 2:7

Application

Persevere with hope

Daniel was "to get on with life in the assurance that he will receive his reward when the end does come"
Fix our hope on glory in Christ → at His coming
Rather than hoping in visible success, glory, fulfillment in this world
Join God's work: "Many will be purified, made spotless and refined"
Jesus: "For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." *Hebrews 11:2*
Full rest and peace will only come in the new kingdom, in the resurrection
And oh, the joy of seeing the Son of God!
Eating from the tree of life in the paradise of God ☐ not just a metaphor!
The purpose of Daniel 7-12:
"to keep in the faith those who will be severely tempted to give up in the face of opposition."
"Hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently." *Romans 8:24-25*
Eating from the tree of life in the paradise of God

Seek His Kingdom now with great courage because of full hope in the coming Kingdom

Boldness to love, to forgive, to trust, to proclaim, to submit, ...
Juneteenth
It is confident faith in God's final victory that gives us courageous hope to keep seeking God's ways as God makes us more like Jesus for our greatest joy in His presence
Seeking God's ways in a broken world
Christians should lead the way ("go your way")
We should bring God's goodness today
Seeking God's ways, using God's methods, in the strength of God's Spirit
Justice and mercy
Truth and grace
Knowing that there will be ups and downs
And even death itself

Hebrews 12:1b-3; Romans 8:21

Reflection Questions for later today or this week...

1. What circumstances in your life require courage and strength?
2. What do you tend to do when you are severely tempted to give up? What steps might be helpful to give you courage and strength in God?
3. What does it look like for you to seek God's ways in this broken world? How does the hope of the resurrection affect you in that work? How could the hope of the resurrection increase your courage and strength for this work?
4. What comes to mind when you set your hope on eating from the tree of life in the paradise of God?