

Daniel 12:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

Analysis

The phrase "they that be wise" comes from the Hebrew root sakal meaning "to understand" or "to have insight." This refers not merely to intellectual knowledge but to spiritual understanding—those who comprehend God's truth and live accordingly. "Shall shine as the brightness of the firmament" uses astronomical imagery—they will radiate glory like the heavenly expanse. This echoes Matthew 13:43: "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

"And they that turn many to righteousness" describes those who lead others to righteousness—evangelists, teachers, disciplers who point people to God. The causative form emphasizes active agency in others' salvation and sanctification. "As the stars for ever and ever" promises eternal glory proportional to faithfulness in leading others to God. This parallels Jesus' teaching about heavenly rewards and Paul's joy in converts as his "crown of rejoicing."

This verse teaches:

1. resurrection bodies will possess glorious, radiant qualities
2. faithful teaching and evangelism result in eternal reward
3. present suffering will be replaced by eternal glory
4. there are degrees of glory in resurrection—those who led others to righteousness receive special honor.

This points to Christ, the ultimate "Wise One" who turned "many to righteousness" through His atoning death.

Historical Context

Daniel 12:3 appears in the book's final chapter, concluding the apocalyptic vision received during Cyrus's third year (536 BC). The context is resurrection and final judgment. This is the Old Testament's clearest resurrection prophecy, anticipating New Testament fuller revelation. The promise that faithful teachers would "shine as stars forever" especially encouraged believers during persecution. Many Jews and Christians faced martyrdom for maintaining faithfulness and teaching others.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does the promise of eternal reward for leading others to righteousness motivate your evangelistic and discipleship efforts?
2. In what ways does understanding resurrection glory provide perspective on present suffering for Christ's sake?

Interlinear Text

וְהַנְּקָעַ יְעַ	כִּי־בָּרָ	זֶה־רֹא	וְיָהִי־בְּ	וְיָהִי־בְּ
And they that be wise	shall shine	as the brightness	of the firmament	
H7919	H2094	H2096	H7549	
וְמַצְדִּיקִים	בְּרֹכֶת יְמֵ	בְּרֹכֶת יְמֵ	לְעוֹלָם	יְמֵ
to righteousness	and they that turn many	as the stars	for ever	and ever
H6663	H7227	H3556	H5769	H5703

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 13:43 (Righteousness): Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Proverbs 4:18 (Righteousness): But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

Daniel 11:33 (Parallel theme): And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days.

Daniel 11:35 (Parallel theme): And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed.

Proverbs 11:30 (Righteousness): The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.

Hebrews 5:12 (Parallel theme): For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

John 4:36 (Parallel theme): And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

John 5:35 (Parallel theme): He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

Jeremiah 23:22 (Parallel theme): But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.

1 Corinthians 3:10 (Parallel theme): According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.