

QUESTIONS:

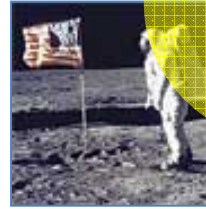
1. Where was Daniel living?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Who was King when he first was taken there?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What nation conquered the Babylonians?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What sort of diet did Daniel and his friends prefer to the kings food? \_\_\_\_\_
5. All the kings whom Daniel served hated him  
TRUE / FALSE
6. Daniel was able to subdue and kill the lion that was supposed to kill him  
TRUE / FALSE
7. What nation came to power after the Persians?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Daniel never named the fourth kingdom but we now know it was \_\_\_\_\_
9. When Nebuchadnezzar was humiliated by God it was because Nebuchadnezzar had exalted himself  
TRUE / FALSE
10. Jesus is now reigning over God's kingdom on Earth  
TRUE / FALSE
11. 2 Peter 1:3,4 says we are still waiting for God to provide some things for our needs  
TRUE / FALSE
12. When faced with a challenge of faith we should :
  - a. Wait to see what God is going to do before we act.
  - b. Do the right thing regardless of what God might do.
  - c. Wait till there are more people to support you.
  - d. Hide.

Finger Lakes Church of Christ: 607 708 4048

fingerlakescoc.com

PO Box 4917 Ithaca, NY 14852

# LIFE-SEARCH



*But from there you will seek the LORD your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul.*

Deuteronomy 4:29

A LOOK INTO THE HEART OF GOD THROUGH THE STUDY OF HIS WORD

Part six

## The Providence of God

## Daniel

Daniel's name means "God is my judge" and that pretty much sums up the way Daniel lived his life. The book of Daniel in the Old Testament gives us his story and it is a story of incredible faith and courage.

Here is what we know about Daniel:

1. He lived in the time period when the Jews were in slavery to the Babylonians and later to the Medes and Persians.
2. He was a young man among the best of the Jewish youth who were brought into the court of King Nebuchadnezzar around 605 B.C.
3. God used him to speak to the Babylonian King, Nebuchadnezzar, and also to the Medo / Persian King, Darius.
4. He prophesied about things that were to happen in his day and about things that were to happen later.
5. Though he enjoyed high standing he nevertheless was constantly tested and persecuted for his faith.
6. He had three friends, whose names were Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who also proved to be very faithful.
7. Though he was an obedient citizen He made it clear that he was ultimately answering to God and that God would ultimately reward him.
8. Jesus mentioned one of his prophecies in Matthew 24:15.

As we think about the providence of God It is important to learn from Daniel's example of looking forward to God's heavenly providence.

## A Stranger in a Strange Land.

Daniel was brought into Babylon to serve the king because he met the qualifications that the king was demanding (good-looking and smart and worthy of standing in the king's presence – Daniel 1:3,4) From the very start he was determined not to lose his Jewish heritage and, along with his three friends, chose to eat vegetables instead of the sumptuous fare of the king's table. (Daniel 1:8-16). The result was that they looked better than those who enjoyed the providence of Nebuchadnezzar.



When the king set up a golden image and demanded that everyone bow down to it or be thrown into a fiery furnace, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused and were indeed thrown into the furnace. As we read in Daniel 3:17 they knew that God could rescue them from this fate but that even if he did not they would not obey the king in this matter. The furious king watched as they were thrown into the furnace but when he looked in there he saw four people instead of three, walking about untouched by the flames. (Daniel 3:24,25). The result was that the King worshipped God (3:28).

Later, under King Darius, Daniel was recognized as faultless. The king was going to promote him and that made him a target of a great deal of jealous anger (Daniel 6:1-9). A plot was hatched to cause him to lose favor with the king. His enemies persuaded the king to ordain a period of thirty days during which no one could pray to anyone except the King, himself. They were counting on Daniel disobeying this edict and he did not disappoint them. The punishment was to be thrown into a lion's den. The king had no choice but to have Daniel thrown into the lion's den with the words, "May your God whom you serve continually deliver you!" (6:16). The next day he found Daniel unharmed with the result that Darius praised God. (6:19-28)

We live in a world that is hostile to the truth of God. Jesus warned His disciples that everyone, from world authorities down to family members, would do everything in their power to destroy them. (Matthew 10:16-24) However, He also promised them that they had no reason to fear their worldly enemies (Matthew 10:26-33) but good reason to fear God. He encouraged them with these words which Daniel seemed to understand hundreds of years earlier.

*So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.*

Matthew 10:32, 33

So we learn from Daniel to trust in God's providence, not on the providence of any earthly ruler.

Another main feature of Daniel's life is his ability to predict future events. The book of Daniel is found among the books of prophecy and contains seven prophetic passages.

1. Daniel interprets a dream of Nebuchadnezzar in which four earthly kingdoms, including his own are represented. In the days of the fourth kingdom God would set up His Heavenly kingdom on Earth. (Daniel 2)
2. Daniel interprets dream of Nebuchadnezzar which predicts that Nebuchadnezzar will be humiliated by God. (Daniel 4)
3. Daniel interprets handwriting on the wall for Nebuchadnezzar's son, Belshazzar which predicted the end of his kingdom at the hand of the conquering Medes. (Daniel 5)
4. Daniel's first vision of four beasts which, again, represent four kingdoms in history. (Daniel 7)
5. Daniel's second vision of a ram and a goat which represent two kingdoms which are Medo / Persia and Greece (Daniel 8)
6. Daniel receives a vision in an answer to his prayer of repentance. Gabriel tells him there are going to be "seventy weeks" till God puts an end to sin (Daniel 9:20-27)
7. Daniel's vision of a man in which world powers of Persia and Greece are again mentioned and a lot of detail about a "King of the North" and a "King of the south". Daniel is not allowed to understand much of this long vision because it deals with "the time of the end." (Daniel 10-12)

There is still speculation over some of what Daniel spoke of but he does give the order of world empires from Babylon to Persia to Greece and to an unnamed fourth empire which we now know is Rome. One main focus is the fact that God would set up His kingdom in the days of those kings (Daniel 2:44). We know that God did set up His kingdom in the days of Rome when He sent Jesus Christ as a sacrifice for sins and received Him back into Heaven to reign at His right hand. He is reigning now and will reign till all His enemies are put under His feet. (1 Corinthians 15:25) The Apostles of Jesus Christ understood that all prophecy had been fulfilled at the point when Jesus had returned to Heaven as King (Acts 3:24).