

## GOD GIVES VICTORY

The true test of success in life is NOT did we go through life without any problems, BUT how did we do as we dealt with the problems that were encountered. When we were youngsters in school we had tests every so often to determine if we were learning what was being taught – to see if we were making any progress. Usually we did not like to have tests. In many ways, the problems we encounter in life are like those tests that we had in school. The way we handle the problems should give us some feedback on how well we are learning the lessons of life and how our progress toward maturity is going. In life, some times the problems we face are more than tests, they are the instructions, also. For a person to not have a Christian perspective on life, problems are difficult to deal with. Sometimes people will think that they are being destroyed by their problems and not realize that God loves them and wants what is ultimately best for them. Without the realizations that ultimate victory is the inheritance of God's people, then Christians can find themselves in the same kind of despair that non-believers have.

The Jews encountered many problems in their history. Many of these problems were for the purpose of teaching them what they failed to learn from the teachings that God gave through Moses. Many times they had trouble believing that they were God's chosen people or if they were, then they sometimes wished that He had chosen someone else. The Jews repeatedly had their faith tested. The Book of Daniel was written to reassure them of God's continuing love, care and purpose for them. It is interesting to read that Daniel himself turned to the Scriptures to find encouragement. Daniel had access to the writing of Jeremiah the prophet and he found there that the desolation of Jerusalem was to last seventy years (Dan 9:2). It is one thing to read a prophecy and just do nothing, it is something else to get involved with it. When Daniel saw this information and realized that the time was near, then he turned to God in prayer. In fact, he did more than just pray, he fasted, confessed his sins and the sins of his people, and pleaded for God's mercy to prevail. At that time God sent the archangel Gabriel to Daniel with a message of encouragement. Several years later we are told of a time when he again fasted and prayed for three weeks. This time he again was visited by an angel in a vision. The angel told Daniel that he was dispatched at the beginning of the period of fasting but that he was hindered in arriving because of the "Prince of Persia". This says that there are spiritual forces behind the governments of this world. The spiritual forces behind the government of Persia did not want the angel sent from God to reach Daniel. This angel delivered a long prophecy to Daniel which is recorded in chapters 10, 11 and 12 of Daniel. This prophecy tells of many terrible things that will happen, but it concludes with the final victory of God and the people of God. We need such assurance today that no matter how bad it gets now that ultimately victory will be ours and that the victory will be worth the cost.

DANIEL 12:1-3 After all the problems are described about the terrible times of tribulation in the world there will be a change in which God will intervene on behalf of His people. The particular time when this occurred or will occur is the subject of debate among religious scholars. Many believe that the time spoken of is a reference to the overthrow of Antiochus Epiphanes the Greek ruler that dominated and defiled the land of Israel. Other believe that the reference is to the tribulation period before the Second Coming of Jesus. It is likely to refer to both. We have noted before that the Old Testament presents patterns and types in the physical that will be happen in the

spiritual realm in New Testament times.

Michael is the Jews' patron angel. His name means "who is like God." This indicates that eventually the cause of God and God's people will be championed in the battles that go on for the souls of men. You recall that Paul tells us that we battle not against flesh and blood but against powers and principalities in the heavenlies. This battle will be great and there will be a time of trouble that is worse than anything the world has ever seen. That doesn't sound like good news; however, there is more. God will provide deliverance for His people, for everyone whose name is found written in the "book." The idea of names written in a book is like the census record that records the names of the citizens of a country. Jesus used this same idea in speaking with His disciples about the importance of having their names written in heaven. This first verse appears to be speaking of the time of the great tribulation. Verse 2 apparently addresses the issue of the resurrection which will be followed by the judgment. There is a lot of uncertainty about to whom the "many" refers. Does this refer to the faithful and unfaithful Jews that go through the tribulation or does it refer to all people? This passage, by the way, is the first mention in the Old Testament of the separate destinies of the righteous and unrighteous. We also see in the third verse the idea of reward or recognition for those that are involved in helping their fellow humans to find the right way of life. Many evangelical Christians reference this passage as an endorsement to share their faith and make converts to Christianity.

DANIEL 12:4-8 Daniel was instructed to seal up the prophecy until the time of the end. For centuries many Christians ignored the meaning and interpretation of these prophecies. Nowadays many are searching the Scriptures trying to understand and interpret so as to know what is happening in the world and how it relates to God's plan for mankind. Truly many are running to and fro and knowledge is increasing in our day and age.

In Daniel's vision he saw two men and one asked the other how long would it be to the conclusion of these things. The answer was "time, times, and half a time." This has been interpreted to mean three and one-half years. During this time period the power of God's people would be shattered and scattered. Daniel did not understand this and he sought clarification by asking what would be the final outcome.

DANIEL 12:9-13 Daniel was not told what the final outcome would be--the word are shut up and sealed until the end time. However, he was told that many would purify themselves and make them selves white and be tested and purified. On the other hand, the wicked would do wickedly. The wicked would not understand spiritual things. Paul tells us that the preaching of the gospel is foolishness to those that perish. These are truly descriptive of what is happening in the church age. Those that come to Jesus are purified by the Blood of Jesus that was shed as an atonement for our sins. We that have come to Him are going through the refinement fires to burn away the dross and purify our lives so that we become more like Jesus. To those that are lost, this all seems like so much foolishness. What we need to understand is that God is working out His purposes and that He is not on our timetable; but, the final victory will come.

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