

A TIMELY WORD CONCERNING THE WORLD SITUATION AND THE LORD'S RECOVERY, Week 5

Answering God's Call to Be His Dispensational Instrument, His Overcomers, to Turn the Age

Scripture Reading: Dan. 1:4-9; 2:17-19; 4:25-26, 32; 6:10-11; 9:1-4, 23; 10:11, 19; 11:32b; 12:3

- Daniel 1:4 Children in whom was no defect, who were good in appearance, who showed insight in all wisdom, understanding in knowledge, and apprehension in thought, and in whom was the ability to stand in the king's palace. And he told him to teach them the learning and language of the Chaldeans.
- Daniel 1:5 And the king appointed to them a daily portion from the king's choice provision and from the wine that he drank, and appointed that they should be brought up for three years so that at the end of the time they might stand before the king.
- Daniel 1:6 Now among these from the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.
- Daniel 1:7 And the leader of the eunuchs gave them names: he gave Daniel the name Belteshazzar; Hananiah, the name Shadrach; Mishael, the name Meshach; and Azariah, the name Abednego.
- Daniel 1:8 But Daniel set his heart not to defile himself with the king's choice provision and with the wine that the king drank, so he requested of the leader of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.
- Daniel 1:9 And God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the leader of the eunuchs;
- Daniel 2:17 Then Daniel went to his house and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions,
- Daniel 2:18 That they might request compassions from before the God of the heavens concerning this mystery so that Daniel and his companions would not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.
- Daniel 2:19 Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of the heavens.
- Daniel 4:25 You shall be driven out from among mankind, and with the beasts of the field shall your dwelling place be; and you shall be made to eat grass as bulls do and shall be wet with the dew of heaven; and seven periods of time will pass over you, until you come to know that the Most High is the Ruler over the kingdom of men and gives it to whomever He wills.
- Daniel 4:26 And in that it was commanded that the stump of roots of the tree be left, your kingdom will be assured to you after you have come to know that the heavens do rule.
- Daniel 4:32 And from among mankind you shall be driven out, and with the beasts of the field shall your dwelling place be; you shall be made to eat grass as bulls do; and seven periods of time will pass over you, until you come to know that the Most High is the Ruler over the kingdom of men and gives it to whomever He wills.
- Daniel 6:10 Now when Daniel came to know that the writing had been signed, he went to his house (in his upper room he had windows open toward Jerusalem) and three times daily he knelt on his knees and prayed and gave thanks before his God, because he had always done so previously.
- Daniel 6:11 Then these men assembled and found Daniel making petition and supplication before his God.
- Daniel 9:1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, a Median descendant who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans,
- Daniel 9:2 In the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by means of the Scriptures the number of the years, which came as the word of Jehovah to Jeremiah the prophet, for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, that is, seventy years.
- Daniel 9:3 So I set my face toward the Lord God to seek Him in prayer and supplications with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.
- Daniel 9:4 And I prayed to Jehovah my God and confessed; and I said, Ah, Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and lovingkindness with those who love Him and keep His commandments,
- Daniel 9:23 At the beginning of your supplications the command went forth, and I have come to tell you, for you are preciousness itself. Therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.
- Daniel 10:11 And he said to me, Daniel, man of preciousness, understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand in your place, for I have now been sent to you. And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling.
- Daniel 10:19 And he said, Do not be afraid, man of preciousness. Peace to you. Be strong, yes, be strong. And when he spoke to me, I received strength and said, Speak, sir, for you have strengthened me.
- Daniel 11:32b ... But the people who know their God will show strength and take action.
- Daniel 12:3 And those who have insight will shine like the shining of the heavenly expanse, and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars, forever and ever.

Every time God wants to make a dispensational move, an age-turning move, He must obtain His **dispensational instrument**. When God changes His attitude toward a certain matter, He make as dispensational move. Every dispensational move brings in God's new way. His most important dispensational move is in Revelation 12. He wants to end this age and bring in the age of the kingdom.... How can He bring this age to a close and bring in another? He must have His dispensational instrument; **we must be those who have dispensational value to God.** (CWWN, vol. 34, "The Glorious Church," p. 153)

Daniel had companions with whom he was **absolutely consecrated** to God and separated unto God from an age that follows Satan. Although Daniel and his companions were still very young, they **stood up as an anti-testimony**. Daniel **joined himself** to God's desire through God's Word. Daniel was not only a person who read God's Word regularly but also a person who was joined to God's Word. Daniel was a **man of prayer** with an excellent spirit, a man living under God's rule in the reality of the kingdom of the heavens, the ruling of the heavens. Daniel was also a self-sacrificing person with the spirit of martyrdom. (CWWL, 1957, vol. 3, "Men Who Turn the Age," pp. 521-522)

In order to be today's overcomers as God's dispensational instrument who turn the age, **we must redeem the time**. We also **need to be vitalized**. Today the way to become vitalized is to answer the Lord's call to be an overcomer; an overcomer is a vital person, and a vital person (one who is living and active) is a **praying person**. (CWWL, 1991-1992, vol. 3, "Fellowship concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups," pp. 562, 405)

Day 1

I. Every time God wants to make a dispensational move, an age-turning move, He must obtain His dispensational instrument; we must be those who have dispensational value to God—Rev. 12:5-11; 1:20; Dan. 12:3; Matt. 13:43:

- A. We need to consider what we are doing to bring in the next age; this is a special time, so there is the need of **special Christians** to do a **special work**—16:18; Rev. 19:7; 1 Cor. 1:9; Rev. 2:4-7; Col. 1:18b; John 17:21; 1 Cor. 14:4b; Eph. 4:16; Col. 2:19.

Day 2

- B. The principle of the Lord's recovery is seen with Daniel ("God is my judge"), Hananiah ("Jah has graciously given," or "favored of Jah"), Mishael ("Who is what God is?"), and Azariah ("Jah has helped"); "Daniel and his companions" were absolutely one with God in their victory over Satan's devices; they were men who turned the age of the captivity of God's people to the age of their return to the land of Immanuel for the building of God's house and God's city for God's expression and authority—Dan. 2:13, 17; Isa. 8:8; cf. Rev. 17:14:
1. In God's sight, an **overcomer** is a "man of preciousness," even "preciousness itself," a person whom God can use to turn the age—1 Pet. 2:7; Dan. 9:23; 10:11, 19.
 2. Christ as the **unique Overcomer** includes all the overcomers; the unique **Overcomer dwells in our spirit** to make us His overcomers—John 14:30; Dan. 2:34-35; Rev. 19:7-21; 1 John 5:4, 18-19; Rev. 3:21.
- C. The Lord needs to raise up men who turn the age for the recovery of God's expression and authority; among fallen mankind God's expression is torn down and His authority is denied; Daniel and his companions **truly allowed God to be expressed through them** and were truly under God's authority—Gen. 1:26; Dan. 3:14-30; 4:17, 26; Rev. 22:1-2.

II. Daniel had companions with whom he was absolutely consecrated to God and separated unto God from an age that follows Satan—Dan. 1:4-8; 5:12, 22; 6:10:

- A. All those who are used by God to turn the age must be **Nazarites—voluntarily consecrated ones** who are sanctified absolutely and ultimately to God—Num. 6:1-8, 22-27; Ps. 110:3; Luke 9:62; Phil. 3:13-14.
- B. Although Daniel and his companions were still very young, they stood up as an anti-testimony, similar to the way that Antipas did in the church in Pergamos—Rev. 2:13.

The **first characteristic** of Daniel was that he was a **separated person**. Everyone who wants to be used by God to turn the age must be a separated person. We must know that everyone in this age is walking on the same road and is swept into the same current. This way is a way that follows Satan. This way is initiated by Satan and is pioneered by Satan. This way is definitely far from God and is always going downhill....

Young people, you must realize that **today's age is the same as Daniel's age**; they are not at all different. Not only the Gentiles are under the ruling of Babylon; even the so-called people of God, so-called Christianity, are also in captivity. This is especially true during Christmas, when the whole of Christianity is **carried away**. Everyone in the world is walking on the same road, and everyone is swept into the same current. Not only do we see the whole world dancing; even those in Christianity are dancing. Dancing has even come to Christianity.

Hence, we must have a **separation** from those in the world. We must stand up and be an **anti-testimony**. Although the tide around us is downward, inwardly we are standing up against the tide. Others may play and amuse themselves, but we will not do the same. Others may have all kinds of cravings, but we cannot have the same. Of course, I am not suggesting that we be peculiar persons. That is not what I mean. Nevertheless, we must remember that in an age where the tide is downward, to be used by God as a person to turn the age, we must be separated persons; we must be able to stand up as an anti-testimony for God. This is the first necessary characteristic. (*Men Who Turn The Age, chapter 2, section 1,2*)

Day 3

III. Daniel joined himself to God's desire through God's Word—Dan. 9:1-4; Deut. 17:18-20; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Eph. 6:17-18; Ps. 119:11, 24:

- A. Daniel was not only a person who **read God's Word regularly** but also a person who was **joined to God's Word**:
1. When Daniel read from the book of Jeremiah that God had ordained seventy years of captivity for the Israelites and that after seventy years God would turn back to bless them, he **immediately fasted and prayed**; as soon as he touched God's desire through the Word, he joined himself to that desire—Dan. 9:2-3.
 2. After Daniel read the book of Leviticus, he could no longer eat the unclean food (Dan. 1:8-21); after he read the book of Jeremiah, he could not help but fast and pray for the restoration of God's people (29:10-14).
- B. We must read **God's Word** in a spirit and atmosphere of prayer and touch God's desire from His Word; then we must **immediately join ourselves to that desire**; the **Bible** should affect our living, and we should be **joined to the Bible**—cf. Ps. 119:11, 15-16, 133, 140; 2 Cor. 6:14-18.

Daniel was not only a person who read God's Word regularly but a person who was **joined to God's Word**. This is the **second characteristic**. He did not read God's Word for the purpose of finding out some knowledge or merely for finding out God's will. Rather, he **read to receive** and to keep God's commandments. We should believe that he refused the food and drink of the king of Babylon because he had read the five books of Moses. He must have read about the clean and unclean food from Leviticus and Deuteronomy. At the same time, he must have found out that God's people cannot partake of any food that has touched the idols. Since he read these commandments and therefore knew God's desire, he accepted them and applied them to himself. Hence, he was not a person separate from the Scripture. He was not merely studying the Bible.

He was not like many Bible readers who treat Bible reading as an objective matter. This kind of Bible reading cannot touch God's desire. Because you read the Bible apart from the Bible, the Bible can never get into you. Bible reading is useless to such persons. To read the Bible, **one must join himself and his living to God's Word**. Any time you find out God's desire from His Word, you must immediately join yourselves to this desire with fear and trembling. This is the second characteristic that we find in Daniel. Every person whom God uses to turn the age must possess this characteristic. **Only those who join themselves to God's Word can be of real use to God.** (*Men Who Turn The Age, Chapter 2, section 3*)

IV. Daniel was a man of prayer with an excellent spirit, a man living under God's rule in the reality of the kingdom of the heavens, the ruling of the heavens—Dan. 2:17-19, 28; 6:10; 9:1-4, 17; 5:12, 14; 6:3; 5:22-23; 4:25-26, 32:

- A. The center of Daniel 6 is **man's prayer** for the carrying out of God's economy; **man's prayers are like the rails that pave the way for God's move to go on**; there is no other way to bring God's economy into fullness and into fulfillment except by prayer; this is the inner secret of this chapter.
- B. The **highest expression of a man who cooperates with God is in prayer**; God carries out His economy on the earth through His faithful channels of prayer—Matt. 26:41; Acts 6:4; Eph. 6:17-18; Col. 4:2.
- C. Prayer is the **lifeline** in the Lord's recovery; the more Satan tries to frustrate our prayer, the more we should pray—Dan. 6:10, cf. vv. 4-9:
 1. Daniel was a person living before God; he **depended on prayer** to do what man could not do, and he **depended on prayer** to understand what man could not understand—2:17-19; 9:1-4; 10:1-3, 11-13.
 2. Daniel's prayer was **totally for God** and not for himself; through prayer he afforded God the highest cooperation—9:2b; Jer. 25:11; Dan. 9:17; 1 Kings 8:48.
 3. Because Daniel was a **man of prayer**, he was acknowledged by God, qualified to be used by God, and capable of speaking forth the mystery of God—cf. Acts 6:4.
 4. Daniel's prayer reached the highest peak; he asked God to do something for Himself; he prayed, "Now hear, O our God, the prayer of Your servant and his supplications, and cause Your face to shine upon Your sanctuary that has been desolated, for the Lord's sake"—Dan. 9:17.
 5. Only a person like Daniel, who **prayed to God single-heartedly** with an **age-turning prayer**, can be used by Him to turn the age.

Daniel had a **third characteristic**. He was a man who was **always praying**. His prayers were not at all common. His prayers were prayers that turned the age. Every time he encountered some crucial matter, he prayed before God. He believed absolutely in prayer. He believed in prayer because he believed in God and not in himself. (*Men Who Turn the Age, chapter 2, section 5*)

God's move is like a train which must have rails for its move. Man's prayers are like the rails which pave the way for God's move to go on. There is no other way to bring God's economy into fullness and in to fulfillment except by prayer. Today, prayer is the lifeline in the Lord's recovery. The more Satan tries to frustrate our prayer, the more we should pray. (*Life-Study of Daniel, pp. 45, 47*)

V. Daniel was a self-sacrificing person with the spirit of martyrdom—6:10-11:

- A. Daniel's companions had a **true spirit of martyrdom**; they stood for the Lord as the unique God and against idol worship at the cost of their lives, being thrown at the command of Nebuchadnezzar into a blazing furnace—3:19-23.
- B. Daniel **prayed** at the risk of his life; the intention of the chief ministers and satraps was to destroy Daniel, but the intention of Satan, who was behind them, was to cut off the channel of prayer that God was using for the carrying out of His economy—6:4-24.
- C. Everyone whom God uses to turn the age is afraid of only one thing, that is, of offending God and losing His presence—3:17-18; 2 Cor. 5:9-10; cf. Ps. 51:11; Josh. 7:4.

There is still a **fourth characteristic**. Daniel was a person who would **sacrifice himself to be martyred**. From the first chapter to the last, the book of Daniel shows that a person who is under God's hand and who is used by Him to turn the age is a self-sacrificing person. Every incident and fact shows that he was a person who did not care for his own life. For example, when he chose to eat vegetables only, he did not necessarily have the assurance that he would be strong. If the more he ate, the slimmer he became, he would be killed by the king of Babylon. Yet he cared neither for life nor for death. He knew that the unclean food, the food sacrificed to idols, could not enter into his mouth, that he would not be defiled, and that he would keep God's word. Because of this word, he was willing to lose even his life.

Today, we can cover only these four characteristics. **First**, we must be an **anti-testimony**. **Second**, we must **read the Bible**. **Third**, we must **pray**, and **fourth**, we must **not care for our own life**. These four characteristics can be seen not only in Daniel but also in **all those used by God to turn the age**....Young brothers and sisters, I feel deeply before God to speak such a word to you. You must see that the whole world today has followed Satan. God wants to gain absolute young people so that He can use them to turn the age. I believe that everyone who has received mercy from God today will surely respond to this matter. I believe that these ones will surely want to touch God's desire, be voluntarily consecrated ones, Nazarites, and be used by God as an anti-testimony in this ever-degrading age. (*Men Who Turned the Age, chapter 2, section 6*)

VI. In order to be today's overcomers as God's dispensational instrument who turn the age, we must **redeem the time; Colossians 4:5 says, "Redeeming the time," and Ephesians 5:16 says, "Redeeming the time":**

- A. One could translate the word time in these passages as **redeeming the "opportunity"**; we who are learning to serve the Lord must not let the Head have a sense that we are dull to His direction and numb to His leading; we need to **allow the Lord to train our spiritual sense and our spiritual sight** to sense the opportunities whenever they come and make the most of them.
- B. Of the days that the Lord has ordained for us, perhaps yesterday should have been the greatest day of our life, but we may have lived yesterday in an ordinary way; this is what it means to miss the opportunity; **there is never a day without God's arrangement for us**.
- C. Perhaps the Lord gave us a thought that we should seek out a certain person who could potentially be very useful to the Lord (cf. Acts 9:10-19; 22:12-16), but on that day we did not go, because we were afraid the weather was too hot, and we were too lazy.
- D. One day we will face the Lord; perhaps we will **regret** the things in our life that now provide us with satisfaction; many times we have **come short** of God's will and have **acted foolishly**; we have not been faithful to live Christ, to grow Christ, to express Christ, and to propagate Christ in every respect for the building up of His Body—2 Cor. 5:10; Matt. 25:21-23, 25-26, 30; Col. 1:9-10; Matt. 7:26; 25:2-3, 8.

Day 5

- E. Daniel 11:32b says, "*The people who know their God will show strength and take action*"; this means that the people of God will open up new horizons; **the more we know God's will, the more we will seize the opportunities**; those who know God will never live in a habitual way day after day—cf. Deut. 4:25 and footnote.
- F. "We have seen how God has blessed Brother Witness's work. His strong point is that he does not allow any opportunity to slip by. It is hard to find him missing an opportunity. Once the opportunity arises, he takes advantage of it"—speaking from Brother Watchman Nee on July 19, 1950 (The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, vol. 55, p. 199).
- G. If our service is **according to God's will**, one day will equal many days, but the days spent outside the will of God are not counted; outside the kingdom of God, no human beings are employed by God (Matt. 20:6-7); Nebuchadnezzar was satisfied with his own work (Dan. 4:30, 37b)—this is the principle of Babylon.
- H. However, thank the Lord for His word of comfort, the words of Joel 2:25—the years that the locust has eaten will be **restored to us**; if we waste our days, ten years may be equal to one day, but if we redeem the time, one day may equal ten years.
- I. Psalm 90:12 says, "*Teach us then to number our days / That we may gain a heart of wisdom*," and 84:10 says, "*A day in Your courts is better than a thousand*"; the days in heaven are not counted by a cycle of twenty-four hours; God has a different way of counting days.

Day 6

VII. Today the way to become **vitalized is to answer the Lord's call to be an overcomer; an overcomer is a vital person, and a vital person (**one who is living and active**) is a **praying person**—119:88, 159; Dan. 11:32b:**

- A. Our intention in forming the new groups is to have groups of overcomers; this is the reason that the groups are called the "vital groups"; the full-time training is also for the producing of the overcomers, those who are **desperate to conquer** the deadness of Sardis (Rev. 3:1), the lukewarmness of Laodicea (vv. 15-16), and the barrenness dealt with by the Lord in John 15 concerning the vine and the branches (vv. 1-8, 16).
- B. If we are going to be vitalized, we need to have **close, intimate, and thorough fellowship** with the Lord and with the seeking saints; we need the Lord to lead us to some **companions**, with whom we can labor, just as Daniel had three companions—Dan. 1:6.
- C. Within today's church life (typified by Jerusalem), we must be the Lord's overcomers (typified by Zion); this is to be in the age of the overcomers according to the Lord's calling (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26-28; 3:5, 12, 20-21; 21:7); it is one thing to be in the church life, but it is another thing to be **an overcomer in the church life** (14:1-5).
- D. We have to make a resolution to be the overcomers, the **vitalized ones**; an **overcomer** is one who **overcomes** anything that is replacing Christ or that is against Christ—Judg. 5:15-16; 1 John 2:18-20, 27.

VIII. As today's overcomers, we should be like the children of Issachar, "men who **understood the times that they might know what Israel should do" (1 Chron. 12:32a); see Brother Lee's applicable experience on the next page.**

On the eve of the revival in Chefoo, when the Japanese had invaded China and had made life in China, which was hard enough, to be even harder, Brother Lee wrote the following in his personal notes in Chefoo, 1942:

People on earth are **suffering calamities**, and the churches are in **hardship**; this is not the age of God's heart's desire but the age of God's procedures. God is using His procedures to fulfill His heart's desire. To turn from the age of procedures to the age of God's heart's desire, **man must pray the age-turning prayer**. Daniel was such a man.

The earth is suffering calamities because people on the earth do not want God and do not care for God's affairs. Therefore, if the saints are to pray to end the time of calamities, they must answer God's demands and care for God and His needs. Oh! These many calamities today should wake us up to no longer live to the earth! Oh! Today we should **truly consecrate** ourselves to answer God's demands on behalf of the church so that God may have a way to come in and to turn this age of procedures into the age of His heart's desire. (The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1932-1949, vol. 2, p. 27)