

GENERAL SUBJECT:
DANIEL—
A PATTERN OF LIVING AN OVERCOMING LIFE
ON THE LINE OF LIFE TO FULFILL THE ECONOMY OF GOD

Message One

Living and Working according to the Vision of the Age to Change the Age

Scripture Reading: Ezek. 14:14, 20; Gen. 6:8; Matt. 24:37-39; Dan. 2:34-35; Job 42:5-6

- I. Noah, Daniel, and Job are patterns revealing how we can live an overcoming life on the line of life to fulfill the economy of God; this is to live and work according to the vision of the age to change the age—Ezek. 14:14, 20; Gen. 2:9; Rev. 2:7; 22:1-2; Matt. 24:37-39, 45-51; Dan. 2:34-35; Acts 26:19; 2 Tim. 4:8.**
- II. The lives of Noah, Daniel, and Job reveal the Triune God dispensing Himself into His chosen people to fulfill His economy:**
 - A. With Noah we see God the Father in His desire and plan for His building and in His eternal faithfulness in keeping His covenant, His word—Gen. 9:12-17; 1 Cor. 1:9; 1 John 1:9; Rev. 4:3; 21:19-20.
 - B. With Daniel we see Christ the Son as the centrality and universality of God's move and His second coming as the Son of Man—Dan. 7:13-14; 10:4-9.
 - C. With Job we see God the Spirit in His transforming work to carry out what is hidden in God's heart that we might gain God to become God in life, in nature, and in appearance but not in the Godhead for the corporate expression of God—Job 10:13; 42:5-6; Eph. 3:9; 2 Cor. 3:18.
- III. “But Daniel set his heart not to defile himself with the king's choice provision”—Dan. 1:8:**
 - A. All those who are used by God to turn the age are today's Nazarites, those who offer themselves willingly to the Lord in the splendor of their consecration—Num. 6:1-8; Psa. 110:3; cf. Judg. 7:13-18.
 - B. Daniel shows us the characteristics of men who turn the age:
 1. Daniel was separated from an age that followed Satan—Dan. 1:8; 4:26; 5:23; Phil. 3:13-14; Rev. 2:13.
 2. Daniel was joined to God's desire through God's Word—Dan. 9:2-4; 2 Tim. 3:14-17; 1:13-15; cf. Neh. 8:8, 13; Deut. 17:18-20.
 3. Daniel cooperated with God through his prayer—Dan. 6:10; 9:17; 10:1-21.
 4. Daniel was a self-sacrificing person with a spirit of martyrdom—1:8; 6:10.

MESSAGE ONE READING EXCERPTS

PRESENTING A PATTERN

To give the new believers and young ones a lot of teaching is not the proper way to take care of them. The proper way to foster them is to show them a pattern. By showing them a pattern you water them, supply them, nourish them, and cherish them. This is fostering. If you find that your experience is somewhat lacking, point the new believers to different people in the Bible, for example, to ones such as Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and David in the Old Testament and Peter, John, Paul, and Timothy in the New Testament. We can present the lives of Bible characters in such a way as to foster the growth of the young ones. In the book of 1 Thessalonians Paul was not preaching himself. Rather, he was feeding his spiritual children with his own living of Christ. This means that Paul's way of living was used to feed his spiritual children. This was the reason he emphasized his coming to the Thessalonians, his preaching, his way of handling the word of God, and his manner of living. (*Life-study of 1 & 2 Thessalonians*, p. 110)

THE LINE OF LIFE THROUGHOUT THE SCRIPTURES

The record of the two trees in Genesis 2, the tree of life and the tree of knowledge, is not merely ancient history, for these two trees are still with us today. If we read the Bible carefully we will discover that throughout the Bible we have two lines—the line of the tree of life and the line of the tree of knowledge. We may refer to them in brief as the line of life and the line of knowledge. These two lines began at the book of Genesis and continue through the subsequent books of the Bible until they reach their destination. As we pointed out in [a previous message], the destination of the line of life will be the New Jerusalem, where the tree of life appears once again. The river of the water of life is also found in the New Jerusalem, for it flows throughout the entire city. Thus, the New

Jerusalem, a city of living water, is the ultimate consummation of the line of the tree of life. The line of knowledge will conclude with the lake of fire, a vivid contrast to the city of New Jerusalem. The city is a city of living water; the lake is a lake of burning fire.

According to the revelation in the Bible, we see two streams proceeding out of the throne of God. One is the stream of living water, and the other is a stream of fire. The stream of living water is revealed in Ezekiel 47 and Revelation 22. In Ezekiel living water issues out of the house of God; in Revelation 22 living water flows out of the throne of God. In Daniel 7:9-10 we see another stream, a stream of fire, flowing out of the throne of God. The living water is for reviving and watering, but the stream of fire is for judging. It courses in judgment throughout the universe. The river of water proceeds out of the throne of God and will flow all positive things into the New Jerusalem. The stream of fire issues out of the throne of God and will sweep all negative things into the lake of fire. In the beginning of the Bible we have the start of two lines, the line of life and the line of knowledge. At the end of the Bible we have two results, two consummations—the city of living water and the lake of burning fire.

Where are you and where are you going? Which line are you on? The line of life is certainly the right line, but the line of knowledge is the wrong line. As redeemed people we are surely on the right line, the line of life. However, it is possible that our walk and our work—that is, the way we live and work for God—might be on the wrong line. Although as persons we may be on the line of life, our walk and work may be on the line of knowledge. The Bible firstly warns people to stay away from the line of knowledge and remain on or return to the line of life. Once we are saved, we are eternally saved, and our salvation is eternally secure. Nevertheless, the Bible warns us concerning our daily walk and our work for the Lord. In Galatians Paul warns us to walk in the Spirit (5:16) and to sow to the Spirit (6:7-8). Otherwise, everything we do will be consumed by fire. In 1 Corinthians 3 Paul

cautions us, the builders of the churches, to be careful to build with the proper materials. If we build the church with gold, silver, and precious stones, this work will continue unto the New Jerusalem, because the New Jerusalem is a city built with gold, pearl, and precious stones. On the other hand, Paul warns us that the wood, grass, and straw are only useful for burning (1 Cor. 3:12-15). Everything that is built with those materials will be swept by the stream of fire into the lake of fire. Thus, we must be careful about ourselves, our walk, and our work. We ourselves must stay on the right line, and our daily walk and work must also be on the right line. Then we and our work will enter the New Jerusalem. We need to be very clear about these two lines. (*Life-study of Genesis*, pp. 181-183)

Message Two
Daniel—
A Pattern of a Person Used by God to Turn the Age (1)

Scripture Reading: Dan. 1:3-8; 6:10; 9:23; 10:11, 19

I. The Lord used Daniel and his companions—Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah—to turn 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. 1:1-21; Isa. 8:8:

- A. 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; 9:23; 10:11, 19.
- B. Christ as the only Overcomer includes all the overcomers; the only 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.

II. Daniel had companions with whom he was absolutely consecrated to God and separated unto God from an age that followed Satan—Dan. 1:3-8; 5:22:

- 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 to enjoy God and bless others with God—Num. 6:1-8, 22-27; Psa. 110:3; Phil. 3:13-14.
- B. We need to flee youthful lusts and pursue Christ in the Body and for the Body with God-given companions, “with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart”—2 Tim. 2:22; 3:1-5; Eccl. 4:9-12:
 - 1. According to the divine principle, the proper representation of the Body is always by those who are matched with others; this matching is determined entirely by God’s arrangement, not by man’s maneuvering—Neh. 1:1; 8:2; 1 Cor. 1:1; Exo. 4:14b-16; Phil. 2:19-22; Luke 10:1; Acts 13:1-3; 1 Thes. 1:1.
 - 2. An overcomer lives in the Body and works according to the principle of the Body in the blending life of the entire Body of Christ; whoever cannot be blended with others will be disqualified by the age—Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12, 15, 20, 25.
- C. If we are going to live a holy life for the church life, we must be careful about our diet, which is a matter of life or death—Gen. 2:9, 17:
 - 1. To eat is to contact things outside of us and receive them into us, with the result that they become our inner constitution—John 6:57; Matt. 4:4.
 - 2. In Leviticus 11 our eating signifies our contacting of people; our contact with certain kinds of people can cause us to be reconstituted and thus make us another kind of person—Acts 10:9b-14, 27-29; Prov. 13:20; 1 Cor. 15:33; 2 Tim. 2:16-18:
 - a. Animals that divide the hoof and chew the cud signify persons who have discernment in their activities and who receive the word of God with much reconsideration—Lev. 11:3; Phil. 1:9-10; Psa. 119:15-16, 99.
 - b. Aquatic animals that have fins and scales signify persons who can move and act freely in the world and at the same time resist its influence—Lev. 11:9-12; 2 Tim. 3:15

- c. Birds that have wings for flying and that eat seeds of life as their food supply signify persons who can live and move in a life that is away from and above the world and who take things of life as their life supply—Lev. 11:13.
- d. Insects that have wings and have legs above their feet for leaping on the ground signify persons who can live and move in a life that is above the world and who can keep themselves above the world—vv. 21-22.
- e. Different kinds of death are signified by the carcasses of unclean beasts (wild death), cattle (mild death), and creeping things (subtle death); in order to maintain our status as Nazarites, we must keep ourselves from the defilement of death—5:2; Num. 6:6-8; cf. 2 Cor. 5:4.

MESSAGE TWO READING EXCERPTS

MEN WHO TURN THE AGE BEING THOSE WHO CONSECRATE THEMSELVES VOLUNTARILY

Let us now take a look at Daniel. How did God use Daniel to turn that age? There is an important principle with Daniel as also with Samuel. It is voluntary consecration. Samuel was a Nazarite. A Nazarite was a person who consecrated himself voluntarily (Num. 6). We can see the same principle in Daniel. Apparently Daniel was not a Nazarite. Actually he was, because a Nazarite was a person who did not drink any wine or strong drink. What is the meaning of not drinking wine or strong drink? It means not to enjoy any pleasures of this life. This is the principle with Daniel. Daniel would have said, "I do not want anything that the world considers sweet, joyous, or satisfying."

Why did Daniel drink neither wine nor strong drink, nor partake of the king's diet? It is because all these things were related to idols. What the king of Babylon drank, as well as his meat and grains, must have been offered to the idols. At least those meals were not clean according to the ordinances on cleanliness in Leviticus 11; it was defiled food. Daniel said, "I will not be defiled by that food. The young people of the world may participate in it. But I will not have a part in it."

Brothers and sisters, a little spiritual pursuit or a little godly living before the Lord is not enough to be used by the Lord to turn the age. All those who are used by the Lord to turn the age must be Nazarites; they must be voluntarily consecrated ones. I believe by now all of us know what voluntary consecration means. It means that when everyone else on earth seeks after the world and enjoys the world, I separate myself from it. This separation is a voluntary consecration. (*Men Who Turn the Age*, pp. 12-16)

THE FIRST CHARACTERISTIC— SEPARATION FROM AN AGE THAT FOLLOWS SATAN

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. We can find this condition in the book of Daniel.

[The picture in Daniel 1] clearly shows us that the whole world was under Babylon's ruling and was worshipping the god of Babylon. Consequently, God's authority was laid aside and God's glory was not expressed. On the contrary, Satan had dominion and was ruling. He was expressed and was worshipped by men....

At this time, although Daniel and his three friends were still very young, they stood up to be an anti-testimony. This anti-testimony is a separation. As soon as they stood up, there was clearly a separation from the world. It was as if others were waving a black flag and they were waving a white one. When we read Daniel 1, we must grasp the meaning of this picture. These men did not follow the tide of Babylon at all. They were the separated ones. They could not eat what others could eat. They could not drink what others could drink. They could not do what others could do. They were clearly different from others in everything. I do not know if the young people have ever realized by reading Daniel that even in his old age, Daniel was still a separated person. He did many things that no one who was in the world would do. Furthermore, he did not do the things that the world did. There was always a separation between him and the world.

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.

.. Everyone in the world is walking on the same road, and everyone is swept into the same current....

Hence, everyone in the world, Gentiles and God's people alike, has been swept into this current; they have all fallen under the same authority and are worshipping the demons. The Israelites in those days were only Israelites outwardly; in reality they were not much different from the Babylonians. They ate what the Babylonians ate. They drank what the Babylonians drank. They worshipped whatever idols the Babylonians worshipped. The situation is the same today. Many are Christians outwardly, but actually ... do what the Gentiles do. They worship whatever the Gentiles worship. They highly esteem what the Gentiles highly esteem. For this reason, the tide of the whole world has come under Satan's ruling. Today, Satan has taken everyone captive and has made it impossible for God to do anything on earth.

Unless Satan gains man first, he cannot damage God's will. Unless God gains man first, He cannot accomplish His plan. Man indeed occupies an important position between God and Satan. Since Satan today has carried away everyone on earth, the first characteristic of a person used by God to turn the age must be that of a strong standing and a clear separation from the world. Such a person must stand up and declare, "I cannot do what the world does. I cannot eat and drink what others eat and drink. I cannot walk the way they walk. I cannot have a part in the kind of life that they live. I am always somewhat different from them." The first characteristic of those who turn the age is an absoluteness in standing on God's side. Such a person sees through everything that belongs to the tide of this age. Not only will he not follow those things, but his heart grieves and burns because of them. With respect to many things, he stands in a position of separation and becomes an anti-testimony.

Young people are most susceptible to follow others in their manner of living. However, the first things Daniel overcame were in the matter

of living, things related to eating and drinking. Many times young people feel that since others can do something, they can do the same. They feel that since everyone else is doing it, it is all right for them to do it also. Please remember that if we do this, we will become completely useless in God's hand in the matter of turning the age. This is because we do not stand on God's side, but rather on Satan's side. If we do this, we can never be used by God to turn the age.

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*, pp. 18-21)

THE CATEGORIES OF LIVING CREATURES THAT ARE CLEAN WITH RESPECT TO DIET Aquatic Animals Having Fins and Scales

Aquatic animals having fins and scales (v. 9) signify persons who can move and act freely in the world and at the same time resist its influence. Fins help fish to move, to act, in water according to their wishes. Because they have fins, fish may even swim against the current. Scales protect the fish and keep those fish which live in salt water from being salted. Fish may live in salt water for years without being salted because they have scales to keep the salt away. Therefore, fins strengthen the fish to move, and scales protect them from being salted.

In the Bible, the sea signifies the fallen, corrupted world. The whole world today is a vast sea, and many of those living in this sea do

not have fins or scales. They cannot move freely in the world and at the same time resist its influence. As believers in Christ, we should have fins and scales and therefore be able to act freely in the sea of the world without being salted by it. On the one hand, we should have fins and scales. On the other hand, we should be careful in contacting those who do not have fins and scales. Be careful of friends, neighbors, and even relatives who do not have fins and scales. When some hear this, they may say, "What about preaching the gospel to people by visiting them in their homes? Should we knock on the doors of only those who have scales?" I would answer that such door knocking in itself is a big scale that shields us. Nevertheless, even in preaching the gospel we need to be careful in our contact with people. We do not want to be salted with worldly salt. (*Life-study of Leviticus*, pp. 313-317)