

THE OVERCOMERS' SECRET

Studies from the book of Daniel

Introduction

The book of Daniel has a message for all those who wish to become true overcomers. We see in it how the Lord chose and prepared a few young men and then used them to defeat the enemy of God's people. God's servants will surely have to go through great tribulation and persecution so they need preparation to make them ready to face all the attacks of the devil. The book of Daniel will be of great help to them.

Till recently Indians never dreamed that they would be attacked by the Chinese. They regarded the Chinese as their friends. Suddenly one fine morning they woke up and found that China had been making great preparations for a long time to attack India. True, they had been warned many times, but they had not taken things seriously. Not until the attack actually burst upon them, did they realize the immensity of their danger. Now you find that Indians are everywhere are eager to make some sacrifice that they may be able to give some contributions to the defense of India.

The devil will be more subtle than China. The targets of his main attacks God's people and God's servants. Therefore we as God's people, have to know our danger beforehand, and also be ready and prepared to face it. Let us remember this background as we begin studies in the book of Daniel.

Chapter one

Victory Through A Life Of Separation

God brought Daniel into high favor with the king and the king gave him unprecedented power in the Empire. In the same way God is raising up a company of people called overcomers. They have to bear great trials, and painful burdens, but God is planning to bring them finally into great favor in his kingdom and to give them much more than any man can expect or imagine. He wants us all to be overcomers. It is very clear that the promise in Rev.21: 7, to inherit all things are meant for those who overcome. Notice that their God wants to give them not merely all things of the old creation, but also of the new creation.

Many people think of salvation in getting a place in some corner of heaven. Evidently they do not know what salvation really is, and they have no idea what God had planned for those who will get to heaven. What a great, eternal, spiritual and glorious inheritance is being prepared in heaven for those who overcome. Besides this, even upon the earth, they will be the instruments God will use to defeat the devil and put him to shame. It is a great privilege and honor to be such instruments in the Lord's hand.

God has planned that we should be His partners and co-workers in fulfilling His eternal purposes. If He had merely to defeat the devil, He could have done that on the same day He created the world. Some people ask why God did not punish Satan in the very day of his rebellion. If He had done so, there would have been no sin in this world. The answer is, God's love towards man is so great that he has planned for eternity to make man His partner and co-worker. But this entire can be understood and enjoyed by us only when we become spiritually mature. Now suppose you tell your baby son that you want him to be the heir of all your property, would he be able to understand? No, he would not understand. A baby can receive and enjoy only a few things at a time and how can he comprehend if you say if you want to give him everything? He cannot grasp such a great thought. He does not know the value of even a naya paisa, how then can he understand the value of the whole inheritance? That child has to grow to maturity. In the same way unless you are spiritually mature you also will not be able to understand that God desires you to be his partner and co-worker in fulfilling his great, eternal purposes.

We see in the book of Daniel how God chose a few young men and through them put high authorities to shame, and at the same time upheld the law and justice, which he had ordained.

The people of Israel were continually rebelling against God's Word. They had been warned many times through the prophets of God; but they would not repent, finally God had to punish them by sending them away as captives into Babylon. The temple was destroyed and the walls of Jerusalem were broken down. In this way God showed that He would certainly punish sin. At the same time, His great purpose for His people remained unchanged. Although they were captives yet they remained God's people. God still loved them. Nevertheless God could use only those who responded to his love. We find that only a small number of people responded to God's word. The majority were carried away by worldly deceptions. Very few they were who had a longing to follow God's word and keep his commandments. They were the remnant.

Quietly, according to His own perfect plan, God began to move on their behalf. The king gave a commandment that all the intelligent and promising young men should be brought together (Daniel 1:3,4). He knew that among these captives there were men of far greater intelligence than any of his own people; it is a well-known fact that God has given the Jews extraordinary intelligence and ability. Even today you will find in many parts of Europe famous scientists who are of Jewish decent. Many of these Jewish Scientists were taken as captives to Germany and Russia and they are responsible for the scientific advancements of those countries. The Jews have always been an outstandingly clever race.

The king of Babylon wanted to train these Jewish young men to hold high positions in his kingdom and to use them to bring a greater prosperity to Babylon.

These very same young men were used to defeat the purposes of the people of Babylon and instead bring deliverance to the captive Jews. That is how God works. He defeats the devil by using his own devices. I will give you an illustration. The Pharisees and the Sadducees were always finding faults with the Lord Jesus and his words. The very same traps, which they laid for the Lord, became their pitfall. Once these men brought before the Lord a woman caught in the very act of sin (John 8:4). They told him that this woman had been caught in adultery, in the very act, and according to the Law, she should be stoned. The Lord replied, "He that is without any sin among

you let him first cast a stone at her". They were all convicted to accept their own sins. That is how the Lord confounded them again and again, and made them to fall into their own traps.

Zeal For Purity

'Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself' (verse 8). This is the secret of leading a victorious life. We should refuse to allow any defilement in our life. Defilement will break our communion with God. We cannot overcome defilement by our own efforts. It can be done only by simple faith in the efficacy of the blood of Christ. Even though the enemy may to defile us a thousand times a day, we can be constantly cleansed by the blood and saved from defilement. By faith we must say: 'I refuse to be defiled. I want to be cleansed. O Lord, I want your blood to cover me and cleanse me'. In this way we shall be able to conquer any temptation.

Daniel could not foresee all that was to happen in his own life, but he knew that God was preparing him for a great purpose. Remember that you too are being prepared by God for a great purpose and determine in you heart not to be defiled.

When Daniel took a strong stand, his three friends also took courage and followed him. If you become an over comer, three more may become overcomers through you. No doubt the other three young men saw the courage of Daniel, and how the chamberlain spoke to him. In the same way, as people see our determination and notice the way God is blessing us, they also will take courage and stand for the Lord.

We see also that Daniel was prepared to eat only pulse (v.12). He and his three friends did not demand anything else; no extra drinks, milk or other nourishing food. They were satisfied with pulse and water. And they knew, by faith that they would be healthier, brighter and stronger than the other young men.

We also should believe that whatever food God gives us has already been blessed by Him. Very often people pray God to bless their food, and even then they do not believe it has been blessed. They will thank God very fervently when they have chicken curry before them, but not when they have only pulse. We should learn to thank God even for ordinary food. An once we have asked God to bless the food we should believe it has been blessed and that they would receive

from God more strength, intelligence and wisdom than all the other young men. Because we are lacking in faith we do not receive.

In the end days it will happen that only those who have the mark of the beast or the number of his name on their foreheads or upon their right hands will be allowed to buy or sell. In those days God will feed his people in a jungle, even as he fed Elijah (Rev 12:6). Elijah was kept strong because he ate food given by God. So whatever food God gives his people in the end days, whether it be roots or leaves from the trees, will be quiet sufficient to give them health and strength. They will refuse to bow down before the devil, to tell lies, and to give wrong statements, in spite of all constraint brought upon them. If you also want to be an over comer, then you must refuse to receive any benefit from the devil. All you benefits must come only from heaven (Daniel 1:13, 14, 15).

These young men asked the officer to test them for ten days. In the Bible the number ten represents testing. Just as children have to go through many tests and examinations in school, so also God takes us through many tests, and He wants us to pass in them all. After ten days the faces of Daniel and his friends were found to be fairer and fatter and shining with God's glory. If you claim, faith, God's blessing on all that you eat or drink, you will have more joy, energy and strength than other people. So if you are not able to buy milk or mutton for all in your family, do not go about with a sorrowful face. Believe that God is able to give you much more blessing through ordinary food, and your face will begin to shine!

Divine Wisdom

The King of Babylon planned that these young Jews should become clever engineers, scientists and doctors who could bring greater prosperity to his kingdom, but God's purpose was something different. He gave them divine wisdom, which helped them to understand heavenly things. Nowadays, parents are proud if their children become doctors, scientists and engineers. Such appointments are held in high esteem, but God's service is considered as of not much value. Some years ago a man came to me and said, 'Can you take my boy into your party?' 'Why do you want him to go with me?' I asked. He replied, 'I have been trying for many years to give him some education, but he has failed in his class again and again. I have tried to train him as a carpenter, but he is not good for that either. He is very dull and stupid. Let him be used at least in God's service.'

There are many people who think that way. If a son is stupid and foolish, they will gladly send him for the Lord's service. But if he is clever and he wants to serve the Lord, they will not allow him. If he insists, then they will start weeping and wailing as if there was a funeral in their house. They cry so piteously, 'what shall we do now? My son wants to serve God.' They continue to weep like this for weeks together. They have such poor conception of God's service. Let all such consider that these four young men Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, were young men of no mean talent. They had far more wisdom than all the doctors and engineers in the kingdom of Babylon.

Worldly wise men will never understand the great honor, which rests upon the service of God. God's servants are his Partners and co-workers in a very precious way. 'Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealed his secrets unto his servants the prophets (Amos 3:7). David says, 'I understand more than all the ancients' (Psalm 119:99, 100).

When we receive divine wisdom, our knowledge will be far superior to that of the teachers, doctors, and engineers of this world; but this wisdom can only be given to us by God as a gift. You cannot get it by undergoing training in some university. God called and prepared these four young men so that through them He might put to shame all the princes of Babylon and the devil as well.

Many people do not realize the value of heavenly wisdom, but they attach great value to earthly wisdom. Parents borrow money in order to educate their children, and are willing even to tell lies to get free concessions. They will commit any sin or go through any shame to achieve their purpose, but they will not give five minutes a day to teach God's word to their children.

Only God can give us wisdom. These young men did not even pray for it. They only determined that they would not defile themselves, and were quite satisfied with simple food consisting of pulse and water. So God gave them wisdom (Dan. 1:17). True wisdom cannot be obtained in any school or college, it is good for us to note that these young men were just praising and thanking God for pulse and water, and God gave to them wonderful wisdom.

These four young men, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego all came from the tribe of Judah. 'Judah' means 'praise'. Consistent with that name these four young men kept praising and thanking God for the simple food given to them, while all the other young men were

enjoying the rich food sent from the king's table. Like these four young men, we also should learn to be content and thankful. We should thank God even for our trials and troubles. If we do this God will give us divine wisdom.

God made me learn this lesson, quite unconsciously, in the early days of my Christian life. Before my conversion, I had not known what it was to be without money. I had two bank accounts. But soon after my conversion my father got involved in a court case and for some time was unable to send me any money. Soon I became penniless. For several days I had to do without single meal. But my Savior, in whom I had out my trust, taught me to thank God for everything. One day I had just enough money to buy a tin of cocoa. This cocoa-drink became my meal three times a day. It was very tasty and I enjoyed it so much that I cannot forget its taste even now. During all the thirty years of my Christian life, I have never murmured in the matter of food. Whatever God gave me; I have always thankfully received and eaten.

Preparation For Future Ministry

Many people must have been wondering how these four young men would fare in the end. After the appointed time was over they were found so well trained that they were able to answer every question. God gave them skill and wisdom. Daniel received understanding concerning dreams and visions as well. That is how God will bless you also. He will give you gifts according to your calling and the ministry you have to fulfill. We ourselves have no right to ask God to make us like so-and-so. In my case, I never wanted to become a preacher, not even in my dreams. God pushed me into the ministry. People asked me to preach. I used to reply that I was not a speaker. But they could not believe me, and would press me to say something. When the time came for me to speak, I would sometimes get so excited and nervous that I would hold my Bible upside down. Whatever God has appointed for you, He will also fulfill, so do not dictate to Him.

God knew the future ministry that Daniel would have to fulfill; so He gave him the necessary wisdom. All of us are now being trained by God according to our future ministry. If we obey Him we shall afterwards know what our calling will be in the difficult days of the end time. It is important for us to understand and believe that God is preparing us for the coming days.

With real longing in your heart, ask God to make you an overcomer like Daniel. Refuse to be defiled by any temptation, which the devil may bring upon you. In every circumstance in which the Lord places you believe that the situation is allowed by God to prepare you for your future ministry. This will help you to be ready and watchful, and will prepare you for the future ministry. Every step brought Daniel nearer to the fulfillment of his heart's desire.

In the Holy Scripture we clearly see two things. Firstly there is the sensitive understanding heart of the Savior Jesus Christ. He understands the heart of a young man or woman, and He cares for them. He knows the way whereby the hungry heart can be rightly and fully satisfied.

He Himself is "the Way, the Truth and the Life." In God's word it is written of Him, "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." Then secondly, we see him with one arm placed lovingly around the shoulders of the young person to guide him in the right way. IN the next part of the story we will see that the other arm of the Lord Jesus Christ rests firmly upon the shoulder of the Father, the Eternal God.

We are studying the Book of Daniel in order to learn how we may become true overcomers. We see here how, through a small company God gave victory. Even though we are few, God can do great and mighty things through us. He wants us to be among those chosen few, and He is preparing us, perhaps unknown to ourselves, for a great task and calling. This work of preparing has several stages, designed to prepare us for all the responsibilities we will have to bear in the future.

In Daniel, chapter 1, we see how four young men were being prepared, unknown to themselves. First, one young man, Daniel, took a bold step and purposed in his heart not to defile himself with the King's meat; not that Daniel had a prejudice against eating such food, but he knew that the meat prepared in the king's palace was first offered of idols. As for the wine, Daniel knew that it would dull the senses. Seeing Daniel, his three friends took courage and joined him. After ten days of trial they were found to be fairer and fatter in the face than all the other young men.

In chapter 2 we see how God proved to the magicians, astrologers and sorcerers of Babylon, that divine wisdom is superior to earthly wisdom. At first these men thought so highly of their earthly

wisdom, their science and philosophy, that they despised divine wisdom. But when the test came, not a single wise man, magician, astrologer or soothsayer could solve the problem before their king. This king was great, mighty and wealthy. He had a dream, which troubles him and filled him with fear. Although he forgot what he had actually dreamed the effect of that dream remained and made him tremble. All his wealth and comforts could not take away his fear.

All worldly people are tested by God in the same way. Men may win many battles and establish kingdoms. Yet one day, when death or some other terrible situation faces them, they are filled with fear and are tormented day and night.

King Nebuchadnezzar was tormented with fear. That is why he sought the help of all his wise men, astrologers, magicians and soothsayers. HE was willing to give any reward to anyone who could tell him the dream and its interpretation. This request was not from curiosity but fear. People often get dreams and forget all about them, and do not worry. But this dream was such an extraordinary one that the king could no longer be happy or take his usual food.

Men of all classes have one fear or another; fear of men, fear of circumstances, fear of sickness or fear of death; often fear is brought into the hearts of men by things beyond their understanding. We read in Luke 21:26 that in the end days the powers of the heavens will be shaken, the stars will fall down, and many other signs will take place, which will create much fear in the hearts of men. It is only when you have true salvation that you will be free from fear; there is no other way.

For years king Nebuchadnezzar had kept many wise men in his court, supporting them from the king's treasury. Now, in the time of the king's need, they were unable to answer his question. They told him it was impossible for anyone to tell him both the dream and the interpretation. Certainly it was impossible for them to tell the king a dream, which he had forgotten, only God could do that. Thus far they were correct, but when they exclaimed, 'How can God live among human beings?' it showed how totally blind these men were to the great truth that the mighty and holy God can and does live among His people.

By the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth as the Son of man, this truth has become very simple and easy to understand. We read in John's Gospel, "In the beginning was the Word....and the Word

was God...and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" John 1:1, 14. This we know that God has come to live among us. But this can be understood only by those who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. They can understand things that cannot be learned in any university, or from any teacher, scholar, or philosopher. There will be no need to have the answer prepared and learned beforehand. See Matthew 10:19 and 20. This is God's promise. When the time comes, He will give you the right word and answer. God will dwell in you and speak through you. You may have read the Bible many times, and yet not have understood certain passages. One day when you are faced with a need, suddenly the light of God will shine into your heart and you will understand a hidden thought and use it to answer the question before you. Many things the Lord reveals to us even before the need arises to use them, but certain things are revealed to us only when the time comes, so we need have no doubt or fear, because God will give the answer just at the time we need it. When we have faith that God will give us the answer to every question and help us to meet every situation victoriously, we also become overcomers.

The king gave the decree that if the wise men of Babylon did not tell the dream and its meaning, they could be killed (vs. 12,13). All these years the wise men had been paid from the king's treasury. Now that they could not help their lord in his need, the king felt that he had kept them in vain, so he gave the commandment that they all should be slain.

When this decree went forth it brought sorrow everywhere. In the families of every one of these wise men there was mourning and weeping, because they knew the king's command irrevocable, certainly death was before them.

Fearlessness

However, there were four men in his kingdom who did not fear. As yet, they did not know the king's dream or its meaning, but they had the faith that at the right time the Lord would surely help them. Consider the situation. The king's decree had been published by a general proclamation. The executioners are looking for Daniel and his friends to be brought forth and slain, and yet these four young men showed no sign of fear. That is one mark of the overcomers; they will have no fear.

No matter what may happen, we should always remember that the Lord is faithful. He will protect and take care of His own. He knows how to deliver the godly (2 Peter 2:9). Humanly speaking, they might have doubted how God could show them the forgotten dream and meaning, but they did not doubt, neither did they fear. With faith in their hearts they began to pray (vs. 16-18).

Togetherness

Daniel was the instrument chosen by God through whom the dream should be revealed, but all the four young men had to pray. They all had a share in it. Daniel had a special gift to understand visions and dreams (ch. 1:17) . But when all four prayed with one mind, God gave the revelation to Daniel.. To be an over comer you have to learn to be together with your fellow believers, and not to live aloof and stand-alone.

This is a matter in which many are deceived. They become independent in their life, habits and ministry. They think that they are more spiritual than others because they live alone and work alone. On the other hand, God's plan is that we should live together and bear one another's burdens. We read in Galatians 6:2, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ ". " For every man shall bear his own burden" (Gal 6:5). If God has given you a wife and children it is your responsibility to look after them and even though you are poor and have many children, you have to bear yourself. Friends may help you, but you cannot demand their help. You have to bear your own burden.

But in spiritual matters our burdens must be borne together. We should share our burdens and lay hold upon the Lord together. Many workers have lost their ministry and blessing by becoming independent - minded.

That is why we see Daniel seeking the help of his friends. He knew that God had given him the gift of understanding visions and dreams and their interpretations (ch 1:17). Presumably, he would have had occasions before this to interpret dreams and tell their meaning. Perhaps many may have approached Daniel to find from him the meaning of their dreams. In spite of all that, in this case Daniel felt he should seek the prayer fellowship of his three friends. They all prayed together and were partners in this ministry. Their gifts were different, but they remained equal partners in the work of God.

If you desire to be an over comer, do not hesitate to seek the prayer fellowship of fellow believers. Tell them your difficulties and ask them to pray for you and pray with you. Then you will discover how very helpful it is. For this reason we have to come together frequently to pray as a church.

Faith

We have already noted the strong faith these young men had. The whole kingdom was mourning and weeping, but they had the faith in the living God that he would not allow them to perish. We also should have such faith that even though many calamities may take place in our lives, the Lord knows how to watch over us and take care of us.

Thanksgiving

God honored the faith of the young men and the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision (vs. 19). Now Daniel was ready to go before the king and tell him the dream and its interpretation, but he was in no excited hurry to do so. He was full of praise and thanksgiving to God, as we can see from his prayer in verses 20 to 23.

We often err in this matter. We fail to thank God sufficiently when He reveals anything to us. We think that perhaps because of our cleverness we have found out these things. For example, suppose during your time of devotion God shows you some new thoughts from the Bible which brings edification and instruction, you should not boast that now you know more than so-and-so, and have better understanding of these passages. Rather, should you not thank God for the favor He has shown to you? If you take pride in your knowledge, and present some truth just to show others how much you know, you will incur spiritual loss.

Notice how Daniel, in his prayer, utters these words, " What we desired of thee" (vs.23). Thus he recognizes that because of their joint prayer, God had revealed to him the dream and its meaning. He repudiates the thought that it was through his wisdom, cleverness or worthiness, that God had given the revelation to him. He refuses to take any honor to himself.

Again before the king, Daniel refused to take any honor to himself. He said: " This secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living " (vs. 30). The king has asked, " Art thou able to make known unto me the dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof?" Daniel replied, " There is a God in heaven that revealed secrets" (vs. 26,28). If you want to be an over comer you should never rob God of His glory.

We must do our best to see that all men honor, not us, but God. If God has revealed anything to us, it is all because of His grace. The apostle Paul said, "By the grace of God I am what I am" (1Cor 15:10). He received much revelation from God, but he never took any honor to himself. Again and again he testified that it was only by His grace he was able to do all things. When you find any preacher or teacher or so called servant of God magnifying himself or some other person, you can be sure that there is something wrong in him, and you should take warning. If you want to be an over comer you should always hide yourself and say: ' It is not I, but God.'

Chapter Two

Victory Through Preparation For The Eternal Kingdom

We find the main purpose of Nebuchadnezzar's dream give in verse 44. This is in fact the key-verse to the whole book of Daniel. There is a kingdom, which cannot be shaken or moved. God is calling people and preparing them for this kingdom. He is teaching them how to become members of such a Kingdom.

A Kingdom Which Cannot Be Shaken

No doubt great kingdoms with great kings will appear in the world, but every one of them will be broken down and brought to an end. Indeed, nothing of man can by any means last forever. Man-made buildings, however strong and mighty they may be, will surely fall down one day.

God wants people who will seek those things, which can never be shaken or moved. If we want to be in that kingdom we must so live that whatsoever we do or say will bring everlasting fruit, and by living and serving in this way we will be acceptable in that kingdom. This is God's test to us, if we wish to be overcomers. Some may imagine that God's power is manifested through us when we are used to perform miracles, signs and wonders, but God says that it is those things, which last forever, that we should do because they are the things that please Him. We should seek to remember this continually.

The End Of Man-Made Things

In this dream the king saw a huge image. The head of gold, the arms of silver, the belly of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet part of clay and part of iron. It was comparatively only a small stone, which came and fell upon the feet of the strong image. Gold, silver, iron and brass are all very strong metals, but the stone broke the image in pieces. And the gold, silver brass and iron of the broken image became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that no place was found for them. The small stone, which smote the image, now became a great mountain and filled the whole earth (verse 35).

In this simple way God was saying that all man-made things would suddenly come to an end. Even though a man may become

great like a flourishing green tree, yet he will be cut off suddenly (Psalms 37:35). The things of man will perish even though for some time they may appear like gold, silver, brass and iron.

Whatsoever is of God will alone not be shaken or moved. The work of God may begin in a simple way, but it will abide forever. God can use a few verses or even half a verse, to humble a man and break down his pride and vanity. That small verse begins by breaking down every idol in his hear, and then that verse multiplying becomes a mountain, and foes on multiplying until that man is filled with love for the Lord Jesus Christ. That is how the Lord is establishing His kingdom. He does not use carnal weapons to do it.

God is not using angels to preach the Gospel. If He had wished He could have done so. Angels were sent at the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, and again at the time of His resurrection. In the same way of God could have used angels to preach the Gospel to the whole earth, but such been not His will. He is using humble men and women, like vessels weak and small, to preach the Gospel. In this way He breaks the strong holds of Satan and establishes His kingdom.

The Lord Jesus himself came to earth like a small stone; He did not come with pomp of an earthly king. He came as a man, yet without sin. Several of those who became His chief disciples were fisherman. Even today His disciples are few in number, but He is establishing His kingdom through them.

Worldly people in spite of all their knowledge and wealth are full of fears. On the other hand those who have received God's word, even though they may be very simple people, will have no fear, but their hearts will be filled with perfect peace and joy. By faith they can see God's kingdom established. Their eyes are upon that kingdom, and that is the secret of their peace and joy.

All things, which we can see, now will one day pass away. As we read in Matthew 24:35 and Luke 21:33, our Lord Jesus said, 'Heaven and Earth will pass away.' It is only God's word that will stand forever (Isaiah 40:8). But we find that in the hearts of men there is much longing for gold, silver, brass and iron; there is no desire for word of God. God was showing king Nebuchadnezzar that although he was glorying so much in his kingdom one day all its glory and power would pass away.

King Nebuchadnezzar had received a wonderful vision. Through Daniel it had revealed again in a wonderful way, even after he had forgotten it. Furthermore he had received a clear lesson of warning through the interpretation of the vision. But king Nebuchadnezzar took no notice at all. Only after he had been driven out from men and put among the beasts to eat grass like oxen for seven years did he repent.

Gold speaks of worldly glory; silver speaks of earthly wealth; brass speaks of worldly wisdom and iron of human power. We can find these four things in every human heart. Love for earthly glory, wealth, wisdom and power. But none of these things can last forever. One day they will all be completely destroyed.

If you want to be an over comer in God's kingdom, all love for earthly glory, wealth, wisdom and power, must be completely cleansed from your life. Then all will see Christ, the stone cut without hands, spreading and increasing in you. You will be willing for Christ's life to fill you, and your eyes will be constantly upon the things of eternity. You will want your labors to bring everlasting results. May the living God make us overcomers.

Chapter Three

Victory Through Faith Daniel Chapter Three

We have seen in chapter 2, how king Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged that Daniel's God is a God of gods and Lord of kings (vs.47). He came to this conviction because Daniel was able to tell him his dream and its interpretation, when the wise men, astrologers, soothsayers and magicians of the kingdom had failed to do so. Now as we come to chapter 3, we see that about twenty - three years later, this same king had made a huge golden image and had commanded all the people in his kingdom to fall down and worship it. A few years before the king has seen in his dream an image with only his head made of gold. Now he has made a huge image ninety feet high and ten feet wide, entirely of gold.

In the dream the head of the image had been of gold and God had shown him that this represented himself. He was told in plain language that this kingdom and the coming kingdoms, would be smashed and destroyed by the true Kingdom of God. He had seen the stone cut without hands smiting the feet of the image so that the gold, silver, brass, iron and clay were all broken into pieces and made like chaff that the wind carries away. He had also seen that the stone became a great mountain that filled the whole earth, and God had taught him thus that man-made kingdoms, however strong they may be, would be destroyed one day. In spite of this, about twenty-three years later, we find him making a golden image of himself. So proud was Nebuchadnezzar that he wanted the people to worship him because of his kingdom, power and wealth. This shows clearly that unless God's word enters the hearts of men and unless they are truly born again, they will remain blind spiritually. Even though they see miracles and wonders, their hearts will not change; they may call upon God and talk about him like Nebuchadnezzar, but there will be no inward change.

After saying very plainly that Daniel's God was the true God, Nebuchadnezzar was now asking his people to worship idols. He did not wish to accept the living God as his God. We see later in chapter 4, that it was only when he was driven away from his kingdom to live in the forest that he repented. God had shown to him wonderful things, but the king had not turned to God with his whole heart. So God had to deal with him severely. God speaks to some people first in a loving

and kind way; it may be through some message given in a gospel meeting, or when they read the word of God, but they will not take heed. It is only when they are in sickness or trouble, or perhaps upon their deathbed, that such men will repent.

So the king in his blindness made a tall and great image representing himself and asked the people to worship it. Three young men refused to do so. They were determined not to bow down to an image at any cost. God has always prepared some men throughout the ages to be overcomers and to be His co-workers. Such men are always few but when they have been fully prepared, God uses them to defeat the enemy and confound all his devices. At that time four young men were being prepared by God to confound the earthly kingdoms of their day. The wise men, magicians, soothsayers and astrologers were all put to shame because of the faithfulness of these four men. Like these young men we also may have to go through many refining fires but all these sufferings will help us to become overcomers. Eventually we will become more than conquerors in everything. Through God we will destroy the works of Satan and put him to shame provided we are willing to pass patiently through the time of our preparation.

Now notice the arrogant words of king Nebuchadnezzar: "Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" When he had been in trouble and all his magicians and wise men, whom he had been feeding for so many years, had not been able to answer his questions, he had been taught by experience that there was a living God who alone had the power to help him. Yet now he was saying, "Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" How foolish and blind he was! Those who do not know the Lord Jesus Christ do not realize how foolish they are. In spite of all wealth and knowledge they are utterly foolish. Yet they have no excuse for no doubt God has spoken to them through His servants, as He did to Nebuchadnezzar.

The three young men were quietly calm, though they had been threatened that they would be cast into the fiery furnace. See what a wise answer they gave. They said "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful (or, we have no need) to answer thee in this matter". It means that as the king was speaking foolishly he did not deserve an answer. It is a waste of time to argue with people who talk foolishly. The king's threats could not shake the young men's faith. They knew that their God was living God and He had all power, far greater than all the power of the Devil, or of the king before them, and they wanted to serve Him without any question.

Some people always go to God with some conditions. They will pray: "Lord I will give you Rs. 35/- and I will go to worship on Sundays if you answer my prayer, if not I will do none of these things". If their requests are not granted they will be absent for two months from God's house. They will get offended and say, "It is a waste of time to pray to God. I prayed and He did not answer me." I know many people of this type who get angry with God over little things, as a man might get angry with his friends. Then for many weeks they will not take any share in serving the Lord. They will not preach the Gospel nor open their mouths in prayer meetings. Without any doubt or question in their hearts, these three young men said! "O King, though we are to be cast into the fiery furnace

We refuse to bow down to your image. Even if God allows us to be burnt in the fire, we will never question Him.

If you want to be an over comer you should never doubt God. Even if he takes you through fiery trials you have no right to question Him. Believe that His way is perfect and is the best for you, and that whatever He is doing in your life, it is all for your good. That is true faith.

We have seen that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were brought before King Nebuchadnezzar, and that he asked them to bow down before the great image he had made. Their answer was bold and clear, "O King we will not serve thy Gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set-up" (v.18).

In these days also, the same King of temptation comes to many of us. I know that there are many Christian teachers, working in Roman Catholic or Hindu schools, who some times bow down to idols. However, they keep it secret. When they see their colleagues going forward and worshiping idols, they say to themselves, "I must be in the good books of my superiors in the school. If I alone keep back they will think badly of me. And even if I bow down here, no one in one in my home, or in the assembly will know about it". They are afraid that if they will keep aloof they may be threatened, or may lose their promotion or the job itself. A true Christian must overcome all these temptations. He should adopt worldly and sinful methods to get promotion or gain.

We are inspired by the noble example of these three young men. Even though they were threatened with death they refused to bow down before the idols. They said, "Our God whom we serve is able to

deliver us from the burning fiery furnace" (v.17). We also must believe that the Lord will never forsake us, for He says: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth...Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:18,20). The Lord will use that power to take care of us, so we should never fear to take a bold stand.

There are some Christians who love to please their friends, so they accept invitations to Hindu parties. They know that the food served there has been offered to idols, yet they partake of it without any feeling of guilt. They also gladly accept coconuts and betel leaves and nuts, which have been likewise first offered to idols. But if you want to be an over comer, you must refuse, at any cost, to defile yourself in such ways.

The answer given by the three young men made King Nebuchadnezzar very angry and he commanded that the furnace should be heated seven times more. He did not realize that the same furnace would kill the men who would draw near to throw these young men into it. He only thought that by heating the fire so much, he could give more punishment to the offending young men. To make sure that they were burnt completely he caused them to be bound in their coats, their hosen, their hats and other garments (v.21). Then they were cast into the midst of the burning, fiery furnace. But the fire burned only their bands and loosened them. The part of the body, which would first catch fire, is the hair; but not a single hair of their heads was singed. They walked in the fire as if they were walking in a garden. When we learn to be overcomers, God will protect us from even the slightest harm. The King was filled with wonder. His wonder was greater because he saw not three men but four walking in the fire.

The Lord knows how to protect His own. He will see to it that no harm comes to us when we stand for the word of God and the testimony of our Lord. There is really no need for us to try to save our lives by defiling ourselves.

If we want to be overcomers, we will certainly be persecuted by the enemy more than other will be. We will be brought before kings, princes and rulers, for His name's sake; but this only give us a fresh opportunity to testify regarding the Lord's power to help and protect us. Just as these young man received wisdom from God to speak to King Nebuchadnezzar, we also will receive a mouth and wisdom which none will be able to gainsay or resist (Luke 21:15).

Then the King promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon (v.30). All the persecution, which came against these faithful young men, only proved to be the means of their promotion, and also of confounding the king and the princes of Babylon.

These young men knew their God, and that is why they came out triumphant. May the Lord make us also true overcomers like them.

Chapter Four

Victory Through True Humility And Worship

Now we come to chapter 4 of the Book of Daniel, and we shall study it with the one object of understanding the secret of an overcoming life. It seems to be God's plan to call a few, prepare them and make them overcomers, and then use them to frustrate and defeat all the enemy's devices.

God is not depending upon the multitudes to fulfill His great purposes. It is true that eternal life is a free gift offered by God to all men, of whatever class they might be. If they are willing to repent of their sins and accept the Lord Jesus Christ as they're as their own Savior, they will be forgiven and justified in His sight. But if you want to be an overcomer, you must be willing to be brought fully into His possession, and kept under His Lordship and Kingship in every small detail of your life and ministry.

Actually, in our hearts we rebel again and again against God and we do not allow Him to take full possession of our lives. As a result we often commit mistakes and suffer much loss. Yet we remain stubborn and rebellious and continue to resist the work of the Holy Spirit.

All this is illustrated by the life of King Nebuchadnezzar. It took him many years to understand the power and greatness of God. We read in verse 37 of this chapter, how he praises, extols and honors of heaven, but it took seven years of chastisement to learn this lesson.

Nebuchadnezzar knew that he was chosen by God to be an instrument of judgment upon the Jewish nation, and that this was the reason why he had been able to conquer Palestine and take all the Jews as captives to Babylon. He also knew that by himself he would not have been able to do it, yet, rather than give thanks to God for the honor He had given him, he became haughty and boastful. It may be the same with us. Perhaps God is using us in His service for the preaching of the Gospel and for the winning of souls. We know that we cannot do anything of ourselves, yet, rather than give glory to God; we become proud and begin to glory in ourselves.

Thus King Nebuchadnezzar said proudly: "I have accomplished all these things by my might" (v.30). How great was his blindness.

Even though God had spoken to him through signs and wonders, he remained totally blind.

On the first occasion Daniel had told the interpretation of the king's forgotten dream, the latter had declared: "your God is a God of god's (chap.2: 47). Yet after a few years we find him making a huge image of gold and commanding the people to worship it. At the root of all this is the desire for self-glorification. This is the cause of all the downfall of many men, including believers and God's servants.

This self-glorification sometimes comes unknowingly and we begin to glory in the things we have done, and wish that people would praise us and honor us. We find even Christian Evangelists and magnified and glorified through photographs and exaggerated descriptions of their words and deeds. Many schemes are adopted to increase their reputation. Rather than glorify God they glorify man. Preachers themselves take pleasure in describing what they have done here and there and love to see their names mentioned in magazines and newspapers. This desire of men to seek their own glory seems to be a great danger, which comes from the world into the Church.

On the second occasion, when the three young men emerged unharmed from the fiery furnace, the King had said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who hath sent His angel, and delivered His servants that trusted Him... because there is no other God who can deliver after this sort" (Dan. 3:28,29). Only for the time being he glorified God, but soon after, began to glorify himself again. He was still blind.

Now in chapter4, for the third time God was speaking to King Nebuchadnezzar and warning him through a dream. He saw in his dream a huge tree reaching almost to the sky. Its branches were spread out, its foliage was beautiful and its fruit was abundant. All kinds beasts and birds were resting under it and on it. All this meant that he was a prosperous King. It is very hard to understand God's patience with men. They fail Him and grieve Him so often, yet He is long-suffering towards them. Although the King would not acknowledge the living God as his God, yet God allowed him to be prosperous.

In many cases, the same prosperity becomes the cause of pride. More prosperity brings more pride. Men become slaves to prosperity, and with a desire to continue in it, they are ready to please and honor men rather than God. This increases their blindness. Even believers fall

into this snare of pleasing men, and then they are not willing to obey the full counsel of God. We read of such people in John 12.42,43; " Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees, they did not confess Him. Lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Now in his dreams Nebuchadnezzar heard these words: " hew down the tree, and cut off its branches" (v. 14). When a tree is cut down, the leaves will fade away and its branches will become dry. God was saying to him," O king, your kingdom which you see now so glorious will one day fade away like this tree".

One would think that hearing all this Nebuchadnezzar would have repented, but he did not. We read: " at the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The King spoke, and said: " is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power and for the honor of my majesty?" (Vs.29, 30). Rather than glory in God, he glorified in himself. The warning given to him was in vain, he had become utterly blind.

When we fail to honor God, we also become spiritually blind. Times of worship are helpful in preventing this condition. When we cut short this time of worship and fail to thank Him sufficiently for all that He has done for us, we will not be able to enjoy His fellowship fully any more. We may read the bible and attend meetings, but we will not be able to enjoy God's presence. Some people, who realize the spiritual dryness in their lives, blame the preachers. Sometimes they are indeed to blame, but do not blame them alone. It may be you have failed in sufficiently giving thanks and worship to God, and that is why you are unable to enjoy His presence.

May the Lord help us to honor God, and glory in Him alone.

Daniel told King Nebuchadnezzar in plain language that if he did not repent he would be cut off like the tree, which he had seen in his dream. Even though he was such a mighty King he would be driven from men, his dwelling would be with beasts of the field, and he would have to eat grass like the oxen (Vs. 24 25). Daniel advised the King to break off his sin and iniquities, and then there might be some hope for him.

In spite of all this Nebuchadnezzar did not repent. After twelve months had passed, it happened to him exactly as Daniel had said. What a severe chastisement it was! This is the third time it is recorded that God spoke to him. God must have spoken to him in many other ways too. Somehow he would not accept God's message. When he heard it he said: "This is God's message. There is nothing like it". But soon after, in his heart he again became foolish, stubborn and blind. This third time God waited for twelve months after warning him. Since he would not heed the warning, God had to drive him out like a beast into the jungle and he wandered there like a mad man. His nails began to grow and he ate grass like an ox. Thus God's word was literally fulfilled and this mighty king wandered in the jungle for seven years until he himself realized that he had become like a beast.

He had said proudly, "see my kingdom, my buildings and my works", but he had not realized that before God he was like an animal, and had no wisdom. Animals might be very strong, but they have no wisdom. Sinful men are just like that before God, because they cannot understand eternal values. Strength or education is nothing before God and men are only like beasts before him.

By the King eating grass his true nature was being expressed and exposed. It showed that he had no taste for heavenly food, and was longing for things of fading glory like grass. As long as you have the old sinful nature, you too are like a beast.

Even after we have been born again the Devil will try to carry us away from the position in which God has placed us. The Lord wanted this King to be His partner in punishing the children of Israel, but the King misused his privilege and dealt with the Israelites cruelty.

The Lord wants all who are born again to be coworkers and partners with Him. If we are overcomers this will be fulfilled in us and we will become God's instruments to execute His judgments. We will be given authority to judge even angels (I Cor. 6:3). When God begins to judge kings and other powers, He will make us partners in that judgment also.

Sometime when a judge has to try a difficult case he will appoint a jury. This jury will consist of men of position and experience. They will sit near the judge in the court, and before the judge brings his verdict, He will invite their opinion. Now God knows full well how to punish the angels and other powers. God knows all that they have done and all that they deserve. On the other hand we know practically

nothing. We ourselves have disobeyed and displeased God many times. Yet God wants us to be His Co-workers in judging these angels and other powers. Eventually, we are going to reign with Him. We read in rev 20:4, " I saw thrones and they sat upon them". There was not one throne only, but many. These are reserved for the overcomers will first become partners with God in his judgment, and then they will reign with Him.

A great privilege was given to King Nebuchadnezzar, but he misused it and incurred the displeasure of God. The devil also tried to carry us away from the position of privilege and responsibility in which God has placed us.

After Nebuchadnezzar had learnt that lesson, and had his kingdom returned to him, he said, " I was established in my kingdom and an excellent majesty was added unto me". Before this he had taken pride in earthly glories, which will pass away, not considering that they can abide only for a short time, but after he had received it back from the Lord, he began to honor and glorify Him.

We think, naturally, that by exalting ourselves we will get more glory. But the simple divine law is this, " Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matt.23: 12). Although we know this and have read it in the bible many times, yet we love to exalt ourselves.

Whenever we go, when we are not given honor and praise we fell hurt. When people praise us and say nice things about us, we fell happy over it for many days, and fell very proud, this is the natural way. But the divine law is that only by humbling ourselves will we be exalted, if we are overcomers, we will know how to humble ourselves.

Nebuchadnezzar had to become like a beast before he could learn that lesson of humbling himself. From the time of Nebuchadnezzar's first dream (Chap.2), till the time when he learnt to extol and honor the ling of heaven (Chap 4:37), it is reckoned to e about forty-seven years. So many years it took for him to learn to extol the true God. Do not be like Nebuchadnezzar. Do not wait till you are chastised. Do not wait till you become like a beast. It is better to give all the glory to the Lord and extol Him at every opportunity. This is the secret of an overcoming life. You must be able to extol God by your words, by the testimony of your life, and by your ministry. Refuse to be honored by men. Run away from people, which flatter you and magnify you.

There seems to be a real danger in this matter especially in European countries. When they arrange campaigns or special meetings, they display large posters extolling the speaker. They put his picture on handbills, which are full of his praise. They prepare calendars and bookmarks with his photographs; I have heard even good people glorifying men unknowingly. They think this is the best way to draw crowds to the meetings. But they forget that our God is a jealous God. He will not allow His glory to be given to another.

Now let us note these words spoken by Nebuchadnezzar to Daniel "no secret troubleth" (4:8,9). Daniel is a type of the overcomer. They will not be anxious, or troubled, or worried about any new thing, even if it is something they cannot understand at the moment.

We may perhaps find some things around us during these days, which are beyond our understanding. In the end days especially, we will see many signs and wonders happening, which are not of the Lord, and which we are not able to explain adequately. But if we are overcomers we will not be afraid, because we will have full confidence that in his own way, in His own time, God will tell us the meaning and the interpretation of it all (Amos 3:7).

The Lord Jesus has promised us that we are His friends (John 15:15); we can really become His friends when we trust Him and talk to Him freely. Then He will surely reveal every secret to us at the right time, there is no need for us to worry before that time, and this is the secret. You should remain humble and at every opportunity extol, magnify and glorify our Lord, knowing how great He is. Do not depend upon your own human wisdom, which is beast-like wisdom. Believe from your heart that human glory will soon pass away. In all humility thank God for the honor He has given to you to serve Him and for the joy to see the fruit of your labor. It is by His grace alone you are what you are. (I Cor. 15:9,10). There is one more lesson before we close our meditation on this chapter. Nebuchadnezzar should have been severely punished for behaving so proudly in spite of repeated warnings. But the Lord was very patient towards him because at one time he had yielded himself to be an instrument in his hand to punish the Jews. God never forgets what we do for Him. All our labor will be amply rewarded. It is only when a man refuses to humble himself, even after every chance, which the Lord gives him, that he will be cast away. May the Lord save us from all these pitfalls and make us true overcomers.

Chapter five

Victory Over Fear Daniel

Belshazzar the king made a great feast for a thousand of his lords. While they are drinking wine, the king commanded his servants to bring in the gold and silver vessels, which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple in Jerusalem, and brought to Babylon. Then they began to drink wine out of these vessels, and praised the gods of gold, silver, brass, iron, wood, and stone. This he did, not because they were short of vessels, but because he wanted to blaspheme the name of Jehovah.

Throughout the ages, men who are prosperous and at the height of their glory have blasphemed God. We have a present day instance of this in Russia. They have advanced much in scientific knowledge and have invented many new medicines. Carried away by their prosperity, they have increased in blasphemy against God. Belshazzar had become wealthy and prosperous, and therefore he became bold in defying the living God. He knew that these vessels had been brought from the temple in Jerusalem. He might not have known the particular use of each of those vessels, but he knew that they were meant to be used only in the temple. Even so, he deliberately commanded them to be brought to him so that he and his lords might drink wine out of them and praise the heathen gods. It is a surprising thing that sinful men take such pride and pleasure in blaspheming against the living God, in seeking against His word, and against His people. I will give you an instance. Although the bible and the Koran have a number of things in common we do not find the Hindus speaking against Muslims and the Koran, but they will blaspheme against Christ and the bible. In the same way king Belshazzar and his lords wanted to show their hatred and contempt for the living and true God, so the king brought out the holy vessels to drink wine in them.

While they were drinking, suddenly the king saw a part of a hand moving before him and writing words on the wall, --- words that he could not read, for they were in a language unknown to him. At this the king was filled with fear, and his knees smote one against the other. Fear is a terrible thing. Many people shake with fear. Some people's hair turns gray because of fear. In this case, the King's whole body began to tremble; his knees knocked together, his joints became loose, and he cried out with fear (Vs. 6 and 7).

We have seen many times how men of wealth, knowledge, position and power start trembling when they see mysterious things happen, which they are not able to explain. Only perfect love coming into our hearts can deliver us from every fear. There is no fear in love (I John 4:18). All men have a longing to be loved. They long for the love of father or mother, brother or sister, husband or wife. But all this human love will change. Only God's love is perfect and unchanging. His love is everlasting (Jer. 31:3). Even though God may rebuke and chasten us because of our folly, His love will never change.

God does not love us a little; He loves us in all His fullness. That is why he gives us all He has. He left all His glory for us. He gave to the very last ounce of His blood for our sakes. Only such a love is perfect love, and only such a love can take away our fears. Sometimes we go through peculiar trials and sufferings, and at such times, no mother, however sincere and loving she might be, is able to share it with us. But the love of Christ is perfect, and He is able to share all our burdens, difficulties, sorrows and sufferings.

Those who do not know the Lord Jesus as their Savior will be subject to many fears. In spite of all their knowledge, wealth and power, you can frequently see the marks of fear upon the faces of great men. For some it may be fear for their health; will it improve, or will they die? For some it may be fear of their enemies; will they injure them? For others it may be fears concerning their business; will they suffer loss, and become bankrupt? Thus, throughout their lifetime, men are victims of one kind of fear or another. Still others are afraid of death; if I die, what will happen to my children, and to my property?

The Lord Jesus said that in the last days there would be many fearful signs, such as stars falling from heaven, earthquakes and pestilences and wars. Then men's hearts will fail because of fear (Luke 21:26).

At that time even God's people will have to go through testing. He said, "ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and Kinsfolk, and friends, and some of you shall they cause to be put to death" (Luke 21:16). But the Lord will keep them above fear.

All the lords were able to see the handwriting on the wall, but only the King saw the part of the hand that wrote. It was Belshazzar who had commanded the vessels of gold and silver to be brought, and

it was he who had made the guests drink wine from them. So the chief guilt was upon him, and he was the first to be judged.

In the same manner, before God judges the sinner, first of all he will judge the devil, who is responsible for man's downfall, sin and defilement. The Lord first judged the devil upon the cross. In the last judgment also, he will be the first to be cast into the lake of fire.

When Belshazzar saw the writing on the wall, he trembled. This was only a sign. If he trembled so much then, how much more will he be trembling in hell? It was God's hand and His writing. God was saying to the king, "O king, thou art found guilty. Get ready for your punishment. It may come at anytime, so get ready for it". This made the king to tremble.

God is speaking to you also now. If you are still a sinner, God is saying to you. "O sinner, if you do not want to repent of your sins, be prepared for your day of judgment." God in His great love and mercy gives you warning again and again in many ways. Through sickness and calamities He calls you, that you may receive His salvation. It is only when men continually refuse to repent, that God finally sends His punishment upon them.

God gave Daniel wisdom to understand and read the writing on the wall. The Lord Jesus Christ will become your wisdom, if you accept Him as your savior. The whole world may be weeping and crying, full of fear. Even at such times God's children will go down upon their knees and pray. Then they will understand everything and they will be able to tell the meaning of it all.

There was a man in France called Voltaire. He was a great scholar, but he was an atheist and a blasphemer. Just before his death, he fell sick, and he was full of fear. Every night he would scream so much that no nurse would stay near him for more than one night. His face was so full of fear that it was horrible to look at.

I have seen people who did not know their god, dying full of fear. But those who know their God can go into the valley of the shadow of death without fear. I knew a young man who was a believer. He died suddenly while on duty due to heart failure. The office manager went to his home to tell his wife, and with great difficulty broke the news to her. To his great surprise she replied, "I shall meet him in heaven", and she told him of the wonderful hope we

have in Christ. The manager had expected her to break down in grief and despair. He went away surprised. The Lord never fails His people.

Today have you still not come to Him? He will free you from all condemnation. He will give you the answer to every question. He will reveal His mysteries to you as He revealed them to Daniel, and make you an overcomer in every situation.

These studies in the book of Daniel show us God's great plan. God's purpose is to raise up overcomers who will completely defeat the devil and all his schemes.

God might have chosen to destroy the enemy on the very day of his fall, but His great wisdom he has desired us, His people, to be partners with Him in His great victory. He has loved us with an everlasting love, and He has chosen us in Him for a very high and lofty purpose which was in His mind before all creation was made, this is shown to us in Ephesians 1:4-23.

Chapter Six

Victory Through Prayer And Faithfulness

In the first six chapters of Daniel we see how God was taking His servants through a long time of preparation which lasted about 43 years; though He was using them in mighty ways right from chapter one, He was all the time really preparing them for a greater ministry. Then from chapter seven onwards we see how God began to reveal through Daniel events, which were to take place in the future. The plans for the coming centuries were made known right to the coming of Christ, His death, burial and resurrection, and return to earth.

In chapter two we see how Daniel was enabled to give only the interpretation of the dream, which had been revealed to Nebuchadnezzar. But in chapters four and five we see him receiving increased ability, till in chapter seven and onwards we see God revealing to him directly things, which were to take place.

It is the same in our own lives. The early days of our Bible reading, studying book about the Bible, and listening to many good sermons, are really training us for the deeper mysteries which we shall find hidden in God's word when He has fully trained us. After years of study, we shall be saying to ourselves during our devotion, "I never knew of that verse before! That fragment seems quite new to me!" The Lord was also training Daniel in the life of prayer.

Here in Daniel 6, we read how King Darius ruled over a kingdom so vast that it needed one hundred and twenty princes. Over these were three presidents, but Daniel was preference above them all. Daniel did not seek for preference as so many seek honors in politics today. He did not try to use the influence of friends and relatives; neither did he use flatteries and bribes. Yet one day he received orders that he had been appointed the chief Governor over all the other Governors. The reason given for this outstanding promotion is that 'an excellent spirit was found in him.

We may be the same as Daniel in this respect. If through prayer we do our duty faithfully, those over us will eventually see the same thing in us, and will have to acknowledge, 'that man, or that woman, has an excellent spirit. That person deserves to be given promotion!' we do not need to use bribes or flattery, or other worldly means.

But we believers do not use our spiritual right in prayer. We often pray for many things connected with our natural life, but we fail to pray through for divine unction, the spiritual anointing which we need every day if we are to live successfully for God. We rely too much on our human knowledge and qualifications, and neglect to seek the wisdom of God for our daily lives, which we have the right to do as believers. Then too, we may be failing to be really faithful in our work as Christians. For these reasons God cannot honor us, as He did Daniel.

At one time when in America, I had a long period of unemployment. Letters and cables sent to my father brought no reply. After I had searched much for a job a man said to me, "Can you cook Indian food? It is so hard to find a good cook here. There is to be an Indian Medical Conference and many doctors will be here for seven days. If you can cook Indian meals for them I will pay you."

I said, "I can cook for a few, but have never attempted doing it for such a large number." "Well," replied he, "you try, and if you cannot manage we will remove you." I prayed a whole night and the next day I started the cooking. I continued praying all the time I was cooking, and the Lord showed me what quantities of various ingredients I was to use each time.

After the meal a lady came to the kitchen and saw me in my long white coat and white cap (that is how cooks dress in America). "Mr. cook," she said, "I have been to India, and eaten in many hotels there, but I have never tasted food like this! Who taught you?"

"My Lord taught me," I replied. My job as a cook continued for ten months, and every day I provided a new taste. They call me a good cook; never realizing that I was cooking only through the wisdom God gave me in answer to prayer.

My point is that God gives wisdom for the daily task. Whether it be for cooks, engineers, teachers or people of many other profession, it is the same divine principle; by learning to pray for everything by faith, we can have the same experience, as did Daniel and his three friends.

But Daniel was hated by those men over whom he was promoted. They became jealous. "Why should he be over us?" they

sneered, and began to scheme against him. We too shall find that others will become jealous of us if, through prayers and faithfulness, we obtain success or promotion.

Though King Darius was a good king, like most other rulers he was too fond of flattery, and this gave Daniel's enemies their opportunity. But how were they to find some fault with which to accuse Daniel? Though they placed spies all around him, and searched into very action and association, they at last had to declare, "We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God" (v.4). They had seen the faithfulness of his prayer life. He was a very busy man with many important matters to attend to, but he never cut short his time of prayer. When the time for prayer came, he left all the files on the table, and never missed his time of communion with God, three times every day.

If you want to be an over comer you must be faithful in all your duties at home and outside. Do not work to please men, but God. Remember, the Lord Jesus Christ is watching you all the time. Some people wonder why they cannot pray; they want to pray but cannot do so for more than ten or fifteen minutes. They fail because they do not give enough time to worship and thanksgiving. They only make request for things, and so soon become dried up.

Then Daniel's enemies came before the King and said: "We have never seen such a wonderful king as you; so we want people to pray to you only and not to any other God for thirty days. Please sign this decree to that effect."

The King was much flattered. "I am such a good king," he thought; "these people love me so much, they want to pray to me," and without really thinking the matter out, he signed the decree. He had no intention of doing any evil against Daniel, but he loved flattery, and these cunning crafty counselors had blinded him. It is the same in our own time. Many rulers blinded by flattery, sign documents and frame rules that are not for their country's good.

Daniel might have said, "I should not pray openly now," and might have commanded the servants to close all the doors and windows. Instead, without fear or complaint, he opened wide his windows, and kneeling down gave thanks to God as he had done before. (v.10). What a faith!

After forty-three years of divine training, Daniel was now facing his final test. The decree was signed; to pray to anyone but King Darius for the next thirty days meant being cast into a den of lions. Here we find the whole kingdom against Daniel. He stood as one man alone without a single person to help him. He did not seek help from man, but trusted in God only.

As before, he still prayed three times a day before his opened windows, and gave thanks to God. Here is the simple way of overcoming. Learn to praise and thank God. Do not allow any fears or doubts to come into your mind, even though you know the enemy is working against you.

Many of us find prayer very difficult in the beginning. That was my problem. After my conversion, I could read the bible for a whole day without tiring, and usually read many chapters at a stretch. But I could not pray for more than ten minutes. I would go down on my knees and then go to sleep. I wanted to pray but could not pray long enough. It was really a struggle and a battle to get through sometimes.

But now I find that though I spend many hours in prayer, still it is not enough. When I finish my quiet time I feel sad I cannot spend one or two hours longer. That will be your experience too, when you learn how to pray as God trained Daniel to pray. Daniel learned how to pray, and that was the only fault they could find with him. Daniel gave thanks to God. There was no murmuring or complaining. Thanking, praising and worshipping God is the secret.

When the prince brought their charge against Daniel, the king suddenly realized how he had been fooled and deceived. He had signed the decree without thinking. That is how many officials get into trouble. They don't look into the papers sufficiently before they sign them. We should never sign any paper before we have properly read and understood it. Though Darius was a good king he was foolish. Sometimes we can be both good and foolish, and that is why human goodness is often no real goodness at all. If we trust God, He will give us true wisdom, and thus save us from evil schemes.

The king found he was helpless. He longed to deliver Daniel from the lion's den, but every effort failed. Though he tried all day, he found he could not succeed because when he had signed that paper, it became " a law of the Medes and Persians which altereth not". Now he wanted to change what he had signed but the princes said, " No. No.

You cannot alter the laws of the Medes and Persians;" then the King realized that he could not alter the law, and those crooked, cunning men had deceived him. He was now bound by his own word, and was forced to issue the command himself that Daniel was to be cast into the den of Lions. (Ch. 6:16).

But the King said to him, " Daniel, THE God whom thou servest continually, He will deliver thee". Even though the king had no experience of God himself, he knew one thing. Daniel was a man of God, who faithfully served God and God, must deliver him.

The king spent the whole night fasting and very early in the morning he came to the den of lions to see what had happened. He called out with a sorrowful voice, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" (Vs. 20). His voice was sorrowful because he had no experience of God. "Who knows?' he thought, 'the lions may have eaten Daniel up.' It is only when we have the living God with us that we have real faith. Otherwise our hearts are filled with doubts and fears.

Daniel replied; " O King, my God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lion's mouths, that they have not hurt me" (Vs. 23,23). Then the king was very glad that his friend Daniel was safe, but he ordered the wicked deceivers who had tried to fool him to be cast into the den of lions instead of Daniel.

God often allows our enemies to prosper for a while, and they themselves think they are prospering. But they do not realize that they are going to be punished. Daniel had suffered because of his testimony, but God delivered him because of his faithfulness. It is only when we are found faithful like Daniel that we shall find God delivering us. We must be faithful in our duty, true in our testimony, honoring God day and night, using our knees three times daily without fear or shame, constantly praising God and thanking Him for all things; then we shall find He will send His angels to work on our behalf, and the enemy's schemes and plans against us will be confounded.

Though all this God was preparing Daniel for a higher ministry, and this was the method of his training. Now God was able to give him those wonderful revelations that were not possible before. Perhaps God is putting us through a time of preparation, and we must be prepared for it. We may be taken through extreme sorrow, trials and sufferings and disappointment. Through these we shall receive a

strong and divine faith, divine wisdom, and God's excellent spirit; then we shall be given the revelation of heavenly mysteries which at the moment are hidden from us.

In the beginning, our worldly minds are so confused and puzzled, that we cannot see spiritual things clearly. But when we have gone through our period of divine training, God will make all things clear to us and work on our behalf.

May the Lord help us to be true overcomers. May he take all murmurings and complaining out of our hearts and give us true strong faith.