

The HEARING OF Faith

LIVING STREAM MINISTRY RADIO NEWSLETTER

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"He therefore who bountifully supplies to you the Spirit . . . does He do it out of the works of the law or out of the hearing of faith?" Galatians 3:5

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If God leads you to walk a way that you know, it will not benefit you as much as if He would lead you to take the way that you do not know. This forces you to have hundreds and thousands of conversations with Him, resulting in a journey that is an everlasting memorial between you and Him.

The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, vol. 7, p. 1144

Dear Life-study Listener,

Our *Life-study of the Bible* journey continues this month as we travel through the book of Daniel. Along the way we have seen many different sights in God's Word that lead us to appreciate Him and enjoy His full salvation. The book of Daniel provides a unique and special picture for our experience.

In Daniel we can see that what Satan intended for evil, the Lord used for good. In the midst of such a dark situation in which God's people were taken into Babylonian captivity, the temple was destroyed, and seemingly God's interests were lost, Daniel and his young friends shone as beacons of light, pointing us back to God's faithfulness.

This thought of the Lord's sovereignty over every situation is a hallmark of this ministry. Daniel probably would have appreciated the quote on this page from Watchman Nee. We hope you also will be helped to have "hundreds and thousands of conversation with Him" as a result of the way He chooses to lead you.

Living Stream Ministry

WHAT IS THE CAPTIVITY OF GOD'S PEOPLE IN BABYLON?

God gives significant attention in His word to an evil city that stands in direct opposition to His purpose with His people. This city's name in Hebrew is Babel (Gen. 11:9) and its name in Greek is Babylon (Rev.17:5). Although the city possesses a prestigious reputation of strength and grandeur, the Scriptures reveal Babylon as a place that captures God's elect and usurps their pure and single-hearted worship toward Him. For this reason God makes a call to His chosen ones, saying, "Come out of her, My people...for her sins have accumulated up to heaven" (Rev. 18:4-5). What does Babylon signify and how can we answer the Lord's call to come out of her? The answer to these questions can be found by tracing Babylon's development from its source in Genesis to its ultimate destruction in Revelation.

In Genesis 11, Babel had its beginning when the people of the earth said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower whose top is in the heavens; and let us make a name for ourselves" (Gen. 11:4). In their rebellion toward God, fallen mankind endeavored to build up something for self-exaltation. In doing so, they rejected God, made a name for themselves, and worshipped idols (Josh. 24:2).

Later, Babel was enlarged, becoming Babylon during the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 1:1). At that time, Babylon invaded Jerusalem,

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CAPTIVITY

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destroyed the temple, captured God's people, and brought the vessels used for the worship of God into the idol temple (Dan. 1:2; 2 Kings 25:8-9, 14-15, 2 Chron. 36:6-7). This mixture of the things of God with the pagan and idolatrous things of man insulted God's holiness. During this time God's people were held in captivity and kept from worshipping God according to His intention.

Finally, what began in Genesis and developed in 2 Kings is consummated in Revelation where Babylon is called Babylon the Great. She is clothed in purple and scarlet and is gilded with gold, precious stone, and pearls, and she holds in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the unclean things of her fornication (Rev. 17:4). She has something of God in appearance, but within her are many sinful things. She is a mixture of the things of God with the heathen, sinful things of man, and for this God executes His judgment upon her (Rev. 18:8).

What then is Babylon? Babylon is a negative type of all man-made organizations and endeavors which, whether secular or religious, exalt man, reject God, and worship something other than God. Thus, to come out of Babylon is to come out of anything that bears the characteristics of self-exaltation and mixture in worship toward Him. When we, under the Lord's merciful enlightenment, condemn everything within us that is halfway and not absolute toward God, we too come to hate all that Babylon represents. Eventually at Babylon's destruction, voices from heaven will shout "Hallelujah!" (Rev. 19:1-4) for by His judgment God will destroy everything, which having the character of Babylon, frustrates God's people in their pure and absolute worship toward Him.

For further reading, please see The Glorious Church by Watchman Nee and Truth Lessons, level 2, vol. 2, lesson 18; Life-Study of Genesis, message 36; and Life-Study of Revelation, message 53 by Witness Lee, published by Living Stream Ministry.

Excerpt from

LESSONS ON PRAYER

BY WITNESS LEE

THE PURPOSE OF PRAYER IS TO GLORIFY GOD

A proper prayer is not to cause man to have the enjoyment in his accomplishment or in the result, but to cause God to gain one hundred percent of the glory. Yes, it is you who prayed; it is God Who answered your prayer and brought it to pass, but you should not have any place in this. If after a prayer has been fulfilled you have any place in it, then you ought to know there is something wrong with your prayer—you have not as yet thoroughly learned the lessons of prayer. Therefore, this principle is very important.

In Jeremiah 29 God said, "That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end" (vv. 10-11). These words proclaimed God's intention toward the Israelites; these were things that He intended to do. But, let me ask you, brothers and sisters, how could God carry out His intention? According to God's principle, His intention must be carried out through man's prayer on earth. Without man's prayer, God's desire cannot be fulfilled. What kind of person can be used by God to pray for His intention? There is only one kind, a person who lives before God, waits before Him, and allows God to do the initiating. When you read the book of Daniel you see that Daniel was one who really did not initiate anything before God. He waited before God, caring only for God, not for himself. Thus, he touched and understood this particular intention of God and learned that God would turn again the captivity of the children of Israel after seventy years were accomplished. Since Daniel's desire matched God's intention, he fasted and poured out this desire before God in prayer. Thus God's heart's desire and intention came out from God, went into Daniel, passed through him, and eventually returned to the throne of God. Then the throne of God took immediate action concerning the situation. This action was not at all for Daniel's enjoyment or glorying but for God to gain the glory. This is a very meaningful matter. Although Daniel prayed for others that God would cause them to return, Daniel himself did not go back. He may have returned eventually, but there is no clear record of that in the Bible. It seems that he had asked for one thing and God brought it to pass, yet he himself did not participate in the result.

According to God's principle, His intention must be carried out through man's prayer on earth.

Therefore, concerning the principles of prayer, your whole being from head to toe must be put aside. Your being does not have much place in prayer. In the beginning it is God who initiates, in the process you are but one who cooperates with God, and ultimately it is for the glory of God. This is real prayer—man being united with God and cooperating with Him on earth, allowing Him to express Himself and accomplish His purpose through man.

Lessons on Prayer, pp. 32-33