

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
CRUCIAL MATTERS
CONCERNING PRESENT NEEDS IN THE LORD'S RECOVERY**

Message One

**Knowing That the Situation before the Lord's Coming
Will Be Like That of the Days of Noah,
Living a Properly Balanced Human Life,
and Being Raptured before the Great Tribulation**

Scripture Reading: Matt. 24:32-44; Luke 17:31-36

I. "For just as the days of Noah were, so will the coming of the Son of Man be"—Matt. 24:37:

- A. The Greek word for *coming* (parousia) means "presence"—Matt. 24:33:
 - 1. In ancient times this word was applied to the coming of a dignified person; in the New Testament this word refers to the coming of Christ, the most dignified One.
 - 2. Christ's coming will be His presence with His people; His parousia will begin with the rapture of the man-child (Rev. 12:5) and of the firstfruits (14:1-4) and will end with His appearing on the earth with the saints—Matt. 24:27; 2 Thes. 2:8; Jude 14.
- B. The situation before the Lord's coming will be like that in the days of Noah:
 - 1. Noah lived in a crooked and perverse age—Gen. 6:1-22:
 - a. As a result of man's first fall, the evil nature of Satan had been injected into man—3:1-6; John 8:44.
 - b. In the second fall, the evil nature of Satan in man devised and developed a godless human culture—Gen. 4:16-24; 1 John 5:19b.
 - c. At the time of the third fall, this godless culture produced an evil, crooked, corrupted, and perverse generation, and the evil power of darkness corrupted the earth and filled it with violence—Gen. 6:1-13.
 - 2. In Matthew 24:37-39 and Luke 17:26-27 the Lord Jesus likened our age to the days of Noah:
 - a. The conditions of evil living that stupefied the generation of Noah before the flood portray the perilous condition of man's living before the great tribulation and the Lord's parousia—Matt. 24:21, 3, 27, 37, 39.
 - b. If we would participate in the overcomers' rapture to enjoy the Lord's parousia and escape the great tribulation, we must overcome the stupefying effect of man's living today—Luke 21:34-36.

II. "At that time two men will be in the field; one is taken and one is left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one is taken and one is left"—Matt. 24:40-41:

- A. The two men and the two women represent the living believers at the time of the Lord's second coming.
- B. To be taken is to be raptured before the great tribulation—v. 21; Rev. 3:10:

1. The rapture is the consummating step of God's full salvation in life—the transfiguration, the redemption, of our body—Rom. 5:10; 8:23; Phil. 3:21.
 2. After we have believed in the Lord and are saved, because of the demand of the divine life which we have received and because of the intensity of our love toward the Lord, we desire to pursue a life that awaits the Lord's coming—1 Thes. 1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23.
 3. In such a life of loving the Lord and waiting for His coming, we expect, according to that which is revealed and prophesied in the Bible, to be raptured to the presence of the Lord, to meet together joyfully with Him—Matt. 24:40-41; Luke 17:31-36; 21:36.
- C. Matthew 24:40-41 refers to the secret rapture, the rapture of the ready ones, the mature ones:
1. The difference between the one who is taken and the one who is left is in the maturity of life; one is mature in life, and the other is not—Heb. 6:1.
 2. To become matured is not an overnight matter; for the Lord's coming we need to prepare ourselves, love Him, and grow in Him, that at His appearing we may be mature to be raptured.
- D. The Lord's word in Matthew 24:40-41 shows us that as we wait for His coming and expect to be raptured, we must be faithful in our daily duties, living a properly balanced human life—cf. 2 Thes. 3:6-15.

III. Luke 17:31-36 speaks of our reaction to the rapture call:

- A. These verses depict the soul-life in its engagement not with sinful things but with the things of earth; the Lord's charge here is related to the believers' overcoming in their practical life—vv. 34-36.
- B. Whether or not the living believers participate in the rapture of the overcomers depends on their reaction to the call to go; the rapture will occur secretly and unexpectedly—v. 31:
1. This call will not produce a miraculous last-minute change in us that has no relation to our previous life with the Lord.
 2. In that moment we will discover our heart's real treasure; if this treasure is the Lord Himself, there will be no backward look—v. 32.
 3. We need the cross to work in us a thorough detachment in spirit from everything and everyone other than the Lord Himself—v. 31.
- C. Certain ones are taken because they have overcome the stupefying effect of self-indulgent living in this age to be raptured into the enjoyment of the Lord's parousia—vv. 26-30, 34-36.
- D. In 21:34-36 the Lord Jesus warns us to take heed to ourselves and to be watchful at every time, beseeching that we would "prevail to escape all these things which are about to happen and stand before the Son of Man."

Message Two

**Being Saved from the Crooked and Perverted Generation
to Be the Corporate Christ as Today's Ark**

Scripture Reading: Acts 2:40; 1 Cor. 12:12; Phil. 2:12-13, 15-16; Heb. 11:7; 1 Pet. 3:20-21

I. Today there are only two things on earth—the crooked and perverted generation and the church as the corporate expression of Christ—Acts 2:40; Phil. 2:15; 1 Cor. 1:2; 12:12, 27:

- A. Whoever is not in the church as the corporate expression of Christ today is in the crooked generation—Acts 2:40; 8:1:
 - 1. As long as a believer in Christ is not built up in the church, that one is in the crooked and perverted generation—Eph. 4:15-17.
 - 2. If a believer, a child of God, is not in the church, that one is not in the testimony of Jesus; rather, such a believer is in the crooked and perverted generation of the present evil age—Gal. 1:4; Rev. 1:11, 20; 22:16.
- B. The entire world, with its unbelieving and believing aspects, is condemned by God; God is using His loving and faithful seekers in His recovery to protest against today's trend—Heb. 11:7; 2 Pet. 2:5; Gen. 6:9; 7:1.
- C. The church as the corporate expression of Christ is a testimony against today's evil generation—Phil. 1:1; 2:15-16; 4:15; Rev. 2:13:
 - 1. The church is the testimony of Jesus, protesting against the crooked, evil, perverted generation—Acts 2:32-33; 7:51-60.
 - 2. As the testimony of Jesus, we, the church as the corporate expression of Christ stand against the present crooked and perverted generation—Acts 2:32-33.

II. If we would be the corporate expression of Christ in the church life, we need to be today's "family of Noah" building the corporate Christ as the ark that will deliver us from the crooked and perverted generation and usher us into the coming age of the kingdom of God—Gen 6:8—8:3; 1 Cor. 12:12; Phil. 2:12-13; 1 Pet. 3:20-21:

- A. The ark built by Noah is a type of Christ as the salvation of God's elect; the ark that we are building today is the corporate Christ, the church, as our salvation from today's crooked, perverted, and evil generation—vv. 20-21; 1 Cor. 12:12, 27.
- B. The church life is today's ark to terminate the present age and bring in God's kingdom—1:2; 12:12, 27; 1 Thes. 1:1, 9-10:
 - 1. The Lord desires "the family of Noah" to build the ark and testify against the trend of the age so that He can use them to terminate the age and bring in the kingdom age—Heb. 11:7; Rev. 11:15:
 - a. Noah was saved not only from God's judgment but also from the crooked, perverted, and evil generation—Gen. 6:8—8:3.
 - b. The kind of salvation that Noah built, secured, and enjoyed was not a salvation merely from eternal perdition but also out of the crooked, evil generation into a new age—6:2-3, 8, 11-14; 7:1.

2. What we are building in the church life is the corporate Christ as the ark for our salvation and for the salvation of the ones under our care—1 Cor. 12:12; 14:26; Phil. 2:12-13.
- C. The salvation in Philippians 2:12 is the salvation that saves us from the crooked and perverted generation; this salvation is the church as the corporate Christ whom we are building as today's ark—1 Cor. 1:2; 12:12; Eph. 2:21-22:
1. To have the proper church life is not only to stand on the ground of oneness but also to build the ark to save ourselves from the present evil generation and bring us into a new age—4:3, 16.
 2. We need a salvation that is built not by God directly but by our daily cooperating with His inward operation—Phil. 2:12-13.
- D. God wants the church, the ark, where we can be saved from today's evil generation—Acts 2:40-47:
1. God wants to save us—through this ark—from the crooked generation and usher us into God's kingdom to fulfill His eternal purpose—Matt. 6:33; 13:43; Luke 12:32; Rev. 11:15.
 2. God cares for whether or not we are in the ark, the proper church life; He wants us to be a part of the corporate Christ, part of the testimony of Jesus—1 Cor. 12:12; Rev. 1:2, 9, 11, 20; 22:16.
- E. We need not only to preach the individual Christ but also to build the corporate Christ, the church, which is today's ark; through this corporate Christ we are saved from the crooked and perverted generation—Acts 8:35; 1 Cor. 12:12:
1. While the apostles were preaching the individual Christ, they were building up the corporate Christ, the ark in which they will enjoy God's full salvation—Acts 8:1, 4-5, 35; 13:1; 14:23.
 2. We should be faithful to do the same thing—preaching the gospel and building the ark, preaching Christ and building Christ—1 Thes. 1:1, 8; 1 Cor. 12:12; 14:4-5, 12, 26.
- F. When this ark is built up, the Lord Jesus will return—Rev. 19:7; 22:7, 12, 20:
1. The Lord has not come back yet because He is still waiting for the ark to be built—Matt. 16:18, 27.
 2. When the testimony of the church in the Lord's recovery is matured, the Lord Jesus will return—Rev. 19:7; 22:7, 12, 20.

Message Three

God's Need for Our Cooperation and for Prayers That Express His Will

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 6:17; Matt. 6:10; 7:21; 12:50; 1 John 5:14-16; John 15:7

I. In order for His will to be done on earth and for His eternal purpose to be fulfilled, God needs our cooperation—1 Cor. 6:17; Matt. 7:11; 12:50:

- A. God can carry out on earth what He has planned in heaven only when He has people who will cooperate with Him—John 7:17; 15:4-5:
 - 1. God needs to gain people on earth who will cooperate with Him and work with Him according to His mind—Phil. 3:15; Col. 3:2.
 - 2. As long as there are those who are of the same mind as God and are willing to work with Him, God's work will be carried out on earth—1 Cor. 15:58; 16:10.
- B. Our eyes need to be opened to see that God has His limitations and to see how we should cooperate with Him—Matt. 6:10; 18:18-19; 2 Cor. 6:1:
 - 1. God is omnipotent, but His omnipotence is subject to limitations because He must have certain conditions suitable for His working—John 7:17; Matt. 7:21.
 - 2. Man was created with a free will; the limitations of God began at this point—Gen. 1:26:
 - a. In creation God put His almighty power under the limitation of the human will—v. 28; 2:9, 16-17.
 - b. God wants the human will to be on His side; therefore, He accepts the limitation that this desire entails—John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; Rom. 12:2-3.
 - 3. As members of Christ's organic, mystical Body, we are either expressing Him or limiting Him—1 Cor. 12:12-13, 18-20, 27:
 - a. The Lord needs to bring us to the point where we have nothing to hinder Him from doing whatever He wills—6:17; Matt. 6:10; 7:21; 12:50; Eph. 1:1, 9; 5:17.
 - b. Once the Lord has brought us to a place of total responsiveness to Him, He will have a free and unhindered way to accomplish His will; then there will be nothing that God cannot do to carry out His purpose on earth—Matt. 6:10; 26:39, 42; Heb. 13:21.

II. God needs the prayer that expresses His will—Matt. 6:10:

- A. God is a God of purpose, having a will of His own pleasure, and He created all things for His will that He might accomplish and fulfill His purpose—Rev. 4:11; Eph. 3:9-11; Col. 1:9:
 - 1. God's will is His heart's desire, His mingling with man, and the fulfillment of His eternal plan—Eph. 1:5, 9, 11; 5:17.
 - 2. The will of God is to obtain a Body for Christ to be His fullness, His expression—Rom. 12:2, 5; Eph. 1:5, 9, 11, 22-23.
 - 3. The Father's eternal will is to build up the church upon Christ the Son as the rock—Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:21-22; 4:16.
 - 4. The kingdom is absolutely a matter of God's will and completely fulfills God's will; in fact, the kingdom is God's will—Matt. 6:10.
 - 5. As believers in Christ, we are on earth to do the Father's will—7:21; 12:50:
 - a. Whoever does the will of the Father is a relative of the Lord Jesus—12:50.
 - b. We need to pray for the Father's will to be done on earth as in the heavens; this is to bring the kingdom of the heavens to the earth—6:10.

- B. God needs us to offer prayers that are the expression of His will—1 John 5:14; John 15:7; Matt. 26:39, 42; 6:10; 18:19:
1. Prayer is the union of the believers' will with God's will—John 15:7.
 2. The greatest use of the church is the fact that it stands for God's will to be done on earth—Matt. 6:10
 3. For the church to pray means that it finds out God's will and speaks out His will—Eph. 1:9; 5:17
 4. For the church to pray means that it stands on God's side to declare that it wants what God wants—Matt. 18:19.
 5. God's works on earth can be accomplished only when there is a will on earth that agrees with God—1 John 5:14; John 15:7:
 - a. God's will can be accomplished only when there is a will on earth that cooperates with Him—Matt. 6:10.
 - b. Whenever man's will is not one with God's will, God is limited; God must have our will in harmony with His will—John 15:7.
 - c. Even though God has a will, He wants the free will on earth to echo His will before He does anything—1 John 5:14; James 5:17-18.
 - d. After we know God's will, we can say to Him, "Lord, we want You to do this. We are determined that You should do this."
 - e. Any prayer that is not according to God's will is useless—James 4:4.
 - f. A prayer that is uttered according to God's will is a most powerful thing—1 John 5:14; Matt. 17:20; Mark 11:22-24.
 - g. Praying in agreement with God is more important than doing anything else—Matt. 18:19.
- C. The prayer ministry of the church is God telling the church what He wants to do and the church praying on earth what God wants to do; this prayer is not asking God to accomplish what we want Him to do, but asking God to accomplish what He Himself wants to accomplish—Col. 1:9; 4:12; Eph. 5:17; John 15:7.

Message Four

Our Need to Labor on the All-inclusive Christ

Scripture Reading: Deut. 8:7-10; 12:6-7, 11-12, 18

- I. As believers in Christ who have been led by Christ into Himself as the good land typified by the land of Canaan, we need to labor on Christ—1 Cor. 1:30; Col. 1:12.**
- II. After the people of Israel entered into and possessed the land of Canaan and received their allotted portion, they labored on the land—Deut. 8:7-10; 12:6-7, 11-12, 18:**
 - A. Whether or not they were willing to labor on the land was a serious matter; they had to labor on and cultivate the land.
 - B. This is a picture of how we need to labor diligently on Christ so that we may enjoy His all-inclusive riches—Eph. 3:8; 1:7; 2:7; 1 Cor. 15:58; Phil. 3:10.
- III. The life we live after entering into Christ as the good land is a life of laboring on Christ—Col. 1:12; Rom. 15:16; 1 Cor. 15:10:**
 - A. As the Lord's people who are living in the all-inclusive Christ, we need to labor on Christ, seeking Christ and enjoying Christ in every situation—Col. 1:12; 3:1, 4, 10-11.
 - B. We are in a very rich land, but if we do not labor on it, there is no produce for us to experience and enjoy—Eph. 1:7; 2:7; 3:8; 1 Cor. 15:58.
- IV. Although we need to labor on Christ as the land to produce Christ, we need to realize that it is not we who produce Christ but Christ who produces Himself in us through our labor—Phil. 2:13; Eph. 3:17; Col. 3:15-16:**
 - A. We all need to labor on Christ and let Christ give us much produce; then we will have rich experiences of Christ—Eph. 3:8; Phil. 4:19.
 - B. The harvest of Christ is the Christ on whom we have labored and have reaped to be our harvest—3:10.
- V. Every morning we need to pray, asking the Lord for the day's portion of grace and consecrating ourselves to the Lord for the purpose of experiencing and enjoying Him by laboring on Him—Rom. 12:1-2; 15:16.**
- VI. Throughout the day we need to maintain our fellowship with the Lord and thereby contact Him, labor on Him, apply Him, experience Him, and enjoy Him—John 15:4-5, 11; 16:22; 1 Pet. 1:8.**
- VII. Exercising our spirit is the key to laboring on Christ, experiencing Christ, and producing Christ—1 Tim. 4:7:**
 - A. The way to labor on Christ is to exercise our spirit to contact the Spirit, the reality of the all-inclusive Christ as the good land—Gal. 3:14.
 - B. Throughout the day, in every situation and in all our circumstances, we should exercise our spirit to contact the Lord and experience Him—1 Tim. 4:7; Rom. 8:4; 1 Cor. 6:17; Phil. 4:11-13.
- VIII. We labor on Christ as the good land by exercising our heart to have faith in the Lord and to love the Lord and by exercising our spirit to contact the Lord and to receive the dispensing of the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit, the reality of Christ as the good land—2 Cor. 3:16; 13:14; Gal. 3:14.**

Supplemental Outline to Message 4

“A Land Flowing with Milk and Honey”

- I. As a type of the all-inclusive Christ, the land of Canaan is “a land flowing with milk and honey”—Exo. 3:8, 17; 33:3; Lev. 20:24; Num. 13:27; 14:8; Deut. 6:3; 26:9, 15; 27:3; Josh. 5:6.**
- II. Milk and honey are produced out of the mingling of two lives—the vegetable life and the animal life:**
 - A. In Deuteronomy 8:8 honey is put together with the plants—wheat, barley, the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree.
 - B. In Deuteronomy 32:14 milk is put together with the animals—cattle and flock.
 - C. For the most part honey has to do with the plant life, and the greater part of the milk is related to the animal life:
 1. When these two lives are mingled together, honey is produced.
 2. Milk is also a product of both the animal life and the vegetable life, but it belongs mainly to the animal life; it is produced from grazing in the pasture (vegetable life) by the cattle and the flock (animal life).
- III. Milk and honey, which are the mingling of both the animal life and the vegetable life, signify two aspects of the life of Christ—the redeeming aspect and the generating aspect—Deut. 8:8; 32:13-14:**
 - A. The vegetable life is the life that generates and multiplies; this life signifies the generating and multiplying life of Christ—John 12:24.
 - B. The animal life signifies the redeeming life of Christ—John 6:54-55.
 - C. The redeeming aspect of Christ’s life is for our judicial redemption, and the generating aspect of Christ’s life is for our organic salvation—John 1:29; 12:24; Rev. 2:7; Rom. 5:10.
 - D. The symbols of the Lord’s table signify the redeeming and generating aspects of Christ’s life for God’s complete salvation—Matt. 26:26-28; 1 Cor. 10:17.
 - E. Milk and honey speak forth the goodness and sweetness of the life of Christ—Eph. 5:2; Phil. 4:18:
 1. When at the same time we experience and enjoy Christ as both the vegetable life and the animal life, we realize how good, sweet, and rich the Lord is to us.
 2. We sense the richness and the sweetness of Christ—the goodness of the milk and the sweetness of the honey.
 - F. By enjoying Christ as the land of milk and honey, we will be constituted with Him as milk and honey—“Your lips drip fresh honey, my bride; / Honey and milk are under your tongue”—S. S. 4:11a; Eph. 4:29; Col. 4:6.