

LIVING
A CHRISTIAN LIFE
at the
END OF THE
PRESENT AGE

2020 UK and Ireland Blending Conference
28–30 August 2020

Conference Schedule

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Friday, 28 August

7pm to 9pm Message One

Saturday, 29 August

10am to 12pm Message Two

Lord's Day, 30 August

9.30am to 10am Lord's Table

10am to 12pm Message Three

2.30pm to 4.30pm Message Four

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
LIVING A CHRISTIAN LIFE
AT THE END OF THE PRESENT AGE**

Message One

A Christian Life under the Government of God

Scripture Reading: 1 Pet. 1:17; 2:21-24; 4:17-19; 5:6

I. The Epistles of 1 and 2 Peter are on the universal government of God:

- A. God governs by judging; the judgment of God is for the carrying out of His government—1 Pet. 1:17; 4:17:
 - 1. Because 1 and 2 Peter are concerned with the government of God, in these Epistles the judgment of God and of the Lord is referred to repeatedly as one of the essential items—1 Pet. 2:23; 4:5-6, 17; 2 Pet. 2:3-4, 9; 3:7.
 - 2. Through various kinds of judgments, the Lord God will clear up the entire universe and purify it so that He may have a new heaven and a new earth for a new universe filled with His righteousness for His delight—v. 13.
- B. The judgment in 1 Peter 1:17, which is carried out by the Father, is not the future judgment but is the present, daily judgment of God's governmental dealings with His children:
 - 1. The Father has regenerated us to produce a holy family—a holy Father with holy children—vv. 3, 15, 17.
 - 2. As holy children, we should walk in a holy manner of life (vv. 15-16); otherwise, in His government God the Father will become the Judge and will deal with our unholiness—4:15-17; Heb. 12:9-10.
- C. The disciplinary judgment in the government of God begins from the house of God—1 Pet. 4:17:
 - 1. God judges everything that does not match His government; therefore, in this age we, the children of God, are under the daily judgment of God—1:17.
 - 2. God uses fiery ordeals to deal with the believers in the judgment of His governmental administration, which begins from His own house—4:12, 17.
 - 3. The purpose of this judgment is that we would live according to God in spirit—v. 6.

II. When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He lived a human life that was absolutely under the government of God, and He committed everything related to Him to God's government—John 6:38; 1 Pet. 2:21-23:

- A. The Lord kept committing all His insults and injuries to Him who judges righteously in His government, the righteous God, to whom He submitted Himself; He put His trust in this righteous One, recognizing His government—v. 23.
- B. When God counseled Christ as a man, Christ's inward parts were one with God and instructed Him through His contact with God—Psa. 16:7; Isa. 50:4.

III. As believers in Christ and children of God, we should live a Christian life under the government of God—John 3:15; 1:12-13; 1 Pet. 4:13-19; 5:6-8:

- A. We should be humbled under the mighty hand of God, which carries out the government of God—5:6:
 - 1. In verse 6 *the mighty hand of God* refers to God's administrating hand seen especially in His judgment—1:17; 4:17.
 - 2. To be humbled under God's mighty hand is to be made humble by God; however, we must cooperate with God's operation and be willing to be made humble, lowly, under His mighty hand—5:6.

- B. We should commit our souls to the faithful Creator—4:19:
 - 1. God can preserve our soul, and His loving and faithful care accompanies His justice in His governmental administration.
 - 2. While God judges us in His government, He cares for us faithfully in His love; as we are suffering His disciplinary judgment, we should commit our souls to the faithful care of our Creator—Matt. 10:28; 11:28-29.
- C. In the death of Christ we have died to sins so that in the resurrection of Christ we might live to righteousness under God’s government—1 Pet. 2:24:
 - 1. God’s government is established upon righteousness (Psa. 89:14a); as God’s people living under His government, we must live a righteous life.
 - 2. The expression *live to righteousness* is related to the fulfilling of God’s governmental requirements—1 Pet. 2:24:
 - a. We were saved so that we might live rightly under the government of God, that is, in a way that matches the righteous requirements of His government.
 - b. In Christ’s death we have been separated from sins, and in His resurrection we have been enlivened so that in our Christian life we might live spontaneously to righteousness under the government of God—Rom. 6:8, 10-11, 18; Eph. 2:6; John 14:19; 2 Tim. 2:11.

NOTES

Message Two

Looking Away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of Our Faith

Scripture Reading: 1 Tim. 1:4; Heb. 11:1, 6; 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 4:13, 18; John 20:29

I. God's economy is in faith—1 Tim. 1:4:

- A. Faith is the unique way for God to carry out His New Testament economy with man—Heb. 11:6.
- B. Faith is the principle by which God deals with His people in the New Testament—Gal. 3:22-24.
- C. The faith of Jesus Christ in us becomes the faith by which we believe in Him—2:16, 20; Rom. 3:22, 26.
- D. Faith is the divine requirement for the overcomers to meet Christ in His triumphant return and to receive the reward of the kingdom—Luke 18:8; Heb. 10:35, 39.

II. Jesus is the Author of faith, the Originator, the Inaugurator, the source, and the cause of faith—12:2:

- A. We need to look away unto Jesus with undivided attention by turning away from every other object—v. 2; Psa. 27:4.
- B. The faith of the believers is actually not their own faith but Christ entering into them to be their faith—Rom. 3:22; Gal. 2:16:
 - 1. The faith by which we are saved is the precious faith that we have received from the Lord; it is God-allotted faith—2 Pet. 1:1; Col. 1:12.
 - 2. When we look away unto Jesus, He as the life-giving Spirit transfuses us with Himself, His believing element—Heb. 12:2; 1 Cor. 15:45b.
- C. Faith is the substantiating ability that issues from the infusion of the divine element into our spirit through the word of God; it is by such faith that we are able to substantiate, give substance to the things unseen or hoped for—Heb. 11:1:
 - 1. Our spirit of faith is the organ whereby we substantiate everything in the unseen world into us—2 Cor. 4:13:
 - a. We need to exercise our spirit of faith, our mingled spirit, to believe and to speak the things that we have experienced of the Lord.
 - b. Faith is in our spirit, which is mingled with the Holy Spirit, not in our mind.
 - 2. We do not look at the things that are seen but the things that are unseen; the things that are seen are temporary, but the things that are not seen are eternal—2 Cor. 4:18:
 - a. The Christian life is a life of things unseen—Rom. 8:24-25; Heb. 11:27; 1 Pet. 1:8; Gal. 6:10.
 - b. The degradation of the church is the degradation from unseen things to seen things.
 - c. The Lord's recovery is to recover His church from things seen to things unseen—John 20:20.
 - 3. Faith assures us of the things not seen, convincing us of what we do not see; therefore, it is the evidence, the proof, of things unseen—Heb. 11:1; 1 Pet. 1:8.
- D. Faith is to believe that God is—Heb. 11:6:
 - 1. Without faith it is impossible to please God, to make God happy—v. 6a.
 - 2. "He who comes forward to God must believe that He is"—v. 6b.

III. Jesus is the Perfecter, the Finisher, the Completer, of our faith—12:2:

- A. As we look way unto Jesus continually, He will finish and complete the faith that we need for the running of the heavenly race—v. 1.
- B. When we look away unto Him, He ministers heaven, life, and strength to us, transfusing and infusing us with all that He is so that we may be able to run the heavenly race and live a heavenly life on earth—2 Cor. 3:18.
- C. As believers, we need to experience the perfecting and developing of our faith through contacting the Lord in the midst of all circumstances—1 Pet. 5:9.
- D. We all have the same faith in quality, but the quantity of faith we have depends on how much we contact the living God and have Him increased in us—Rom. 12:3:
 - 1. Faith in the progressing stage comes through our contacting the Triune God, who is faith in us—1 Thes. 5:17.
 - 2. The way to receive such a faith is to contact its source, the Lord, the processed and consummated Triune God, by calling on Him, praying to Him, and pray-reading His word—Heb. 4:2, 16; Rom. 10:12; 2 Tim. 2:22; Eph. 6:17-18.
 - 3. When we contact the Lord, He is overflowing within us, and there is a mutuality of faith among us; we are encouraged through the faith that is in one another—Rom. 1:12; Philem. 6.
- E. Our regenerated spirit, our spirit of faith, is the victory that overcomes the Satan-organized and Satan-usurped world—1 John 5:4.
- F. The unlimited power of faith motivates the believers to follow the Lord, suffer for Him, risk their lives, and be those who are sent for the carrying out of God's eternal economy—Luke 18:8; Phil. 2:20; Rom. 16:3-4; Acts 20:24.

NOTES

Message Three

The Losing of the Soul-life and Receiving the Salvation of the Soul

Scripture Reading: Luke 9:23-25; 14:26-35; 17:26-36; 21:34-36; Heb. 10:39; 1 Pet. 1:7-9, 13

I. In our Christian life we may save our soul-life and lose it or lose our soul-life for the Lord's sake and save it—Matt. 10:39; Luke 9:23-25; 14:26-35:

- A. In Luke 9:23-25 the Lord Jesus taught the disciples to take up their cross and follow Him by denying their soul-life:
1. To save the soul-life is to allow the soul to have its enjoyment and to escape suffering; to lose the soul-life is to cause the soul to lose its enjoyment and thereby to suffer—Matt. 16:25.
 2. To lose the soul-life is to lose the enjoyment of the soul, and to save the soul-life means to preserve the soul in its enjoyment—Mark 8:35.
 3. To deny the self is to reject the soul's desire, preference, and choice—Luke 9:23.
 4. We must deny our soul, our soulish life, with all its pleasures in this age, so that we may gain it in the enjoyment of the Lord in the coming age—1 Pet. 1:9.
 5. If we allow our soul to suffer the loss of its enjoyment in this age for the Lord's sake, we will cause our soul to have its enjoyment in the kingdom age; we will share the Lord's joy in ruling over the earth—Matt. 25:21, 23.
- B. In Luke 14:26-35 the Lord taught us to be absolute in following Him and to hate everything, even our own soul-life, that distracts, hinders, and frustrates us from following Him faithfully:
1. As the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13), the believers' taste depends on their renouncing of the earthly things—Luke 14:33-34.
 2. Believers may lose their taste—their function in the kingdom of God—by not being willing to renounce all the things of the present life—v. 34.
 3. If the believers lose their taste, their function, they will be fit neither for the land, signifying the church as God's farm (1 Cor. 3:9), which issues in the coming kingdom (Rev. 11:15), nor for the manure pile, signifying hell, the filthy place in the universe (21:8); having been saved from eternal perdition but being unfit for the coming kingdom, they will be thrown out from the glory of the kingdom in the millennium and be put aside for discipline—Luke 14:35.
- C. Preserving the soul-life is related to lingering in the earthly and material things—vv. 31, 33:
1. We linger in the earthly things because we care for our soul's enjoyment in the present age—cf. 2 Tim. 4:10.
 2. Lot's wife became a pillar of salt because she took a lingering look backward at Sodom, indicating that she loved and treasured the evil world that God was going to judge and utterly destroy—Luke 17:32:
 - a. She was rescued from Sodom, but she did not reach the safe place that Lot reached—Gen. 19:15-30.
 - b. Although she did not perish, she was not fully saved, but, like the salt that becomes tasteless (Luke 14:34-35), she was left in a place of shame; this is a solemn warning to the world-loving believers—1 John 2:15-17, 28.
 3. Lingering in the earthly things for the sake of our soul's enjoyment will cause us to lose our soul; that is, our soul will suffer the loss of its enjoyment in the coming kingdom age—Luke 17:33.

II. The salvation of the soul in 1 Peter 1:9 means that our soul will be saved from sufferings into the full enjoyment of the Lord at His revelation, His coming back—vv. 6-7; 3:17; 4:1, 12-16, 19:

- A. The proving of our faith results in the receiving of the end of our faith—the salvation of our souls—1:7-9:
 - 1. The emphasis in 1 Peter 1:7 is not on faith but on the proving of faith by trials that come through sufferings.
 - 2. These trials are used by God to prove and try our faith to see whether we will follow Christ in suffering—2:19-23; 3:14-18.
- B. We must deny our soul, our soulish life, with all its pleasures in this age, that we may gain it in the enjoyment of the Lord in the coming age—Matt. 10:37-39.
- C. At the Lord’s revelation, some believers will enter into the joy of the Lord, and some will suffer in weeping and gnashing of teeth—25:21, 23, 30; 24:45-46, 51.
- D. To enter into the Lord’s joy is the salvation of our souls—25:21, 23.
- E. At the revelation of the Lord Jesus, His coming, our soul will be saved, and we will be qualified to participate in the Lord’s enjoyment in the coming age—1 Pet. 1:9, 13.
- F. If we would receive as the end of our faith the salvation of our souls, we must not be “of those who shrink back to ruin but of those who have faith to the gaining of the soul”—Heb. 10:39:
 - 1. The gaining, or saving, of our soul depends on how we deal with our soul in following the Lord after we are saved and regenerated.
 - 2. If we lose our soul now for the Lord’s sake, we will save it, and it will be saved, or gained, at the Lord’s coming back—Luke 9:24; 1 Pet. 1:9.
 - 3. The gaining of the soul will be the reward of the kingdom to the overcoming followers of the Lord—Heb. 10:35; Matt. 16:22-28.

NOTES

Message Four

Loving the Lord's Appearing

Scripture Reading: 2 Tim. 4:8, 10, 18; Rom. 12:2; Rev. 17:14; 22:20

I. If the Lord's second coming is precious to us, we will love His appearing—**2 Tim. 4:8:**

- A. Loving the Lord's appearing and loving the Lord Himself are inseparable—1 Cor. 2:9; 2 Tim. 4:8.
- B. If we are waiting for the Lord to come, we should be those who love His appearing—1 Thes. 1:10; 2 Tim. 4:8.
- C. The Lord's appearing, His coming back, is a warning, an encouragement, and an incentive to us—vv. 1, 18:
 - 1. We should love the Lord's appearing and look forward to it with earnest expectation and joy—Rev. 22:20.
 - 2. We should have a living that loves the Lord's appearing; this causes us not to be discouraged but to remain faithful to the end—2 Tim. 4:8; Rev. 17:14.

II. Loving the Lord's appearing is in contrast to loving the present age—**2 Tim. 4:8, 10:**

- A. An age is a part, a section, or an aspect of the world system of Satan, which is used by him to usurp and occupy people and keep them away from God and His purpose—1 John 5:19; 2:15.
- B. In 2 Timothy 4:10 *the present age* refers to the world that surrounds, attracts, and tempts us; we cannot contact the world unless we contact the present age of the world.
- C. Demas loved the present age; due to the attraction of the present age, he forsook the apostle Paul—v. 10.
- D. In Romans 12:2 Paul exhorts us to not be fashioned according to this age but to be transformed by the renewing of the mind:
 - 1. *This age* in verse 2 denotes the present, practical part of the world, which stands in opposition to the Body life and replaces the Body life—vv. 4-5.
 - 2. To be fashioned according to this age means to adopt the modern fashions of the present age; to be transformed is to allow an organic element to be wrought into our being, thus producing an inward metabolic change—v. 2; 2 Cor. 3:18.
 - 3. Because the present age opposes the church, which is God's will, we must not be fashioned according to it—Rom. 12:2.
 - 4. If we are to live in the Body of Christ, we should not follow the present age or be fashioned according to this age or conformed to it—vv. 4-5.
- E. If we love the present age, we will take sides with the world; if we love the Lord's appearing, we will take sides with Him and fight with Him for His interests—2 Tim. 4:1-2, 4-8, 10.

III. Those who love the Lord, wait for His coming, and love His appearing will overcome—**1 Cor. 2:9; 2 Tim. 4:8; Rev. 22:20; 17:14:**

- A. Loving the Lord's appearing is a proof that we love the Lord and live for Him today; hence, it also becomes a condition for us to receive His reward—2 Tim. 4:8, 18.
- B. To love the Lord's appearing does not mean that we should not live a normal life; rather, the more we love His appearing, the more we need to live a normal life today—Matt. 24:40-42; 2 Thes. 1:10; 3:6-12; 1 Tim. 5:8.
- C. As those who love the Lord Jesus, take Him as our life, live Him, and magnify Him, we should await His coming and love His appearing; this should be our heart's desire and our living as those who hope to enter into His joy, be saved into

