

**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."