

## THE LORD'S RETURN

### Message 6

#### **Our Preparation for the Lord's Coming (1) Watching and Being Ready**

Scripture Reading: Matt. 24:37-44; Luke 17:26-27; 21:34-36; Rev. 3:10; 2 Cor. 2:10; Rev. 12:5; 14:1, 4b; Eph. 3:16-17a; Matt. 25:1-13; 2 Cor. 11:2; Prov. 20:27; Rom. 8:16; 9:21, 23-24; Eph. 5:17-18; 6:18; Matt. 22:2, 11-14; Rev. 19:7-9

#### **I. The Lord's word in Matthew 24:32-44 is a word about watching and being ready:**

- A. "For just as the days of Noah were, so will the coming of the Son of Man be"—v. 37:
  - 1. 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 coming—vv. 3, 21, 27, 37, 39; Luke 17:26-27.
  - 2. In order to participate in the rapture of the early overcomers, we must overcome the stupefying effect of man's living today—21:34-36.
- B. "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:
  - 1. To be taken is to be raptured before the great tribulation—v. 21; Rev. 3:10:
    - a. The meaning of rapture is to be taken into the Lord's presence; if we would be taken into the Lord's presence, we must be in His presence today—Luke 21:36; 2 Cor. 2:10.
    - b. The rapture is not mainly for our enjoyment but for God's enjoyment, God's economy, and the fulfillment of God's purpose; the rapture is for defeating the enemy and satisfying God—Rev. 12:5; 14:1, 4b.
  - 2. The one who is taken is mature in life, and the other is not.
  - 3. As we await the Lord's coming and hope to be raptured, we need to live a balanced human life, being faithful in our daily duties—2 Thes. 3:6-15.
- C. "Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord comes"—Matt. 24:42:
  - 1. The overcomers will be the watchful ones, who will be raptured before the coming of the great tribulation—v. 21.
  - 2. "Be watchful at every time, beseeching that you would prevail to escape all these things which are about to happen and stand before the Son of Man"—Luke 21:36:
    - a. To prevail here is to have strength and ability; the strength and ability to escape the great tribulation come from watchfulness and beseeching.
    - b. *Stand before the Son of Man* corresponds with *standing* in Revelation 14:1; this indicates that the raptured overcomers will stand before the Savior on Mount Zion in the heavens before the great tribulation.
    - c. Being taken to meet Christ on the throne depends on our beseeching in a particular way.
- D. "For this reason you also be ready, because at an hour when you do not expect it, the Son of Man is coming"—Matt. 24:44:
  - 1. We make ourselves ready for the Lord's coming by praying that we may grow and mature in life—cf. 2 Pet. 1:5-11.
  - 2. Being ready to be raptured is a matter of being filled with Christ to the uttermost—cf. Eph. 3:16-17a.

#### **II. The Lord's word in Matthew 25:1-13 is a parable for watchfulness:**

- A. "At that time the kingdom of the heavens will be likened to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom"—v. 1:
  - 1. Virgins signify believers viewed from the aspect of life—2 Cor. 11:2.

2. Lamps signify the spirit of the believers, which contains the Spirit of God as the oil—Prov. 20:27; Isa. 61:1; Heb. 1:9; Rom. 8:16.
- B. “The foolish, when they took their lamps, did not take oil with them; but the prudent took oil in their vessels with their lamps”—Matt. 25:3-4:
  1. Vessels signify the souls of the believers—Rom. 9:21, 23-24.
  2. Having oil in our lamp is to have the Spirit of God dwelling in our spirit.
  3. Taking oil in our vessel is to have the Spirit of God filling and saturating our soul.
  4. We have the Spirit in our regenerated spirit, but there is a question as to whether or not we have an extra portion of the Spirit in our soul.
- C. “The foolish said to the prudent, Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out. But the prudent answered, saying, Perhaps there will not be enough for us and for you; go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves”—Matt. 25:8-9:
  1. We need to pay the price for the filling of the Spirit in our soul—v. 4:
    - a. The price involves matters such as giving up the world, dealing with the self, loving the Lord above all, and counting all things loss for Christ.
    - b. The Spirit who came into our spirit was given freely, but the saturating Spirit to fill our soul is not free.
    - c. After having the Spirit in our spirit, we need to pay the price for the further filling of the Spirit, for the extra portion of oil.
  2. To be watchful is to be filled with the Spirit—v. 13; Eph. 5:17-18:
    - a. To be watchful is to prepare ourselves daily by buying the oil.
    - b. If we allow the Spirit to saturate our entire being, we are watchful persons, making ourselves ready for the Lord's coming.
  3. To have our soul saturated and filled with the Spirit cannot be accomplished in one day; it is a lifelong matter.
  4. Because we do not know when we will die, we need to get ready before we die by accumulating sufficient oil in our vessel—Matt. 25:4-5.
  5. There is no other way to gain the oil except by praying; through prayer we receive more Spirit—Eph. 5:18; 6:18.
  6. Whether or not we will be raptured early to enter into the wedding feast depends upon our daily buying of the Spirit—Matt. 25:10-12:
    - a. For us to be qualified to be raptured to enter into the Bridegroom's marriage feast requires our passing through a long period of accumulating the spiritual oil—22:2, 11-14; Rev. 19:7-9.
    - b. The sufficient oil will be our entry to the wedding feast—Matt. 25:10.