

Message Six

**Watching and Being Ready**

Scripture Reading: Matt. 24:32-44

**I. “But learn the parable from the fig tree: As soon as its branch has become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that the summer is near”—Matt. 24:32:**

- A. The fig tree signifies the nation of Israel as a sign to us concerning the Lord’s coming—Jer. 24:2, 5, 8.
- B. When the branch of the fig tree becomes tender and it puts forth its leaves, we know that summer, the full restoration of the Messianic kingdom, is near.

**II. “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”—v. 3:
  - 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

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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.

### III. **“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:

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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.
- IV. “Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord comes”—Matt. 24:42:**
- A. The overcomers will be the watchful saints, who will be raptured before the coming of the great tribulation—v. 21.
  - B. Whether or not we will be raptured before the great tribulation and taken away to meet Christ on the throne depends on our watchfulness and on our beseeching in a particular way—Luke 21:36.
- V. “But know this, that if the householder had known in which watch the thief was coming, he would have watched and would not have allowed his house to be broken into”—Matt. 24:43:**
- A. *Householder* refers to the believer, and *house* to the conduct and work that a believer has built up in his Christian life.
  - B. A thief comes only to steal what is precious; we need to be precious by being mature so that the Lord will come secretly and take us away as His treasure—Rev. 3:3; 16:15.
- VI. “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:**
- A. In the light of the truth concerning the rapture, we need to make ourselves ready for the Lord's coming by praying that we may grow and mature in life.

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- B. The rapture in which we will participate is Christ Himself—Col. 1:27; 3:3-4:
1. The rapture is a matter of being filled with Christ; thus, in order to be raptured, we need to be filled with Christ—Eph. 3:17a, 19b.
  2. When we have Christ wrought into us to a sufficient degree, we will be raptured—Gal. 4:19; 2 Thes. 1:10.