

**International Training for Elders and Responsible Ones (October 2020)**

**#2: Watching and Being Ready in Order to Be Prepared by the Lord for His Second and Imminent Coming (12/14-20)**

**OL Summary:**

**I. The Greek word for coming (Parousia) means “presence”; Christ’s coming will be His presence with His people; His Parousia will begin with the rapture of the man-child and of the firstfruits before the great tribulation and will end with His appearing on the earth with the saints at the end of the great tribulation.**

**II. We need to see the signs of the Lord’s second and imminent coming:** **A.** The greatest sign of the end of this age (when the last three and a half years of the great tribulation are about to begin) is the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom to the whole inhabited earth. **B.** Another great sign of the Lord’s coming is when Israel, represented by the fig tree, was miraculously restored as a nation; to the believers this fig tree is a sign of the end of this age. **C.** Before the day of the Lord’s second coming, the apostasy will come, and the man of lawlessness, Antichrist, will be revealed. /Thus, we can see that Isaiah 5:20 is fulfilled with the ones who believe the lie—“Woe to those who call evil good, / And good evil; / Who put darkness for light, / And light for darkness; / Who put bitter for sweet, / And sweet for bitter!” **D.** When the great tribulation, the last three and half years of this age, is about to begin, Antichrist will set up an abominable idol of desolation, an image of himself, in the temple and make people worship both it and him; this shows that the temple of God will be rebuilt before the Lord comes back. **E.** The conditions of evil living that stupefied the generation of Noah before the flood portray the perilous condition of man’s living before the Lord’s coming and the great tribulation. **F.** A sign of the Lord’s second coming is a lack of faith among many of His believers—“When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?” **G.** Another sign of the Lord’s second coming is that “because lawlessness will be multiplied, the love of the many will grow cold”. **H.** A sign of the end times and of the Lord’s second coming is the over-accumulation of wealth—“You have stored up treasure in the last days”.

**III. To be taken by the Lord, we need to be those who are watchful for His imminent coming and prepared and ready to be His bride so that we may be raptured before the great tribulation:** **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. **B.** In order to be those who love the Lord’s appearing, His coming back, we must treasure His appearing, His manifestation, to us today. **C.** The one who is taken is mature in life, and the other is not; to become mature is a lifelong matter; for the Lord’s coming, we need to prepare ourselves by loving Him to the uttermost and by growing up into Him in all things so that, at His appearing, we may be matured to be raptured. **D.** Being ready to be raptured is a matter of

being filled with Christ to the uttermost by praying that we may grow and mature in life. **E.** The meaning of being watchful is to be careful, not careless, every day on the alert against the possibility of stumbling; those who watch must be those who do not trust in themselves and are not self-confident. **F.** The Lord will come secretly, as a thief, to those who love Him and will take them away as His treasures; Christ is the preciousness to His believers, and our desire is for Him to fill us and saturate us with Himself as our supreme preciousness, our treasure, so that we become men of preciousness, even preciousness itself. **G.** Especially in these last days, we need to be watchful and give heed to the prophetic word as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in our hearts; in the few remaining days that we have, let us be those who love and serve the Lord, who are revived and overcoming every day, and who let the world go in order to be ready and waiting with all our heart for the Lord’s second coming.

**IV. The Lord’s word in Matthew 25:1-13 is a parable for watchfulness:** **A.** Virgins signify believers viewed from the aspect of life; the believers, the kingdom people, are like chaste virgins, bearing the Lord’s testimony (the lamp) in the dark age and going out of the world to meet the Lord; for this they need not only the indwelling but also the filling of the Holy Spirit. /The believers shine forth the light of the Spirit of God from within their spirit; in order for the divine light to shine into man’s inward parts, God’s Spirit as the oil must soak (mingle with) man’s spirit as the wick and “burn” together with man’s spirit. /Thus, the believers become the light of the world and shine as a lamp in the darkness of this age, bearing the testimony of the Lord for the glorification of God. **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”. **C.** One of the best ways to gain the oil, to receive more of the Spirit, is by musing on God’s word in order to have intimate fellowship with Him in a spirit and atmosphere of prayer. **D.** “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”. **E.** The foolish virgins, who do not take oil in their vessels and who are not ready when the Lord Jesus comes, will miss the wedding feast; whether or not will be raptured early to enter into the wedding feast depends upon our daily buying of the Spirit. **F.** To be watchful is to be filled with the Spirit all day long; if we allow the Spirit to saturate our entire being, we are watchful persons, making ourselves ready and being prepared by the Lord for His second coming. **G.** Every day we need to be watchful by paying the price to buy the Spirit as the golden oil so that we may supply the churches with the Spirit for the testimony of Jesus and be rewarded by the Lord to participate in the marriage dinner of the Lamb.

**CP1:** The greatest sign of the end of this age is the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom to the whole inhabited earth

Matt. 24:30 And at that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the land will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. **O11:** The greatest sign of the end of this age (when the last three and a half years of the great tribulation are about to begin) is the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom to the whole inhabited earth. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole inhabited earth for a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come. **O12:** Another great sign of the Lord's coming is when Israel, represented by the fig tree, was miraculously restored as a nation; to the believers this fig tree is a sign of the end of this age. 32-33 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. So also you, when you see all these things, know that it is near, at the doors.

The Lord's parousia will start when the Lord raptures the overcomers to heaven to be with Him before the beginning of the great tribulation. Beginning at this time, the Lord's parousia, that is, His coming, will last for three and a half years until His appearance is manifested. This manifestation..., or appearance, is what the Bible calls the manifestation (epiphaneia) of His coming (parousia). The Lord's return involves a period of time, the parousia (coming), and a point in time, the epiphaneia (manifestation).

The gospel of the kingdom, which includes the gospel of grace, brings people not only into God's salvation but also into the kingdom of the heavens. The gospel of grace emphasizes forgiveness of sin, God's redemption, and eternal life, whereas the gospel of the kingdom emphasizes the heavenly ruling of God and the authority of the Lord. This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole earth for a testimony to all the nations before the end of this age. Hence, that preaching, signified by the white horse of the first seal in Revelation 6:1-2, will be a sign of the consummation of this age.

When the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom to the whole world... has been accomplished, we should realize that the last three and a half years are about to begin.... Prior to this preaching, many other things will have taken place. But these things are not the signs of the end of the age, for in speaking about them the Lord said that the end was not yet. Therefore, the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom to all the inhabited earth will be the unique sign of the end of this age.

The fig tree represents the nation of Israel. In Matthew 21:18-20 the fig tree, the symbol of the nation of Israel, was cursed by the Lord and withered because it did not produce fruit for Him. The Jews lost their nation and were scattered. According to prophecies in the Bible, however, the Jews will recover their nation. The Lord's word concerning the fig tree branch becoming tender and putting forth its leaves refers to this matter.

Application to New Ones and Youth/College students

**FN** **testimony**: The gospel of the kingdom is a testimony to all the nations (Gentiles). This testimony must spread to the whole earth before the end of this age, the time of the great tribulation.

New ones and young people, recognizing that these days are approaching to the end, please have the burden for preaching the gospel of the kingdom to those around you, pray for this and practically go out with the saints to preach the gospel.

Science warns that if global warming continues at this rate, the Arctic will disappear by the year 2100, and ecosystems will not be able to keep up with the rapid changes. The greatest sign before the end of this age is the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom in the whole inhabited earth. The gospel of the kingdom must be preached primarily by local churches. Because the gospel of the kingdom is the gospel of God's economy, emphasizing God's heavenly rule and the Lord's authority. In the late 19th century, the "gospel of grace emphasizing the forgiveness of sins" was preached throughout the earth by England. But the gospel of the kingdom has not yet been fully preached. It must be preached by brothers and sisters of local churches who understand God's economy through the ministry words from the Recovery Version of Bible and the Life Studies, etc. and who build up the Body of Christ

In order for this prophecy to be fulfilled, it is necessary that

- 1 local churches flourish and are established in major cities,
- 2 that the brothers and sisters in local churches rise up and testify the gospel of the Kingdom to all who live in Japan,
- 3 for young people to rise up and continue and strengthen the testimony of the church. Church in Kobe must all rise up and preach the gospel of the Kingdom, and the number of Lord's table meetings must be increased from 185 (average for September-November 2020) to 200-300, and then to 500. We need to expand to the major neighboring cities, such as Nishinomiya, Amagasaki, Akashi, and Himeji, in order to fulfill the prophecy concerning the gospel.

Man has a solution to the problem of sin and God's will for man (expressing corporately and representing God). When it comes to the problem of sin, "good works," "education," "ethics," "chanting," and "religion" cannot save man from sin. This is because without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins. The Lord shed His blood on the cross and died for man's sins as the sinless One. Therefore, those who believe in Him and are united with Him will have their sins forgiven and be covered with the righteousness of Christ.

When it comes to God's will, man needs to enjoy Christ and be filled with Him, and express Christ greatly together with the saints in the church life, and rule over God's enemy Satan representing God's authority.

Take up the burden for preaching this gospel of the kingdom to your relatives, friends, and neighbors and pray for them. When you pray for the Lord's prophecy to be fulfilled, the Holy Spirit begins to work. And when you go out for the gospel, you will be blessed as a coworker of God. **Prayer:** "Lord Jesus, I also feel these days are approaching to the end. I take up the burden for preaching the gospel of the kingdom to those around me and to the people in Kobe and Nishinomiya City where we live. I pray for this with the saints and practically go out to preach the gospel. Fill me with the Spirit and strengthen me. To continue and strengthen the testimony of the church, perfect us young people as vessels to bring Lord's second coming to turn the age."

**CP2:** Another sign of the Lord's second coming is that lawlessness will be multiplied. Watch and be prepared for the rapture before the great tribulation

**OL1:** Before the day of the Lord's second coming, the apostasy will come, and the man of lawlessness, Antichrist, will be revealed. 2 Thes. 2:3 ...It will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition. 7 For it is the mystery of lawlessness that is now operating. **OL2:** Another sign of the Lord's second coming is that "because lawlessness will be multiplied, the love of the many will grow cold". **OL3:** A sign of the end times and of the Lord's second coming is the overaccumulation of wealth. **OL4:** To be taken by the Lord, we need to be those who are watchful for His imminent coming and prepared and ready to be His bride so that we may be raptured before the great tribulation. Rev. 3:10 Because you have kept the word of My endurance, I also will keep you out of the hour of trial, which is about to come on the whole inhabited earth, to try them who dwell on the earth.

According to 2 Thessalonians 2:4, holy place refers to the temple of God. Antichrist will set up an abominable idol of desolation, an image of himself, in the temple and make people worship it. This shows that the temple in Jerusalem will be restored. When the great tribulation, the last three and a half years, is about to begin, Antichrist will set up his image in the temple. When this happens, the day of the Lord's second coming will be very close....

Second Timothy 3:1-5 describes the condition of human society at the end of this age... [as] a sign of the Lord's second coming.... In the last days men will love themselves the most, followed closely by money...There also will be boasting, arrogance, reviling, and the blaspheming of God.... They all do things recklessly and arrogantly under the guise of freedom. It is also a particular characteristic of people today to be lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God...These are all signs of the Lord's second coming, and they should remind us that we must watch and be prepared for the Lord to come.

Before the Lord's imminent coming, there will be clear signs. During this time, men will accumulate wealth in an unprecedented way...No other age will see as much wealth as the age immediately preceding the Lord's return. Not only is there a multiplication of material enjoyment, but there is a multiplication of lustful indulgence. I am saying this to let all the brothers and sisters throughout the whole world know that the day of the Lord is approaching! We have to spend whatever we have on the Lord, while the money is still useful.

To be taken means to be raptured before the great tribulation. It is very interesting to see that the two men are working in the field and that the two women are grinding at the mill. Both working in the field and grinding are for eating. There is a difference between our eating and the eating of the worldly people. The worldly people study and work, and we also study and work. The worldly people, however, have been drugged. But we... rather... are simply fulfilling our duty to make a living...We maintain our existence in order to take

the way of the cross to fulfill God.

Application to business person/graduate students

2 Tim. 3:1 But know this, that in the last days difficult times will come. 2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boasters, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 Without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, savage, not lovers of good, 4 Traitors, reckless, blinded with pride, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 Having an outward form of godliness, though denying its power; from these also turn away. 1 Tim. 6:6 But godliness with contentment is great gain; 7 For we have brought nothing into the world, because neither can we carry anything out. 8 But having food and covering, with these we will be content. 9 But those who intend to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge men into destruction and ruin. 10 For the love of money is a root of all evils, because of which some, aspiring after money, have been led away from the faith and pierced themselves through with many pains.

As business person, please be watchful not to be fallen into the love of money and led away from faith. You should sweat and work diligently and complete your duty. It is not only to support your family financially but it should be for the purpose of human existence, which is "preach the gospel of the kingdom and shepherd new ones to build up the church". Never dream to be rich to be luxurious. This evil desire will ruin and destruct you.

For the lord's testimony, move up the career ladder and offer more materials as much as possible. But this should not be motivated by the love of money. And you should follow the capacity measured up by the Lord. You should make your career plan under the Lord's restriction and never try to develop unlimitedly according to the lust. If the Lord keeps you in profession, stay there. Lord's measure for you might be for one profession, or manager, director, executives or president. Anyways go on according to the rule of Lord's measure and learn to be blessed. 2 Cor.10:13 But we will not boast beyond our measure but according to the measure of the rule which the God of measure has apportioned to us, to reach even as far as you. FN"measure": The apostle was bold, but not without limit. This shows that he was under the restriction of the Lord. His boasting was according to the measure of the rule which the God of measure, the ruling God, had apportioned to him.

Prayer: "In this age of end, the worldly people aspire money and overaccumulate the wealth as it has never seen before. But as I am in the Lord, I work diligently to complete my duty and pursue upward as much as possible according to the measure the Lord has apportioned me. It is not only to support my family financially but also to support the financial need of the church. Let me not fall into the love of money according to the mystery of lawlessness and be led away from faith. I take grace and take the way of the cross and accomplish the God ordained will."

CP3: Being prepared by the Lord for His second coming, make Christ the person, paying the price to buy the oil, and take the oil in the vessels.

Matt. 25:1 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. 4 But the prudent took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 8 And the foolish said to the prudent, Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out. 10 ...As they were going away to buy, the bridegroom came; and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast. And the door was shut.

None of us knows the day or hour of His coming.... If you are not watchful in life, you will receive some dispensational punishment....What shall we do to meet Him? We must be prepared. We are virgins going out to meet the One who is coming to us as the most pleasant person, as a Bridegroom. In this solemn book of Matthew He would not let us know when He would come. His not letting us know means that we have to be watchful and always keep ourselves exercised.

We all are going out of the world to meet our Bridegroom, bearing a lamp as a shining testimony....This lamp should be bright and shining, so it needs oil. Oil in typology signifies the Spirit of God, and we need the Spirit as the burning oil. We are going out to meet Him, bearing a shining testimony, so we need the burning oil, the burning Spirit. With the lamp there is a vessel. The foolish ones have oil in their lamps, their spirits, but they do not have the extra portion of oil in their vessels, their souls. We should be in a situation of going out to meet Him and bearing His testimony. For this purpose we need more oil, more Spirit, so we have to buy the oil. This extra portion of oil could never be given to you as a gift. You could never get it freely. You need to buy the oil.

To accumulate a deposit of the extra portion of the Holy Spirit in your being is not an overnight job....To pick up things that become a constitution of your proper being is not a matter of one day or even one year. It is a matter of daily business for a lifetime.

Matthew 25:8 [indicates that]... after resurrection the foolish believers discovered that they were short of the Spirit of God and needed the fullness of the Spirit of God....They did not have an extra portion of the Spirit in their vessel, in their soul, their being. Then the foolish ones begged the prudent ones to help by giving them some oil. "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"(25:9). We should not forget that this conversation takes place after all the believers have been resurrected.... [Many believers] were short of the Spirit all the time during their life, but they were befuddled and stupefied. When they are resurrected, they will discover their shortage, but then it will be too late.

Application to the serving ones

25:4FN "took oil in their vessels": Man is a vessel made for God, and man's personality is in his soul. Hence, vessels here signify the souls of the believers. The five prudent virgins not only have oil in their lamps but also take oil in their vessels. That they have oil in their lamps signifies that they have the Spirit of God dwelling in their spirit, and that they take oil in their vessels signifies that they have the Spirit of God filling and saturating their souls. 10FN "ready": We should be ready, always having oil in our vessels, always being filled with the Spirit of God in our whole being. Watching and being ready should be our daily exercise for the Lord's coming (parousia). 9FN "not be enough": No one can obtain the filling of the Holy Spirit for others.

25:11 And later the rest of the virgins came also, saying, Lord, lord, open to us! 12 But he answered and said, Truly I say to you, I do not know you. 12FN "I do not know you": Not know here carries the sense of not recognize, not approve, as in Luke 13:25. The foolish virgins had their lamps lighted, went forth to meet the Lord, died, and were resurrected and raptured, but were late in paying the price for the filling of the Holy Spirit. Because of this the Lord would not recognize them, approve them, for participation in His wedding feast. They miss this dispensational reward but do not lose their eternal salvation.

As a serving one, you need to serve diligently and at the same time pursue the growth of life. You need to open your heart to the Lord so that the Holy Spirit spreads from the regenerated spirit to every part of the soul. In other words, you need to not only make Christ the enjoyment of life, but also deny the person of the soul and make Christ the person. Instead of deciding things according to your soul, you should live Christ according to Christ as a person. In many cases, you care about how you feel, but not how the Lord feels. Learn to make Christ a person, considering whether Christ will go, not whether you want to go. Then you can accumulate oil in the soul, which is the vessel.

For example, we need to change our service arrangements to accommodate changes in the environment. You ask what the Lord wants to do in you, not "like or dislike" or "whether you gain or lose", and learn to make Christ a person in reality. Buying the oil means denying the person of the soul and making Christ the person. It is also to receive the Lord as a fully open vessel.

Prayer: "Let me have the Spirit of God fill and saturate my soul and have oil in my lamp and vessel, like the five prudent virgins in Matthew 25. Not only do I enjoy Christ as life, but I can't accumulate oil in my vessel unless I make Christ my person and deny the person of the soul. Let me live Christ and prepare for the second coming of the Lord according to Christ as a person, rather than deciding things according to my soul."