

Week 45

The Lamb Whom the Overcoming Firstfruits Follow

Hymns: E1304

Scripture Reading: Rev. 14:1-5; Gen. 5:22-24; Heb. 11:5-6; Matt. 24:45-51

- Rev. 14:1 And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him a hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.
- Rev. 14:2 And I heard a voice out of heaven like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder; and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harp-singers playing on their harps.
- Rev. 14:3 And they sing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the hundred and forty-four thousand, who have been purchased from the earth.
- Rev. 14:4 These are they who have not been defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are they who follow the Lamb wherever He may go. These were purchased from among men as firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.
- Rev. 14:5 And in their mouth no lie was found; they are without blemish.
- Gen. 5:22 And Enoch walked with God after he had begotten Methuselah three hundred years, and he begot more sons and daughters.
- Gen. 5:23 And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty-five years.
- Gen. 5:24 And Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.
- Heb. 11:5 By faith Enoch was translated so that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God had translated him. For before his translation he obtained the testimony that he had been well pleasing to God.
- Heb. 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing to Him, for he who comes forward to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.
- Matt. 24:45 Who then is the faithful and prudent slave, whom the master has set over his household to give them food at the proper time?
- Matt. 24:46 Blessed is that slave whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing.
- Matt. 24:47 Truly I say to you that he will set him over all his possessions.
- Matt. 24:48 But if that evil slave says in his heart, My master delays,
- Matt. 24:49 And begins to beat his fellow slaves and eats and drinks with the drunken,
- Matt. 24:50 The master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know,
- Matt. 24:51 And will cut him asunder and appoint his portion with the hypocrites. In that place there will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

I. Revelation 14:1-5 reveals Christ as the Lamb whom the overcoming firstfruits follow:

A. The firstfruits are the living overcomers, who will be the first ripe ones in God's field; hence, they will be reaped before the harvest as firstfruits to God and to the Lamb:

1. The firstfruits will be caught up to the heavenly Mount Zion, to the place of God's dwelling in the third heaven, in order to be in the presence of God and Christ.
2. The meaning of rapture is to be taken into the Lord's presence; in order to be taken into the Lord's presence, we must be in His presence today—Luke 21:36; 2 Cor. 2:10; Hosea 6:2; 2 Tim. 4:8; Acts 26:16.
3. The rapture is for defeating the enemy and satisfying God; the Lord needs the man-child to fight against His enemy, but He needs the firstfruits even more for His satisfaction and enjoyment—Rev. 12:5; 14:1, 4b.

B. The Bible reveals two aspects of the rapture: the rapture of the overcomers before the great tribulation and the rapture of the majority of the believers at the end of the great tribulation—Matt. 24:40-41; Luke 21:36; Rev. 3:10; 1 Thes. 4:15-17; Rev. 12:5; 14:1.

C. In Leviticus 23:10 we see a type of the rapture—the type of the crop ripening in the field—Matt. 13:24; Rev. 14:14-16:

1. The reaping of God's crop is what we call the rapture; this reaping indicates that the believers will be taken away from the earth—Matt. 13:30, 39b.
2. Part of the crop—the firstfruits—ripens earlier and is reaped earlier; the rest of the crop—the harvest—ripens later and is reaped later.
3. According to Revelation 14, there are two kinds of rapture—the rapture of the firstfruits and the rapture of the harvest—vv. 4b, 14-16.

D. The firstfruits are raptured to the house of God in Zion as the fresh enjoyment to God; this is for God's satisfaction—Exo. 23:19a; Lev. 23:10; cf. John 20:17a.

E. The firstfruits have the name of the Lamb and the name of His Father written on their foreheads; this is the designation of their being one with the Lamb and with the Father and of their belonging to Them—Rev. 14:1b.

F. The firstfruits are the earliest among God's crop to reach maturity—Heb. 5:14—6:1; 1 Cor. 2:6; Eph. 4:13; Phil. 3:15:

1. To be transformed is to be changed in our natural life; to be matured is to be filled with the divine life that changes us—Rom. 12:2; Eph. 3:19b.
2. For God's expression there is the need of maturity; only a mature life can bear God's image and exercise His dominion—Gen. 1:26; Rom. 5:10, 17, 21.

§ Day 3 & Day 4

II. In order for us to follow the Lamb and go on to maturity to become the firstfruits, we must walk with God by faith to escape death and obtain the testimony of being well pleasing to God:

A. The way to escape death and obtain the testimony of being well pleasing to God is to walk with God—Gen. 5:22-24; Heb. 11:5-6:

1. To walk with God is not to override God, not to be presumptuous, not to do things according to our own concept and desire, not to do things according to the current of the age, and not to do anything without God—cf. Psalms 19:12-13; Joshua 9:14b; Luke 24:15.
2. To walk with God is to take Him as our center and everything, to live and do things according to God and with God, according to His revelation and leading, and to do everything with Him—Rom. 8:4, 13-14; Gal. 2:2a; 2 Cor. 5:14-15.

3. To walk with God means that we do not live by what we are or can do but by the immortal life, which is Christ Himself—vv. 4, 9.

4. To walk with God is to have habitual fellowship with God, to be in constant touch with the Lord, and to be under His constant infusion—1 John 1:3; Phil. 4:6; 2 Cor. 3:16, 18.

5. To walk with God is to continually exercise our spirit to enjoy the Blessed Trinity—Jude 14, 19-21.

6. To walk with God implies the denying of our self and everything that is of our self so that we may be one with Him; it implies that we have given ourselves to Him, that we will give in to Him and let Him take the lead—Matt. 16:24-25; 2 Cor. 2:13-14.

B. To walk with God is to walk by faith—5:7; Heb. 11:5-6:

1. Faith means that we believe that God is—vv. 1-2, 6; 2 Cor. 4:13, 18:

a. Without faith it is impossible to please God, to make God happy—Heb. 11:6a.

b. To believe that God is, is to believe that He is everything to us and that we are nothing—John 8:58; Eccl. 1:2.

c. To believe that God is implies that we are not; He must be the only One, the unique One, in everything, and we must be nothing in everything—Gen. 5:24; Heb. 11:5.

d. To believe that God is, is to deny our self; in the whole universe He is, and all of us are nothing—Luke 9:23.

e. I should not be anything; I should not exist; only He should exist—it is no longer I, but Christ—Gal. 2:20.

f. At his conversion the Lord told Saul of Tarsus, "I am Jesus"—Acts 9:5:

(1) The Lord was saying, "I am the great I Am; I am the One who is; you

must believe that I am and that you are not."

(2) Eventually, Saul was over, and Paul came up—13:9.

g. This is faith—"O the joy of having nothing and being nothing, seeing nothing but a living Christ in glory, and being careful for nothing but His interests down here"—J. N. Darby.

2. Faith means that we believe that God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him—Heb. 11:6; Gen. 15:1; Phil. 3:8, 14:

a. Enoch's reward was the highest degree of life—escape from death—Heb. 11:5a; 2 Cor. 5:4; Rom. 8:6, 10-11; 5:17.

b. The Lord is a rewarder, and we need to be His seekers—Psa. 27:4, 8; 42:1-2; 43:4; 73:25; 119:2, 10.

C. Enoch, as the first person to be raptured, is the representative of all the overcomers who will be raptured while they are living—Matt. 24:37-51; Rev. 14:1; Luke 21:34-36:

1. Our being raptured depends on our being mature in the divine life by our walking with God—Heb. 6:1a.

2. Enoch continually walked upward with God day and night for three centuries, becoming closer to God and more one with God each day until "he was not, for God took him"—Gen. 5:24; cf. S. S. 8:5a.

§ Day 5

III. In order for us to follow the Lamb and go on to maturity to become the firstfruits, we must be faithful in service in the Lord's commission to give God as food to the members of His household so that we may win Christ as our reward in the coming kingdom—Matt. 24:45-51:

A. God has a household and a household administration, an economy,

to dispense Himself as food to the members of His household for His expression—1 Tim. 1:4; 3:15; Eph. 2:19.

B. God has set faithful and prudent slaves over His household as household administrators, stewards, channels of supply, to give His people food at the proper time—Matt. 24:45; 1 Cor. 9:17; Eph. 3:2; 1 Cor. 4:1; 1 Pet. 4:10; Phil. 1:25.

C. Give them food refers to ministering the word of God and Christ as the life supply to the believers in the church; Christ as the life-giving Spirit is our food, embodied and realized in the word of life—John 6:57, 63, 68; Acts 5:20:

1. In order to enjoy the Lord as our spiritual food so that we can feed others, we must pray over and muse on His word, tasting and enjoying it through careful considering—Eph. 6:17-18; Psa. 119:15; Ezek. 3:1-4.

2. We must devote ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the word—Acts 6:4; 2 Cor. 3:6, 8; John 7:37-39; cf. Heb. 7:25; 8:2.

§ Day 6

D. To say in our heart that our Master delays is to love the present evil age and not to love the Lord's appearing—Matt. 24:48; 2 Tim. 4:8, 10; cf. Acts 26:16:

1. We must beware of covetousness, not storing up treasure for ourselves but being rich toward God—Luke 12:15-20; 2 Cor. 6:10; Eph. 3:8.

2. "Remember Lot's wife" is a solemn warning to the world-loving believers—Luke 17:31-32; cf. Rom. 1:21, 25.

3. We must be watchful and beseeching so that the day of the Lord's coming would not come upon us suddenly as a snare—Luke 21:34-36; cf. Matt. 2:3.

E. To beat our fellow slaves is to mistreat our fellow believers—24:49a; 18:3-7; Acts 9:4:

1. We must not judge and condemn our fellow believers but be kind to them, tenderhearted, forgiving them, even as God in Christ forgave us—Luke 6:37; Eph. 4:31-32.
2. We must not revile or criticize our brothers but consider them more excellent than ourselves—1 Cor. 6:10; Phil. 2:2-3, 29:
 - a. To revile a brother is to criticize or demean him harshly with abusive language—cf. Luke 17:2.
 - b. Those who take in reviling words bear the same responsibility as those who speak reviling words; such words damage the Body.
 - c. God will never entrust authority to those who by nature like to criticize others.
3. We must not lord it over our fellow believers but serve them as a slave to feed them with the resurrected Christ as the life-giving Spirit—1 Pet. 5:3; Matt. 20:25-28:
 - a. For one to lord it over the saints means that he replaces the Lord in their lives by making decisions for them or by telling them where to move, thus, insulting the headship and lordship of Christ.
 - b. If we tell others where they should go without encouraging them to pray, seek the Lord's leading, and have the proper fellowship in the Body, this is a great insult to the Lord!

F. To eat and drink with the drunken is to keep company with worldly people, who are drunk with worldly things—24:49b; cf. Eph. 5:18:

1. Because of their divine nature and holy standing, the believers should not be yoked together with the unbelievers; this should be applied to all intimate relationships between believers and unbelievers, not only to marriage and business—2 Cor. 6:14; 1 Cor. 15:33; cf. Prov. 13:20.
2. We must flee youthful lusts and pursue the all-inclusive Christ with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart—2 Tim. 2:22.

WEEK 45 — DAY 1

Morning Nourishment

Rev. 14:1 And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him a hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.

4 These are they who have not been defiled with women, for they are virgins...who follow the Lamb wherever He may go. These were purchased from among men as firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.

Revelation 14:1-4 reveals Christ as the Lamb whom the overcoming firstfruits follow. In the Old Testament typology the sheaf of the firstfruits of the good land was brought into the temple and offered to God directly for His enjoyment. In the New Testament reality, the one hundred forty-four thousand overcomers will be the firstfruits in God's new creation offered to Him directly in the heavenly Holy of Holies for His satisfaction. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 4301)

Today's Reading

These early overcomers will be the first-ripe ones in God's field...This means that the overcomers will be raptured to the heavens before the harvest, just as the firstfruits of the good land were reaped and brought into the temple of God before the harvest (Lev. 23:10-11)...The events recorded in Revelation 14:6-13, all of which will take place during the great tribulation (Matt. 24:21), indicate clearly and prove strongly that the first overcomers, the firstfruits in Revelation 14:1-5, will be raptured before the great tribulation, and that the harvest in verses 14 through 16, composed of the majority of the believers, will be raptured at the end of the great tribulation.

These one hundred forty-four thousand firstfruits will not be taken to the air; rather, they will be taken to the heavens, even to the heavenly Mount Zion...The firstfruits are a small part of the harvest which ripens first. This

signifies that as God's chosen people are growing on earth, a small number among them will become the firstfruits, the overcomers.

The firstfruits in Revelation 14 are before the throne of God; they are no longer on this earth. This means that they have been raptured. They are on Mount Zion in the heavens, before the throne of God. They are standing not in the air but upon the throne, upon Mount Zion. This refers to Mount Zion in the heavens where God dwells. Thus, the firstfruits go not to the air...but directly to the Father's home in the third heaven.

Revelation 14:1 indicates that the one hundred forty-four thousand have the name of the Lamb and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. They are in contrast to those who worship the beast and have the name of the beast written on their foreheads (13:16-17)...[This] signifies that [the overcomers] are one with the Lamb and with the Father and that they belong to the Lamb and to the Father. It also signifies that the overcomers have become the same as the Lamb and the Father. This corresponds with Revelation 3:12, which says that the Lord Jesus will write His new name upon the overcomer. This indicates that eventually the overcomers become Christ. Likewise, the overcomers' bearing the name of Christ, the Lamb, and His Father implies the union and mingling of the redeeming Triune God and His redeemed people. This is exceedingly profound.

The firstfruits are the faithful followers of the Lamb [14:4]...The overcomers' following the Lamb wherever He may go indicates that they constantly enjoy and experience Him. They follow Jesus and are not defiled by the earthly things.

Because they were always with the Lamb, having followed the Lamb wherever He went, they are seen...standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion [v. 1]. Because they are already in the Lord's presence, the rapture will not come as a surprise to them. They are living in the heavens today, and they will be standing with the Lamb in the heavens on Mount Zion in the future. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 4301-4305)

Further Reading: The Conclusion of the New Testament, msg. 422; Life-study of Revelation, msg. 46

WEEK 45 — DAY 2

Morning Nourishment

Heb. 6:1 Therefore leaving the word of the beginning of Christ, let us be brought on to maturity...

Eph. 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

In Revelation 12 the rapture of the man-child, who fights against God's enemy, is for a function before God. God needs the man-child to be raptured to the heavens to fight the battle with His enemy so that the enemy might be defeated and cast down to the earth for the fulfillment of God's purpose. In the same principle, the firstfruits in chapter 14 do not merely enjoy the rapture but satisfy God's need. God and the Lamb need enjoyment. God is hungry and thirsty. He desires some first-fruits to taste for His satisfaction. On the one hand, the man-child fulfills God's purpose by defeating His enemy, and on the other hand, the firstfruits are for God's satisfaction. As the firstfruits offered to God in the temple for His satisfaction, the living overcomers enjoy the rapture in order to take care of God's need. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 4308)

Today's Reading

We should pay attention to our maturity so that we may be the firstfruits to satisfy the heart of God...If we are still immature, how can we be the firstfruits and be raptured?

In order to be the firstfruits, we must love the Lord Jesus...We should spend our time in loving the Lord, saying, "Lord, I enjoy looking at You and talking to You. Lord, I want to satisfy You, to be one with You, and to stay in Your presence." We should learn to spend time loving the Lord Jesus in an intimate way...It is not adequate merely to be sinless; neither is it sufficient simply to be good or right. We must be in love with the Lord. We all need to

fall in love with the Lord Jesus, telling Him, "O Lord Jesus, I love You, and You know that I love You. Because I love You, Lord, there are certain things that I will not do." This is the way to be a living overcomer. Although the Lord certainly needs the man-child to fight against His enemy, even more He needs the firstfruits, His lovers, to be His satisfaction.

We should be firstfruits, those who ripen earlier for the Lord's satisfaction. We need to say, "Lord, for the sake of Your satisfaction, I want to ripen early... Lord, as long as I can satisfy You, it makes no difference to me whether I am on earth or in heaven." This is the attitude of the living overcomers.

Because it does not matter to the firstfruits where they are, we are not told that they are caught up; instead, we are simply told that the one hundred forty-four thousand firstfruits are standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion... This surely is not the Zion on earth but the Zion in the heavens...Those who are raptured as the firstfruits will have no feeling of surprise. Rather, they will say, "Lord Jesus, I have been with You continuously for years. Lord, it makes no difference whether I am on earth or in the third heaven. I have no special feeling about being here because I have been in Your presence for years. I have lived in this atmosphere for a long time."...If we truly love the Lord and live in intimate fellowship with Him, the rapture will not come as a surprise; it will be an ordinary experience.

The firstfruits are the saints who are saturated with the Lord Jesus. They are the ones who have been fully occupied with Christ and taken over by Christ until they are matured. Our heart should ache for many of the Lord's children who seem to be ignorant, careless, and dull concerning the need to be matured...We need to consider how mature we are...We need to take this word seriously and bring this matter to the Lord.

We all need to pray, "Lord, have mercy upon me that I would be a part of the firstfruits and that I would be an overcomer." We need to see God's purpose and intention, and we need to see our responsibility to cooperate with Him. We should enjoy Christ, participate in Him, and take Him in until we are matured. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 4308-4310, 4312)

Further Reading: CWWN, vol. 57, ch. 22

WEEK 45 — DAY 3

Morning Nourishment

Gen. 5:24 And Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.

Heb. 11:5 By faith Enoch was translated so that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God had translated him. For before his translation he obtained the testimony that he had been well pleasing to God.

The way to escape the ultimate issue of man's fall was discovered by the seventh generation, Enoch. Enoch lived in such a way that he was kept from death both literally and totally. Before Enoch was taken up by the Lord and while he was living and walking on earth, death had ceased to kill him.

Enoch was the first person to be raptured...Since the first mention of a thing in the Bible establishes the principle for that thing, the case of Enoch, the first mention of the rapture, establishes the principle of the rapture. What is the principle of the rapture? It is to be matured in life by walking with God. Enoch walked with God for three hundred years, and God took him away (Gen. 5:22-24). (Life-study of Genesis, 2nd ed., pp. 349-350)

Today's Reading

Do you expect to be raptured? If you do, you need to walk with God. We should not only call upon the name of the Lord but should also walk with God. The calling must be followed by the walking. To walk with God is not to override God, not to be presumptuous, not to do things according to our own concept and desire, nor is it to do anything without God. To walk with God is to take Him as our center and everything, to do things according to His revelation and leading, and to do everything with Him. It is not only to live for God and to do things for God but to live and to do things according to God and with God. Enoch walked with God in

such a way, living and doing things according to God and with God, not according to his own desire or concept or according to the current of the age in which he lived.

Please tell me, is God walking with you, or are you walking with God? Was God walking with Enoch, or was Enoch walking with God? The Bible does not say that God walked with Enoch; it says that Enoch walked with God.

In order to walk with God, we must be with Him. We must be one with Him in our thinking, loving, and choosing...It is not easy for one person to walk with another. Suppose, while I am walking with you, I have a different concept from you and say, "Brother, I love you, and I want to walk with you, but don't go that way. Turn this way. I don't want to go that way." If I say this, I am not walking with you; I am arguing with you. However, this is exactly what so many lovers of Jesus do. They say, "Lord, I love You and I like to follow You. I want to go with You." However, when the actual time comes, many do not walk with Him but argue with Him. For you to walk with the Lord implies a great deal: the denial of yourself, the denial of your thinking and your loving, the denial of everything that is of you. It implies that you have given yourself to Him, that you will give in to Him and let Him take the lead...Walking with Him will kill you. My wife suffers whenever she walks with me. Nevertheless, if you are going to walk with me, you have to deny yourself. On the other hand, if I am going to walk with you, I must forget myself, condemn myself, and renounce myself that I may be one with you. If I am unwilling to do this, I cannot walk with you or with anyone else.

Enoch walked upward with God. Do not think that Enoch's being taken away by God happened suddenly. Do not think that one moment he was on earth and that the next he was in heaven. Enoch did not walk up and down with God; neither did he walk in a zigzag pattern. He continually walked upward until he touched heaven. At the age of three hundred sixty-five, as he was nearly touching heaven, God said to him, "Dear child, I am here. Come with Me." And Enoch was taken away. (Life-study of Genesis, 2nd ed., pp. 350-352, 351-352)

Further Reading: Life-study of Genesis, msg. 26

WEEK 45 — DAY 4

Morning Nourishment

Heb. 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing to Him, for he who comes forward to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Luke 9:23 ...If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me.

He who comes forward to God must believe that God is (Heb. 11:6b). This is very simple. God requires you only to believe that He is. The verb to be is actually the divine title of our Triune God...Moses asked God what His name was. God answered that His name is I Am Who I Am (Exo. 3:13-14). Our God's name is the verb to be. He is I Am Who I Am. He is the only One.

In the whole universe...only One is. He is, because He is real. All other things created by Him are not real. This is why Solomon, the wise king, said that all things are vanity (Eccl. 1:2)...The sun, the moon, the living creatures, the heavens, and the earth are all vanities. Only One is. This is, the verb to be, implies existing. He is the One who was existing, who is existing, and who is to be existing. (CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 1, "Crystallization-study of the Epistle to the Romans," pp. 276-277)

Today's Reading

Jesus is the great I Am. He told us, "I am...the life" (John 14:6a). "I am the resurrection" (11:25). "I am the door" (10:7, 9). "I am the good Shepherd" (v. 11). "I am the bread of life" (6:35). He is the real food...He is the breath (20:22), the living water (4:10, 14), and the tree of life (15:1; 14:6a; Rev. 2:7). He is God (John 1:1; 20:28-29; Rom. 9:5), the Father (Isa. 9:6; John 14:9-10), the Son (Mark 1:1; John 20:31), and the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17; 1 Cor. 15:45b). He is everything to us. Our life is a false one...We are

today, but eventually, we will not be tomorrow. So in the whole universe we are nothing.

If a husband realized that only God is and he is not, then he would not love his wife by himself and in himself. The brothers need to ask themselves, "Is it me or Christ who is the husband to my wife?"...If her husband is Christ, she has the only Husband, the unique Husband. Only Christ is the Husband. No husbands are real husbands. They are all vanity. Do you come forward to God? If you say yes, then you have to believe that God is, implying that you are nothing. You are finished. It would be good to speak a word like this at a wedding. The person marrying a couple could say to them, "Are you the dear bride, and are you the dear bridegroom?" The bridegroom should say, "No. I am not. But Christ is." The bride should say, "I am not the bride...I am not pretty. Christ is the beautiful One. I am not the bride, but He is." This is a believer. When you say what Paul said, "It's no longer I, but Christ," you believe that God is. To believe that God is...implies that you realize that you are not, but He is. You are not means that you do not exist. This is what the Bible means when it says to deny yourself...A believer who is about to be married should say, "Lord, I am going to marry this man. Lord, You know I am nothing. I cannot be the proper wife. I am nothing, Lord."...This is the blessing of denying yourself in everything.

To deny yourself equals to believe that God is, and to believe that God is equals to deny yourself. This is because you believe that only He is. In the whole universe He is, and all of us are nothing. I should not be anything. I should not exist. Only He should be everything. Only He should exist. So Paul says, "I have been crucified. It is no longer I, but Christ." I would like...to refer to what Darby said: "O the joy of having nothing and being nothing, seeing nothing but a living Christ in glory, and being careful for nothing but His interests down here." This is faith. We care for nothing but His interest. We should always say, "Not I, not me, not my, not mine; but He, Him, His. He is the first and the last and everything in between." (CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 1, "Crystallization-study of the Epistle to the Romans," pp. 277-280)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 1, "Crystallization-study of the Epistle to the Romans," ch. 7

WEEK 45 — DAY 5

Morning Nourishment

Matt. 24:45-47 Who then is the faithful and prudent slave, whom the master has set over his household to give them food at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Truly I say to you that he will set him over all his possessions.

The household spoken of in Matthew 24:45 refers to the believers (Eph. 2:19), who constitute the church (1 Tim. 3:15). To give them food is to minister the word of God and Christ as the life supply to the believers in the church. We all must learn how to minister the life supply to the household of the Lord at the proper time. [In] Matthew 24:46-47...to be blessed is to be rewarded with the authority to rule in the manifestation of the kingdom. In the manifestation of the kingdom of the heavens, the Lord will set the faithful slave over all His possessions. This will be a reward to him. (Life-study of Matthew, p. 705)

Today's Reading

In Matthew 24:45-51...the Lord charged us, commissioned us, to minister something to His household, that is, to the believers in the church...At the proper time we have to minister food, the life supply, to the Lord's people. Do not say that others have a gift of teaching to teach you the Word of God and minister spiritual food to you but that you do not have such a gift...All of the Lord's servants received the gift for their commission.

Whoever serves food knows the proper time. If you are serving food every day, you have to make breakfast, lunch, and dinner...In like manner, whenever we meet together, this is one of the proper times, the appointed times, for you to minister the proper food to the Lord's folks...If I did not labor adequately in the Word and came to speak to you, I would just be ministering to you "a

cup of coffee and some doughnuts." To cook a nourishing, good breakfast requires your diligence. According to the context of this parable, the faithful one is the diligent one. Faithful here equals diligent, and slothful equals lazy. We must be diligent in seeking the Word so that we could prepare to serve good food when we come to the meeting. The eating time is the proper time, and the meeting time is the proper time. We have the proper time on the Lord's Day morning, on the Lord's Day evening, Tuesday evening, and Friday evening. The meeting times are the proper times when we all have to minister some portion of the life supply to our folks, to our fellow believers.

To care for them is simply to feed them, to minister food to them. To the sinners the proper food that we minister is the gospel of Christ. The nurses in the hospitals know that they must serve the patients with different meals. Different food is ministered to different patients to meet their specific needs. It is the same with us. The entire earth is a hospital, full of sickness and full of all kinds of sick people. The church in a good sense is also a hospital, full of sick people. Therefore, we have to minister different words to them at the proper time...The believers, the churches, and even the more all the sinners are around you. It is your duty, your obligation, to minister food to them. If they are sinners, you have to minister the gospel of grace to them as the food they need. If they are believers sick of something, then you need to minister some word from the Bible that suits their condition, either to nourish them, to heal them, to strengthen them, or to wake them up...When you enter into your office, you must realize that this is one of the proper times to minister the proper food of the gospel to the unbelieving ones. (CWWL, 1985, vol. 5, "The Way to Practice the Lord's Present Move," pp. 514-517)

In several verses the writer of Psalm 119 tells us that he mused upon God's word (vv. 15, 23, 48, 78, 99, 148). To muse on the word is to taste it through careful considering. Thus, musing is a kind of enjoyment. I can testify that most of the enlightenment I receive comes by musing on the Word early in the morning. As I muse on the Word, I think about it with much consideration in a detailed way. (Life-study of the Psalms, 2nd ed., p. 461)

Further Reading: Life-study of Matthew, msgs. 63, 67

WEEK 45 — DAY 6

Morning Nourishment

Matt. 20:27-28 And whoever wants to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.

1 Pet. 5:3 Nor as lording it over your allotments but by becoming patterns of the flock.

Matthew 24:48 says, "But if that evil slave says in his heart, My master delays." The evil slave is a saved believer, as seen in the fact that he was appointed by the Lord (v. 45), that he called the Lord "my Master," and that he believed that the Lord was coming. Verse 49 says that the evil slave beats his fellow slaves and eats and drinks with the drunken. To beat the fellow slaves is to mistreat the fellow believers, and to eat and drink with the drunken is to keep company with worldly people, who are drunk with worldly things. (Life-study of Matthew, p. 706)

Today's Reading

All of us should be those who are feeding the Lord's people at the proper time (Matt. 24:45) and using the Lord's talents in full (25:20, 22). On the negative side, we should not be those beating our fellow slaves (24:49). You may not do your duty to perform your service, but instead you are criticizing and sometimes even strongly opposing the brothers. You are not doing the work but beating the fellow slaves. Some of the sisters are always busy on the telephone...When they hear something bad about certain brothers, especially the elders, they become busy on the telephone...These telephone calls are all beatings.

Sometimes you may have a subtle way of praying in the prayer meeting for a saint who is in a negative situation...You pray for people, but about ten percent of your prayer is a kind of judging. This is beating.

You waste your time of service in beating. Instead of doing the service, you beat the brothers, the fellow slaves. Many of the brothers can testify that they never heard me beating others by criticizing or exposing them. My only burden is to release messages. Although I have no intention of exposing anyone, many are exposed by the light in the messages I release. That is not my job but the Lord's work. We all have to stop our criticizing, judging, opposing, and murmuring as a kind of beating. We must spend our time, our energy, and our everything to do a positive service for the Lord's interest. (CWWL, 1985, vol. 5, "The Way to Practice the Lord's Present Move," pp. 539-540)

We should not make suggestions to others or give instructions to them. None of us is qualified to do this. At the time of the Acts, Peter, Paul, and the other apostles were not qualified by themselves to make decisions or give instructions. Then what about us? We must honor the Lord. We are not the Lord or the Master, and we are not the Lord of the harvest. Only the Lord Jesus is the Lord of the harvest. He is the Master, and we must honor Him by not making decisions in ourselves...Nevertheless, we have all transgressed in this respect in the past, for a lot of decisions have been made among us. Some decisions were made by individuals, and others by groups. In certain cases some even made decisions for others. But where is the Lord? When we make decisions in this way, it seems that there is no Lord among us. It seems that we do not have the Spirit but only ourselves to depend on. We make decisions and we give instructions. Instead of doing this, we must pray, fast, and wait on the Lord. We need to honor Him. He is our Master, and we are His slaves. We should say to Him, "Lord, You are my Master. I am neither qualified nor do I have the position and the authority to make decisions or give orders to others. Lord, I am waiting on You. I want to know Your will and Your heart. Lord, I want to know what You want me to do and what You want my fellow workers to do. Lord, I ask You what You want the churches to do." We all must have this attitude; otherwise, we shall insult the Lord, and eventually He will give us up. (CWWL, 1977, vol. 2, "The Spirit and the Body," pp. 284-285)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1977, vol. 2, "The Spirit and the Body," ch. 1

WEEK 45 — HYMN

Christ comes quickly for His Bride

Hope of Glory — Preparing for Christ's Return

1304

1. Christ comes quick - ly for His Bride, Wed- ding feast He will provide, Gar-ments bright and pure sup-plied—Dress in
 time! Tak-ing Christ as life she's dressed, By much suffer-ing stitched and pressed; Righteous acts are thus pos-sessed—Dress in
 time! (C) Be in time! Be in time! For the mar - ri-age feast of Je-sus Be in
 time! If your soul life you deny And the Spir - it you ap-ly, Then you'll ful - ly qua - li-fy— Be in time!

2. Virgins Christ comes quickly for,
Those with oil an extra store,
Not the fools who oil ignore—
Buy in time!
For the oil a price we pay,
Deal with self without delay,
Fill your vessels every day—
Buy in time!
3. For His servants Christ will come
And reward each faithful one;
Slothful ones will be undone—
Serve in time!
Make your single talent count,
All self's problems now surmount,
Serve with Christ, the living fount—
Serve in time!
4. Christ comes quickly for His grain,
Ripened firstfruits to obtain;
Unripe harvest will remain—
Ripen now!
From earth's water grain must dry,
From the world your soul deny;
To mature the self must die—
Ripen now!
5. Overcomers Christ will take,
Those who all for Him forsake,
Those who of first love partake—
Win in time!
All the deadness overcome,
With the living Christ be one,
Toward the goal now swiftly run—
Win in time!
6. Christ comes for His kingdom too;
Heav'nly reign we must pursue,
Let His rule our self subdue—
Yield in time!
Rebel self must be dethroned,
Lessons must not be postponed,
Quickly yield to Christ enthroned—
Yield in time!

Composition for prophecy with main point and sub-points:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.