

## Message Three

### **Being Rescued out of the Present Evil Age and Being Saved from the Crooked and Perverted Generation to Be the Testimony of Jesus—the Corporate Christ as Today’s Ark**

Scripture Reading: Rev. 1:1-2, 9, 11-13, 20; 2:9, 13, 15, 20; 3:1-2, 20;  
Gal. 1:4; Acts 2:40; 1 Cor. 12:12; Phil. 2:12-13, 15-16; Heb. 11:7; 1 Pet. 3:20-21

#### **I. The book of Revelation presents the testimony of Jesus, which is the church as the corporate expression of Christ—1:2, 9, 11-13, 20:**

- A. Revelation is an unveiling of Christ, and Christ is expressed through the church; therefore, the church is the testimony of the Jesus revealed in this book—vv. 1, 13, 20; 19:10b:
  - 1. The testimony of Jesus is the church as the expression, testimony, and revelation of Jesus in a corporate way—22:16.
  - 2. The testimony of Jesus is the expression of Jesus, who is expressed in the local churches today and eventually in the New Jerusalem in the millennium and in eternity—21:2, 10-11.
- B. God’s goal in His creation of man was to have a corporate expression, a testimony, of Himself, and according to this goal, man was made in the image of God in order to be His testimony—Gen. 1:26:
  - 1. The living person of Jesus is the image, expression, and testimony of God, and the church today is the testimony of Jesus, His corporate expression—2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15, 18; 3:10-11, 15.
  - 2. As believers in Christ, we all are reproductions, “photographs,” of Jesus; therefore, God has a corporate expression—the church—which is the testimony of Jesus, who is the expression of God—John 1:14, 18; 12:24; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:16.
  - 3. The first God-man, the wonderful all-inclusive Christ, now lives in us as the life-giving Spirit; He is our life, we experience and enjoy Him, we are constituted with Him, and we live Him for His expression—1 Cor. 15:45b; 6:17; Gal. 2:20; Col. 3:4, 10-11; Phil. 1:20-21a.
  - 4. The corporate God-man living, the living of the many God-men as reproductions of the first God-man, is the genuine church life—the testimony of Jesus—1 Cor. 1:2; 12:27; Rev. 1:2, 11, 20.

#### **II. In order to be the testimony of Jesus, we must be rescued out of the present evil age, be saved from the crooked and perverted generation, and shine as luminaries in the world—Gal. 1:4; Acts 2:40; Phil. 2:15:**

- A. Jesus Christ “gave Himself for our sins that He might rescue us out of the present evil age according to the will of our God and Father”—Gal. 1:4:
  - 1. The present evil age here refers to the religious world, the religious course of this world, the Jewish religion—6:14-15.
  - 2. Through His death on the cross, the Lord Jesus gave Himself for our sins in order to rescue us from, to pluck us out of, the present evil age, the

religious world; the principle is the same both with the believers in Paul's time and with us today—1:4.

3. To rescue God's people from the religious age is to bring them out of the sheepfold and into the one flock, according to the will of God—John 10:1, 3, 16.
  4. The will of God is to have the church as the living, organic Body of Christ—Rev. 4:11; Eph. 1:5, 9, 11, 22-23; 3:9-11; 4:16; 5:17; Rom. 12:1-5:
    - a. Satan's aim is to systematize people into his world and keep them away from God's will to have the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:14; Rom. 12:2, 4-5.
    - b. Today Satan uses the religion of Christianity to keep many of the Lord's people outside of God's will, which is to build up the Body of Christ; if we are outside of the Body life, we are outside of God's will—Rev. 2:6, 13, 15, 20; 3:1-2, 20; Eph. 1:5, 9, 11, 22-23; 5:17; Col. 1:9, 18; 3:10-11, 15; Rom. 12:1-5.
    - c. God's people need to be delivered from Christianity as the present evil age and come back to the Body of Christ—Gal. 1:4; Rev. 18:4; Rom. 12:2, 4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12-13, 27; Eph. 1:5, 9, 11; 4:16; Col. 1:9, 18; 3:10-11, 15:
      - (1) Paul needed to be delivered from Judaism, the religious age of his time—Gal. 1:4; 6:14-15.
      - (2) Today we need to be delivered from the religious system of Christianity, the religious age of our time, for the Body of Christ—Rev. 18:4; Eph. 1:22-23; 3:4-6; 4:16; 5:23, 30.
      - (3) The history among us in the Lord's recovery has been a history of coming completely out of Christianity into the pure church life to accomplish God's will to have the Body of Christ—Rev. 18:4; Rom. 12:2, 4-5; Col. 1:9; 2:19; 3:15.
- B. "Be saved from this crooked generation"—Acts 2:40:
1. The crooked generation here refers to the perverted Jews in that age who rejected Christ and were considered by God as the present evil age—v. 36.
  2. For the crooked Jews to be saved from their evil age required repentance and a real turn toward God; they needed to turn to God not only from their sins but also from their generation—vv. 37-41.
  3. The result of being saved from the crooked generation was an entrance into a new generation—the church; the saved ones were separated from Jewish society unto the church—vv. 42-47.
- C. "That you may be blameless and guileless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine as luminaries in the world"—Phil. 2:15:
1. The believers shine as luminaries in the dark, corrupted world, which is usurped by Satan—Matt. 5:14-16; 1 John 2:15-17; 5:19.
  2. The believers do not possess any light in themselves but have a heavenly ability to reflect the light of Christ; Christ is the sun, with the church as the moon and the believers as the planets to reflect Him by holding forth the word of life—Mal. 4:2; Matt. 17:2; Phil. 2:15-16.

**III. Today there are only two things on earth—the crooked and perverted generation and the testimony of Jesus—Gal. 1:4; Acts 2:40; Phil. 2:15; Rev. 1:2, 9, 11, 20:**

- A. When Peter stood up on the day of Pentecost, the crooked and perverted generation was the Jewish religion, and the testimony of Jesus was the church—Acts 2:40, 42; 8:1.
- B. When Paul wrote the letter to the Galatian churches, the present evil age was the Gentile world plus the Jewish religion, and the testimony of Jesus was the church; today the crooked generation is worldliness plus Judaism, Catholicism, and Protestantism, and the testimony of Jesus is still the church—1:2, 4; 1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Thes. 1:1.
- C. Whoever is not in the church as the testimony of Jesus today is in the crooked generation—Acts 2:40; 8:1:
  - 1. As long as a believer in Christ is not built up in the church, that one is in the crooked and perverted generation—Eph. 4:15-17.
  - 2. If a believer, a child of God, is not in the church, that one is not in the testimony of Jesus; rather, such a believer is in the crooked and perverted generation of the present evil age—Gal. 1:4; Rev. 1:11, 20; 22:16.
- D. The entire world, with its unbelieving and believing aspects, is condemned by God; God is using His loving and faithful seekers in His recovery to protest against today's trend—Heb. 11:7; 2 Pet. 2:5; Gen. 6:9; 7:1.
- E. The church as the testimony of Jesus is a testimony against today's evil generation—Phil. 1:1; 2:15-16; 4:15; Rev. 2:13:
  - 1. The church is the testimony of Jesus, protesting against the crooked, evil, perverted generation—Acts 2:32-33; 7:51-60.
  - 2. As the testimony of Jesus, we stand against the present crooked and perverted generation composed of the world, Judaism, Catholicism, and Protestantism; we are protesting against these things—Rev. 2:9, 13, 15, 20; 3:1-2, 20.
  - 3. According to the context of Revelation 2 and 3, to overcome is to be victorious over the crooked and perverted generation of the world, Judaism, Catholicism, and Protestantism—2:9, 13, 15, 20; 3:1-2, 20.

**IV. If we would be the testimony of Jesus—the corporate expression of Christ in the church life—we need to be today's "family of Noah" building the corporate Christ as the ark that will deliver us from the crooked and perverted generation and usher us into the coming age of the kingdom of God—Gen 6:8—8:3; 1 Cor. 12:12; Phil. 2:12-13; 1 Pet. 3:20-21:**

- A. The ark built by Noah is a type of Christ as the salvation of God's elect; the ark that we are building today is the corporate Christ, the church, as our salvation from today's crooked, perverted, and evil generation—vv. 20-21; 1 Cor. 12:12, 27.
- B. The church life is today's ark to terminate the present age and bring in God's kingdom—1:2; 12:12, 27; 1 Thes. 1:1, 9-10:

1. The Lord desires “the family of Noah” to build the ark and testify against the trend of the age so that He can use them to terminate the age and bring in the kingdom age—Heb. 11:7; Rev. 11:15:
  - a. Noah was saved not only from God’s judgment but also from the crooked, perverted, and evil generation—Gen. 6:8—8:3.
  - b. The kind of salvation that Noah built, secured, and enjoyed was not a salvation merely from eternal perdition but also out of the crooked, evil generation into a new age—6:2-3, 8, 11-14; 7:1.
2. What we are building in the church life is the corporate Christ as the ark for our salvation and for the salvation of the ones under our care—1 Cor. 12:12; 14:26; Phil. 2:12-13.
- C. The salvation in Philippians 2:12 is the salvation that saves us from the crooked and perverted generation; this salvation is the church as the corporate Christ whom we are building as today’s ark—1 Cor. 1:2; 12:12; Eph. 2:21-22:
  1. To have the proper church life is not only to stand on the ground of oneness but also to build the ark to save ourselves from the present evil generation and bring us into a new age—4:3, 16.
  2. We need a salvation that is built not by God directly but by our daily cooperating with His inward operation—Phil. 2:12-13.
- D. God wants the church, the ark, where we can be saved from today’s evil generation—Acts 2:40-47:
  1. God wants to save us—through this ark—from the crooked generation and usher us into God’s kingdom to fulfill His eternal purpose—Matt. 6:33; 13:43; Luke 12:32; Rev. 11:15.
  2. God cares for whether or not we are in the ark, the proper church life; He wants us to be a part of the corporate Christ, part of the testimony of Jesus—1 Cor. 12:12; Rev. 1:2, 9, 11, 20; 22:16.
- E. We need not only to preach the individual Christ but also to build the corporate Christ, the church, which is today’s ark; through this corporate Christ we are saved from the crooked and perverted generation—Acts 8:35; 1 Cor. 12:12:
  1. While the apostles were preaching the individual Christ, they were building up the corporate Christ, the ark in which they will enjoy God’s full salvation—Acts 8:1, 4-5, 35; 13:1; 14:23.
  2. We should be faithful to do the same thing—preaching the gospel and building the ark, preaching Christ and building Christ—1 Thes. 1:1, 8; 1 Cor. 12:12; 14:4-5, 12, 26.
- F. When this ark is built up, the Lord Jesus will return—Rev. 19:7; 22:7, 12, 20:
  1. The Lord has not come back yet because He is still waiting for the ark to be built—Matt. 16:18, 27.
  2. When the testimony of the church in the Lord’s recovery is matured, the Lord Jesus will return—Rev. 19:7; 22:7, 12, 20.