

<Introduction>

Calamity on the day of the Lord by Jeremiah

Today, I would like us to discuss the “Calamity on the day of the Lord”.

The Bible tells us that there will be “the day of the Lord” which is also the day of calamity by the End of Times. It is described in the scripture below.

1 Thessalonians 5:2 for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

5:3 While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

We can see how the day of the Lord seems to be a horrific day in which everything is destroyed. The question here is, who will be destroyed on the day of the Lord as well as who will be subjected to judgment.

<The day of the Lord is the day of calamity for God’s people>

To find the answer, as you continue reading the Book of Thessalonians, it seems that the judgment is for God’s people. The scripture below is a good example.

1 Thessalonians 5:4 But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief.

Here, Paul assured the brethren in Thessalonian that “You are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief”.

However, on the flip side, it is possible for this day to come as a surprise to Christians who are still in the darkness. Paul goes on to say in the scripture below.

1 Thessalonians 5:5 You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.

5:6 So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober.

5:7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night.

5:8 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.

5:9 For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Here, Paul talks to Christians who have been freed from darkness and walk in the light and truth by saying “You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or the darkness”. In the same vein, he made mention of those Christians who are still walking in darkness living in sin.

He encourages us saying, “*do not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober*”. This he said because there are so many Christians who are spiritually asleep in darkness and sin.

He also says, “God did not appoint us to suffer wrath”. This means the wrath of God on the day of the Lord is against the Christians who are still walking in darkness and sin.

We have to understand this as the interpretation of what the day of the Lord and the wrath of God are all about.

<Rebellion and the day of the lord>

The day of the Lord is also related to rebellion which means Christians and churches going against the teachings of Christ. Paul describes this in the scripture below.

2 Thessalonians 2:3 Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.

2:4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

Here, Paul says, “*that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction*”. This is to show there is a relationship between the day of the Lord, rebellion, the man of lawlessness, and the anti-Christ. It is almost like the close relationship between a filthy room and cockroaches.

This explains that the biggest reason why the day of the Lord comes to the churches is extensive rebellion of Christians in the End Times. Also, simply put, the day of the Lord is the day of destruction of the church and the anti-Christ who dominates the churches as their god and will be at the center of this destruction. As you can see, these are closely related to the day of the Lord and that is why Paul decided to mention about “rebellion and anti-Christ” in relation to the day of the Lord.

Therefore, we need to realize that what the Bible mentions about the day of the lord is completely different from what the Christians understand. At the moment, the

church tells us that the future of the church is bright and the church will be taken to heaven before the Tribulation which is nothing but baseless doctrine.

But, the Bible teaches differently and it describes that there will be more rebellion in the church leading to the End Times therefore causing God's wrath to destroy the churches and it will be led by non-Christians. This perfectly matches the current situation of the churches. For example, the Catholic Church teaches that as long as you live your life by following the conscience, you will be saved even without believing in Christ. This is far from the truth and a horrible doctrine of rebellion but unfaithful Protestants are not showing the sign of disagreement either.

<The day of the lord in Zephaniah>

There are many descriptions about the day of the lord in the Old Testament, so let's learn from Zephaniah. Chapter 1:7 says "Be silent before the Sovereign Lord, for the day of the Lord is near." We can see that this part is about the day of the lord. I would like us to take a look at Zephaniah 1:2-1:18 to learn more about the day of the lord.

Zephaniah 1:2 "I will sweep away everything from the face of the earth," declares the Lord.

1:3 "I will sweep away both man and beast; I will sweep away the birds in the sky and the fish in the sea— and the idols that cause the wicked to stumble." "When I destroy all mankind on the face of the earth," declares the Lord,

"The earth" is mentioned in both verse 2 and 3, meaning there is a problem amongst the people on the earth. In relation to this, Revelation 6:10 says "They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?". This describes that there is a problem in the people living on earth.

People living on the earth are different from Abraham who was a traveler on this earth. Because they preferred the value/life of this world, the wrath of God will come upon them.

1:4 "I will stretch out my hand against Judah and against all who live in Jerusalem.

I will destroy every remnant of Baal worship in this place, the very names of the idolatrous priests".

The Lord spoke about bringing judgment upon Judah and the people of Jerusalem here. It started in 70 AD when the people of Jerusalem were destroyed by the

Romans. The reason for that was them being rebellious and in fact they killed many prophets including Jesus the Son of God.

As a result, Jerusalem and the people of God were destroyed and this is partly how the day of the lord was fulfilled. Of course, the day of the lord hasn't finished yet and the Bible clearly states there will be the day of the lord again at the end of the church era.

What will happen now is the same as what happened previously; the churches will become rebellious, destroyed, and the people of God in the New Testament era will be under judgment.

This has been prophesied in the book of Revelations as seen in scriptures below.

Revelation 11:8 Their bodies will lie in the public square of the great city—which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt—where also their Lord was crucified.

“the great city—which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt” represents rebellious churches in the End Times and this prophesies about murder of Christ (i.e. blasphemy against the Bible) will be repeated.

1:5 those who bow down on the roofs to worship the starry host, those who bow down and swear by the Lord and who also swear by Molek,

1:6 those who turn back from following the Lord and neither seek the Lord nor inquire of him.”

Bowing down on the roofs to worship the starry host is a figurative speech. Abraham is the spiritual ancestor of Christians' and his descendant is described as stars in the sky and the sand on the earth, so starry host represents Christians.

To worship the starry host means ignoring the word of God and putting the Roman Pope and Billy Graham first. The wrath of God towards those people is described in scriptures here.

1:7 Be silent before the Sovereign Lord, for the day of the Lord is near.

The Lord has prepared a sacrifice; he has consecrated those he has invited.

A sacrifice is an animal and that means the church in End Times. How the church becomes like an animal is described as below.

Revelation 13:11 Then I saw a second beast, coming out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb, but it spoke like a dragon.

The church which has become like an animal will be judged but as it says “he has consecrated those he has invited”, sanctified Christians will receive the blessing on the day.

1:8 “On the day of the Lord’s sacrifice I will punish the officials and the king’s sons and all those clad in foreign clothes.

“All those clad in foreign clothes” is a parable. We understand that this represents the church which adopted the teaching of the gentiles or this world. From this point of view, we can see that there are many of them right now such as “positive thinking”, “counseling”, and “the prayer of Jabez”. We need to know that these will provoke the wrath of God on the day of the lord.

1:9 On that day I will punish all who avoid stepping on the threshold, who fill the temple of their gods with violence and deceit.

“Who fill the temple of their gods with violence and deceit.” These are people who speak about non-biblical false teaching such as pre-tribulation, two steps rapture, or insisting that once saved you will never face the judgment. Indeed, these people will be judged by God.

1:12 At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps and punish those who are complacent, who are like wine left on its dregs, who think, ‘The Lord will do nothing, either good or bad.’

“The Lord will do nothing, either good or bad.” must be what current Christians are thinking in their heart. The Lord has mentioned about making terrible judgment against rebellious churches in the Bible many times, but no one actually fears these horrible facts. Although no one takes it seriously but the day is definitely on its way.

1:13 Their wealth will be plundered, their houses demolished. Though they build houses, they will not live in them; though they plant vineyards, they will not drink the wine.”

The house is a parable of the church. The church which is the house of God will be ruined as a result of being under the anti-Christian’s control. Christ is going to be rejected from the temple of God and the anti-Christians will be seated there as described below.

2 Thessalonians 2:4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

Once Christ has been rejected, the church will no longer function as the church. That is why it is called “the beast with two horns like lamb”, as described in Revelation.

1:14 The great day of the Lord is near— near and coming quickly. The cry on the day of the Lord is bitter; the Mighty Warrior shouts his battle cry.

1:15 That day will be a day of wrath— a day of distress and anguish, a day of trouble and ruin, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness.

1:16 a day of trumpet and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the corner towers.

I presume that the fortified cities are parable of various Christian denominations. They all will be under the control of the anti-Christ while causing the wrath of God. It is just like how the churches in Soviet Union and China were under the persecution in the atheist and communist society. It forced the anti-Christ like doctrine onto the people and the same will happen to the rebellious churches.

1:17 “I will bring such distress on all people that they will grope about like those who are blind, because they have sinned against the Lord. Their blood will be poured out like dust and their entrails like dung.

1:18 Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them on the day of the Lord’s wrath.” In the fire of his jealousy the whole earth will be consumed, for he will make a sudden end of all who live on the earth.

It is written here that the wrath of God will be poured on the churches, so we need to correctly understand the reason why the Lord comes in End Times. It will be caused by the country of the beast or anti-Christ, but we have to know that the wrath of God is the primary reason.

So, we need to understand that the day of the lord is the day of God’s wrath. Of course, not all Christians will be judged or causing the wrath of God and some people will be approved by the Lord and receive the blessing. This is understandable when you think about the day Jesus first came down to the earth. Many Jews rejected Christ then and led Him to be crucified but some recognized who Christ was and they received eternal life. They were 12 disciples and others. Even in End Times, people who are obedient to the word of God will receive huge blessing and be glorified when Christ returns. Lets make sure that we will do the Lord’s will in End Times.

Choosing the church

We have learned about “the church” recently from proverb 7 at our Saturday meeting. There, I learned that not every “church” is considered good. So, I would like to share what the Lord spoke to me on this matter with you.

Frankly speaking, just like at the end of the Old Testament era, the church will be divided into two types at the end of the New Testament era. Simply put, one follows Jesus and the other ignores the Holy Spirit and rejects Jesus. I may have shared with you a similar thing already, but God spoke to me again and I believe this is very important so I would like to reinforce it here.

You may be thinking, *“I have heard that already! I am sick of it!”* That is the typical response in this world and people tend to hate to hear the same thing over again. But that is how the Bible speaks to us. Why? It is because there are so many Christians, including myself, who are slow to understand or quick to forget. You may say “I am not like that!” but as it says **“Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man”** in Proverbs, I believe this is true.

Because God knows that we could end up not getting results or worse, forgetting or not understanding something, he continues to reiterate the danger of drifting from eternal life. Paul also encourages us to mention the same thing over and over again and he even went on to say to “do so without getting annoyed”. I know it has been a rather long introduction but I would appreciate if you could understand my point and read on.

Now, I would like to talk about my theme. When we say “choosing the church”, I bet you would be thinking it is only for new Christians and not for people who have been Christians for long time. Most of you may say “I belong to XX church so I will stay there no matter what.” Before the End Times started, it was fine indeed. But we are in the middle of the End Times now where the common sense doesn’t apply. We are referring to evil as good and good as evil. Also, many things are taking place as written in the Bible. In the book of Ecclesiastes, it is written that the old churches are going to get worse. This means that many churches are heading towards becoming rebellious and this is the reality stated in the Bible. Whether to believe it or not will depend on each person, but I personally feel it is exactly what is happening right now. That is why it is important to choose a church very carefully.

Now, I would like to take a look at some important factors for choosing the right church.

1. The message is based on the Bible

Unfortunately, there are many churches whose teachings are different from the doctrines or references of the Bible. Catholics even have their own doctrines and some Protestants emphasize non-biblical “pre-tribulation rapture”. There is no scripture in the Bible where it talks about raising people before tribulation. Anyway, it is dangerous to accept things without referring to the Bible just because someone else is talking about it. Unless you pray and ask God what message to share or if the message is consistent with the Bible, you are unable to preach properly.

2. Giving the answer to parables

As I have said many times previously, there are many parables in the Bible. The scripture says “He did not say anything without using a parable” which means that the Bible encourages you to find the answer to parables. So, if you don’t do this or have only personal interpretation, it is against God’s will. Many churches think what is written as “personal interpretation” in 2nd Peter indicates that spiritual interpretation is not good but this is wrong. The original meaning of this is “not to refer to only one part but many other parts of the Bible as well when sharing the message.”

3. Preaching about End Times

Again, as I have said many times previously, we are in the End Times, and there are lots of scriptures talking about it too. Therefore it is mandatory to talk about End Times otherwise you won’t be able to comprehend the era. The Lord described those people as “hypocrites” (Luke 12:56) so regardless of what era it is, I think it is important to understand it.

4. Talking about curse and judgment as well as God’s love and blessing

Many churches emphasizes “God’s love”, “blessing”, and “grace” but hardly talk about God’s strict judgment or curse. Actually, there are more descriptions about curse and judgment in the Bible so it is not right to preach those. Pst. Jeremiah often says that it is the message of “heresy” to mention only God’s love and not the other aspects such as disaster or calamity. Living your life without understanding the judgment will end up being unaware of sin or not practicing repentance (turning around) so I don’t think it is possible to inherit the kingdom of God. The Bible mentions about rebellious Christians in details, so if the church doesn’t want to talk about it, you have to be very careful.

5. Staying within the Bible

End Times is the era when the focus is shifting towards fantasy and lies. There will be many false teachers, pastors, and messengers who preach things like “pre-tribulation rapture” for instance. They teach that although Tribulation will come, all Christians will be raised to heaven beforehand so we don’t need to prepare for it. They may not say “There is no need to prepare for Tribulation” but at the same time they don’t talk about the preparation either. This is wrong. In fact, Jesus talked about preparation for Tribulation many times, so if the message doesn’t contain this, it is actually seen as incomplete. For example, you have to be careful if the message contains something non-biblical such as “Christians won’t be facing the judgment and all of them will go to heaven”, “There is always a second chance so we don’t need to think too much while on the earth”, “The hell doesn’t exist”, “Homosexuality should be accepted”, or interpreting the Gospel in your own way. They are all doctrine with “yeast (sin)”. If you keep listening to things like this at Sunday service every week, you will be spiritually misled. It happened to me before so I don’t want to make it sound like I don’t know what I am talking about, but by the mercy of God I was able to get out of this situation. Now, what happens if you always eat food additives? Of course, you wouldn’t notice immediately but over time it will slowly start to affect your body. The same happens if you have unbalanced diet and you will get sick quite easily.

I think this theory also applies to the relationship between the message with yeast and spiritual outcome. Because Satan is cunning, he won’t present lies all at once but he tries to spread them very slowly. Although it is very little each time so you won’t notice, if you look carefully, you will realize how strange they are and even sometimes the most important part is missed. After all, even though it is a small amount, if you keep accepting strange doctrines, you will end up becoming unable to judge correctly spiritually or heading to the opposite direction. This is why we need to check carefully each time and in case you find the message is non-biblical, I think you should walk away from it.

You may say “Well, I am fine. Even though my church preaches strange doctrines, I will personally learn the true doctrine”. From biblical point of view, this is impossible. Because the Bible says “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love another, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other”. If having good balance between good and bad doctrine is possible, I would have chosen to do so. But, the Lord spoke to me to “leave the church” and it guided me to the right result.

So, I shared some points to “choose the right church” here this time. If your church is heading to the opposite direction from what I recommended here, it may be a part of other churches which rejected Jesus therefore will face judgment. In this case, you need to think about the situation very carefully. I am not sure if all of what I shared is true, but I felt this is what God spoke to me so I decided to share here. I know this is not my own business but God respects each of our decisions and that will reflect on the results regardless (good or bad) so I pray that you would make the right judgment in God’s eye.

May glory and honor be to the Lord who always gives us important messages.