

THAT DAY

- A. Introduction: During our stay-at-home time we focused on calming fear and increasing faith and trust in Almighty God by examining what is happening and why—according to the Bible. We’ve covered a lot of ground, but have more to say about how to navigate through the days and years ahead.
1. When Jesus was here two thousand years ago, He promised His followers that He would one day return to earth.
 - a. Just before He was crucified, Jesus said that the years preceding His return will be marked by increasingly challenging events, some of which He compared to birth pains. This pandemic and its related social, economic, and political ramifications is a birth pang. Matt 24:6-8
 - b. To be free from fear and full of faith in the increasingly difficult times ahead of us, we must understand why Jesus is coming back. He will return to complete God’s plan to have a family with whom He can live forever in loving relationship in a perfect world.
 1. God created human beings to become His sons and daughters through faith in Christ. He made the earth to be a home for His family. However, both the family and the family home have been damaged by sin. Eph 1:4-5; Isa 45:18; Gen 3:17-19; Rom 5:12; Rom 5:19; etc.
 2. Neither humanity nor this world is as God intended. Humans are disqualified for sonship because of our sin, and the family home is infused with a curse of corruption and death that make life extremely toilsome.
 - A. Jesus came to earth two thousand years ago to pay for sin by dying in our place on the Cross. Through His death and resurrection Jesus opened the way for sinners to be transformed into God’s sons and daughters through faith in Him. John 1:12-13
 - B. Jesus will come again to cleanse the earth of all corruption and death, restore it to a fit forever home for the family, and establish His visible eternal kingdom on earth. The Bible calls the family home the new earth—this planet renewed and restored. Isa 65:17
 2. For the past 30 years or so the emphasis in many church circles has been almost entirely on this life and how to be blessed in it. We are the worse for it because we’re ill prepared for the times we’re living in. To make it through the years ahead we need an eternal perspective.
 - a. An eternal perspective lives with the awareness that there is more to life than just this life—and the greater and better part is ahead after this life. An eternal perspective recognizes that eternal things matter more than the temporary things of this life.
 - b. An eternal perspective makes this life easier to deal with. The apostle Paul was able to call his many difficulties momentary and light because he knew that what is ahead after this life is far better. II Cor 4:17-18; Rom 8:18
- B. The apostle Paul, like the other men who wrote the New Testament, was an eyewitness of the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus personally taught Paul the message that he preached. Acts 26:15-16; Gal 1:11-12 Consider something Paul wrote to believers in his day who were facing increasingly intense difficulties.
1. Heb 10:25—This verse is often used to support the idea that Christians must attend church regularly. I believe that Christians should gather together in worship. But that’s not really Paul’s point.
 - a. First, church as we know and practice it didn’t exist yet. There were no church buildings. Believers gathered primarily in homes. Second, Paul wrote this epistle to real people for a specific reason and purpose. And this verse speaks to that purpose.
 1. He wrote to Jewish men and women who acknowledged Jesus as Messiah (Savior), but were experiencing increasing pressure from unbelieving Jews to renounce Jesus and His sacrifice. Paul wrote the entire epistle to encourage them to stay faithful to Jesus no matter what.
 2. Notice that the immediate context of his statement is the fact that Jesus is coming back: Not

forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another and so much the more, as you see the day approaching (Heb 10:25, KJV); And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage and warn each other, especially now that the day of his coming back again is drawing near (Heb 10:25, NLT).

- A. The term second coming did not exist at that time in the way we use it today. They spoke of the Day of the Lord, a term that came from the Old Testament prophets.
 - B. In the writings of the prophets the Day of the Lord referred to a future time when the Lord will come to deal with the ungodly, deliver His people, and then live among them. Joel 2:1; 11; 28-31; 3:14-21; etc.
- b. The prophets were not clearly shown that the Lord will accomplish those three things through two separate comings. Some Old Testament prophecies actually make reference to both the first and second coming of the Lord in the same verse. Isa 9:6
2. Paul instructed his readers to exhort (encourage and warn) each other as they see the day of the Lord (or the return of Jesus) approaching. His whole letter is an exhortation, but notice several points he made in the rest of chapter 10.
 - a. These men and women had already experienced public ridicule, beatings, jail, and loss of property at the hands of their fellow countrymen.
 - b. Paul reminded them that they made it through those challenges because they knew there is more to life than just this life and what you lose in this life you'll get back in the life to come.
 1. Heb 10:34—When all you owned was taken from you, you accepted it with joy. You knew you had better things waiting for you in eternity (NLT): a better property and one which you would keep forever (Basic).
 2. Heb 10:35-37—Do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord, no matter what happens. Remember the great reward it brings you...For in just a little while, the Coming One will come and not delay (NLT).
 3. Eternity refers to the life after this life. The better things in that life (the reward) include the present invisible Heaven along with the resurrection of our bodies and a return to the new earth (this earth renewed and restored) to live forever. Nothing will rob from or hurt us again.
 - c. At the end of the preceding chapter, Paul encouraged his readers by reminding them of the big picture. Jesus is coming back to complete the plan of God, His plan of redemption.
 1. Heb 9:26—He (Jesus) came once for all time, at the end of the age, to remove the power of sin forever by his sacrificial death for us (NLT).
 2. Heb 9:28—He will come again but not to death with our sins again (NLT)...but to bring full salvation to those who are eagerly, constantly and patiently waiting for and expecting him (Amp).
 3. Full salvation includes the renewing of the earth which will restore it to a fit forever home for God and His family. Full salvation includes resurrection of the body so that those believe on Jesus can live on earth again. Full salvation includes no more sorrow, no more pain, no more death—no more tears of sorrow, only tears of joy! Rev 21-22 (lots of lessons for another time).
 3. The people to whom Jesus first came two thousand years ago lived with an awareness that this present age—where life is not as God intended it to be because of sin—will come to an end.
 - a. The first Christians lived with the consciousness that Jesus is coming back and it gave them hope to stand strong in the midst of whatever came their way. They had an eternal perspective and they encouraged themselves with what is ahead in the life after this life.
 - b. Do you have enough accurate information to encourage yourself or anyone else with the fact that Jesus is coming back soon? Sadly, far too few Christians are deficient in this area.
 1. What they know has made them afraid of the devil's power (the Antichrist, mark of the beast,

new world order) or they're afraid of the wrath of God coming down on people.

2. Others are so tied to this life that they don't want to leave it behind. They mistakenly believe that life after this life will be harps and clouds in Heaven and a transparent, cube shaped city with no sun, moon or sea called the new earth.
3. (For accurate information about the life to come read my book: *The Best is Yet to Come: What the Bible Says About Heaven*. It's available on Amazon and also as an ebook.)

- C. Hold that thought and let's back up for a moment. Let's look at the message Paul preached when he told men and women about Jesus.
1. About AD 50 Paul went to the city of Thessalonica (in what is today northern Greece). He preached in the local synagogue on three Sabbath days. He used the Old Testament Scriptures to prove that Jesus is the promised Messiah and that His suffering, death, and resurrection were fulfillment of prophecy.
 - a. Some Jews were persuaded, including a large number of Greek men and women (converts to Judaism). Jealous Jewish leaders incited a mob that went looking for Paul and Silas and the new believers sent the men on to the next town. Acts 17:1-9
 1. Paul later wrote a letter to the Thessalonians to encourage them to stay faithful to Jesus despite the persecutions that broke out in their city. We know from his letter what Paul preached to these people and how they responded in the three short weeks he was with them. (Paul proclaimed the same message everywhere he went. I Cor 4:17)
 2. I Thess 1:9-10—Paul instructed them to turn from idols to serve the Living and True God and wait expectantly for His Son Jesus, whom God raised from the death. Paul informed them that Jesus has delivered us from the wrath to come. Paul mentioned in two other places that we are delivered us from the wrath to come (I Thess 5:9; Rom 5:9).
 - b. There is wrath and judgment associated with the second coming of Jesus. This topic is too large to discuss right now. But we need to make a few comments.
 1. The subject of God's wrath scares people who ought not be afraid. I've heard other sincere but misguided Christians claim that this pandemic is God's wrath and judgment. I know of some who think that the death angel passing over the earth and they have to hide themselves because of what is coming. None of that is accurate (with all due respect to those who believe it).
 2. The thought of God's wrath scares many sincere Christians who are doing their best to serve God but are aware that they still fall short in some areas.
 3. To be excited about the Lord's return, you need to know what God's wrath is, why it is consistent with a good God, and how it does and does not affect you.
 2. God is righteous and God is just. The word righteous comes from a root word that means right or rightness. It means blameless conduct, right actions, and integrity. Justice is used in Scripture to mean what is right or as it should be. Justice is about making things right. The words righteousness and justice are often used synonymously in the Bible. God is right and God always does what is right.
 - a. Wrath is God's righteous and just response to sin. God's wrath is not an emotional outburst at fallen humanity. He expresses wrath because is right.
 - b. We all understand that justice is doing what is right, giving people what they deserve. If someone commits a heinous crime no one is upset when appropriate punishment is meted out.
 1. All human beings deserve of the wrath of God because all have sinned. To be true to His righteous and just nature God must punish sin.
 2. The just and righteous penalty for our sin is death or eternal separation from God. If this penalty is enforced, God's plan for a family will not come to pass.
 - c. God devised a way to carry out justice in regard to our sin and still have fallen men and women as sons and daughters without violating His righteous nature.

1. At the Cross Jesus took our place and took the penalty for our sin on Himself. The just and righteous wrath that should have gone to us went to Jesus. Justice has been carried out in regard to your sin.
 2. God's righteous wrath toward sin has been expressed but you must receive that expression in order for His wrath to be removed from you. If you have accepted Jesus and His sacrifice, then there is no more wrath for your sin.
 3. If you have not given your life to Jesus then the wrath of God awaits you when your body dies. You have chosen to live separate from Him in this life, and that separation becomes irreversible at death. John 3:36; II Thess 2:8-9
3. Jesus is coming back to remove from this world all that is corrupted and all that corrupts so that God's plan for a family can be completed. And that's a good things. There are a lot of points we must make in connection with this, and we will do so in later lessons. For now, consider these points.
- a. God does not dole out wrath and judgment on a sin-by-sin basis—it went to Jesus at the Cross. When God judges men for sin in this life He allows them to reap the consequences of their sin. (Lots of lessons for another time.)
 1. God is dealing with men and women in mercy. He give us a lifetime to repent (II Pet 3:9) During that lifetime God shows them kindness and gives them a witness of Himself (Luke 6:35; Matt 5:45; Acts 14:16-17; Rom 1:20)
 2. God has given men an objective demonstration of His unconditional love for man. While we were sinner Christ died for us. John 12:32; I John 4:9-10; Rom 5:8; 10
 - b. Jesus Himself said that at the end of this age: I, the son of Man, will sent my angels, and they will remove from my Kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil...then the godly will shine like the sun in their Father's Kingdom (Matt 13:41-43, NLT). Corruption due to sin is removed from God's kingdom removed one of two way.
 1. By transformation: Sinners are transformed into sons and daughters of God through the power of God when they put faith in Christ and His sacrifice at the Cross.
 2. By removal: Sinners are forever banished from the presence of God and His family and consigned to a place called the second death. Rev 20:14
 - c. Jesus is the standard by which all humanity will be judged, the standard by which justice will be meted out. If you have accepted Him, for you, justice will mean reward. If you have rejected Him, justice will mean eternal separation from Him.
- D. Conclusion: We've introduced a number of topics that deserve more discussion. We will address them in later lessons. Let's close with this thought. As the days grow darker, keep the big picture in sight.
1. Remember what the Day of the Lord (the earliest name for second coming) is all about. The Lord will come to deal with the ungodly, deliver His people, and then live among them forever.
 2. Through His sacrificial death on the Cross Jesus made it possible for men and women to become God's people through faith in Him.
 3. Encourage yourself and others with accurate information as you see that Day approaching. Our future is bright, and God will get us through until He gets us out.