

8. Learning About the Day of the Lord

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to understand why many people choose to ignore the coming of the Lord. We saw that false teachers influence many people with the result that many people become scoffers who choose to continue to walk after their own lusts. However, the day of the Lord will come when the Lord will judge the heavens and the earth as well as all those who have continued in their sin of unbelief. We will learn how to explain the Day of the Lord to our children in this topic.

In 2 Peter 3:10-13, we read, “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.” Here, we see that God must cleanse the present heavens and earth from the results of sin.

The Day of the Lord is the Day of Judgment. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 discusses the return of Christ to take the Christians to heaven. Then chapter five begins, in verses 1-2 by saying, “But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.” Here, we see that the Day of the Lord will begin right after the Christians are taken to heaven. We see in that chapter that the first part of the Day of the Lord talks about the seven years of tribulation. Here, Peter talks about the final judgments that are also a part of the Day of the Lord. Revelation 20:7-8 point out the fact that the thousand-year period known as the millennium will happen between the first part of the judgment and the Great White Throne Judgment when all unbelievers will be cast into the eternal judgment of the lake of fire.

Just as the first part of the Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, we see here in 2 Peter 3 that the final judgment will also come as a thief in the night. In addition to the judgment of all unbelievers, we see here in 2 Peter that the Day of the Lord includes the cleansing of the heavens and the earth. We see that the heavens will pass away with a great noise. The earth will burn up with a great heat. All of the buildings and other things that people have built will be burned. Here, we see that God will purify the heavens and the earth with fire. Revelation 21:1 says, “Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.” The present heavens and earth must be purified to remove the effects of sin.

We see that the future judgment of the heavens and earth gives us a reminder about the way that we should live as Christians as we live on this earth. We see that it should be our desire to conduct our lives in holy conduct and godliness. Paul wrote Timothy, in 1 Timothy 4:12, “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” Just as Timothy was to be an example to other believers by his conduct, we want to provide an example for our children of godly conduct in our lives.

We see that following the Day of the Lord when sinful man will be judged that the Day of God will come. The day of man is the time from the first sin by Adam and Eve to the final judgment when all sin is judged. As Christians we can eagerly look forward to the Day of God will come. 1 Corinthians 15:28 says, “Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.” Here, we see that Paul talked about a day when all things will be subject to the Father. As a result, the Day of God is the eternal state where all sin has been removed. That is why the heavens and earth must be dissolved so that everything that remains from sinful man is removed.

As Christians, we can look forward with great joy to the promise of God that there will be a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Isaiah spoke of the new heavens and new earth when he wrote, in Isaiah 65:17, “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.” The new heavens and the new earth will be filled with righteousness. As a result, we will not even think about or remember sin and the consequences of that sin.

Based on the fact that we can look forward to the new heavens and earth, 2 Peter 3:14-16 says, “Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; and consider *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation--as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable *people* twist to their own destruction, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures.” Here, we see that we want to be ready at every moment for the coming of Christ.

As Christians we are to be looking forward to the new heavens and the new earth. If we are looking forward to the eternal future with Christ, Peter reminds us that it will affect the way that we live today. We want to be able to have peace at the moment that Christ comes to take us to heaven. Isaiah 26:3 says, “You will keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose* mind *is* stayed *on You*, because he trusts in You.” This statement was originally made to Israel. However, it certainly also describes the way that we will feel at the coming of Christ if our lives are without spot and blameless. “Without spot” means that *we are without sin in the sight of Christ* and “blameless” means that *we have a reputation in the sight of the people of the world that cannot be rebuked*. This will give us true peace. In addition, the longsuffering of Christ means we are given more time to share the message of salvation with those who have not yet repented of sin and placed their faith in Christ.

Peter went on to remind the Christians that Paul had written about these same things to them. Peter pointed out the fact that some of the things that Paul wrote are hard to understand. For the person who is an immature Christian, Hebrews 5:13-14 says, “For everyone who partakes *only* of milk *is* unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, *that is*, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” Here, we see that immature Christians cannot understand most of the more difficult teachings of the Word of God. Then, 1 Corinthians 2:14 says, “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*,

because they are spiritually discerned.” Here, we see that a person who is not a Christian cannot have spiritual understanding.

In contrast, 1 Corinthians 2:9-10 says, “But as it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.” Here, we see that God wants us to understand the difficult things that Paul wrote. However, we are to ask the Holy Spirit to reveal those things to us because they will not be understood just through our human understanding because that is intellectual knowledge instead of spiritual understanding.

As a result, the unlearned (ignorant) and unstable wrest the difficult teachings. The word translated “wrest” means *to twist or pervert*. Here, we see that those who are not Christians will twist or pervert both those written by Paul and also the other Scriptures to their own destruction. In 1 Thessalonians 2:13, we read, “For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.” Those who are true Christians recognize and obey the Word of God but those who are not Christians twist and pervert the Scriptures.

The book concludes by saying, in 2 Peter 3:17-18, “You therefore, beloved, since you know *this* beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory both now and forever. Amen.” Peter wanted the Christians that knew and loved the Lord to know these things in advance so that they would not be deceived by false teachers who would try to lead them astray. In the same way we want to help our physical and spiritual children to know these things so that they will be steadfast (stand firm) in their spiritual lives.

We want to make it our goal to help our physical and spiritual children continue to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. We and our children grow in grace as we are strengthened in our spiritual lives. We grow in the knowledge and understanding of our Lord Jesus Christ as we ask the Lord to reveal His truth to us through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. As 1 Corinthians 2:10 says, “But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.” God has given us the Holy Spirit as the down payment and guarantee of our eternal life. The Holy Spirit does many things for us in our lives. Here, we see that one of the things that He does is helps us to grow in our knowledge and understanding of the more difficult teachings of Scripture so that we can give glory to God. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children grow in their understanding.