

God's Tomorrow

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[0 : 00] in Joel chapter 2, and in Revelation chapter 6, from 12 to 17.

This evening I would like to turn your attention and take a look with you into God's tomorrow. A look into God's tomorrow. Men and women will say, how can we know about God's tomorrow? What evidence have we got for God's tomorrow? Well as we found out this morning, in the Old Testament, men were wrought upon by God, motivated by the Spirit of God, and compelled to write what we might call the sayings of God.

But when Joel prophesies, he prophesies of the latter days.

[2 : 24] Now the latter days were to be from the time of Christ in his first coming, to the time of Christ in his second coming.

These were to be the latter days. And in this prophecy of Joel, he links two distinct happenings together.

The first of these two have already taken place hundreds of years after Joel prophesied, and are now recorded both in biblical history and indeed in secular history.

It is a recorded fact that a certain time after the death of Jesus, the Spirit of God came down on the gathered church, possessed those who were gathered there, gave them all sorts of different gifts. Young men dreamed dreams, saw visions, spoke with other languages. It all took place exactly as Joel had prophesied.

[3 : 57] And yet, only half of it. It was as if God was being infinitely gracious and saying to us, if you look at the prophecy of Joel as he looks into my tomorrow, you'll see him looking in at two parts of it.

One part you can examine yourselves, look at the evidence of history, look at the reality of the experience.

you can know it has come to pass. But in the same prophecy, for the latter days, towards the end of the latter days, we read of the sun being turned into blackness, and the moon was to be turned into blood.

The stars of heaven were to be fall from the earth, like the fig tree casts her figs. The heaven was to depart and open up like a scroll.

There was to be great cosmic eruptions. The mountains and the islands were to be moved out of their places.

[5 : 30] And Joel wrote over it, when the great and terrible day of the Lord will come, at the second coming of our Lord.

Now, there is no doubt that the first part of that prophecy has been fulfilled. And as the church looked into God's tomorrow from Joel's time, they saw part of it fulfilled.

They were in the middle of the experience. It happened to them. And then the church looked onward, and looked upwards, and looked again into God's tomorrow.

And when John, the last of the disciples, was wrought upon by the Spirit of God to record the latter end of the latter days and the happenings, he begins not at the falling of the Spirit of God, but at the second part of Joel's prophecy.

And he records it in Revelation like this. And lo, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black, a sacklet of hair, and the moon became as blood, and the stars of the heaven fell to the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken in the wind.

[7 : 07] And the heaven departed as a scroll, when it is rolled together, and every mountain and island moved out of their places, and the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the rocks of the mountains, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the

Lamb, for the great day of his wrath is come, and who is able to stand?

In Revelation chapter 6, we see a promise ultimately fulfilled.

Part of it was promised in the Old Testament. The second part of it was reiterated in the New, and now it comes to pass.

God exists after all. This is the shock that faces a lost humanity.

God really does exist. And the picture they see, the first picture is God existing.

[8 : 40] And as they look, they see God acting. They see God unfolding his plan, bringing it to completion.

They see God revealing himself as he is. God comes terrifyingly to the last stage of human history as we know it.

And it is a frightening experience for humanity. He comes, He comes, as Joel says, the great day of the Lord has come.

The day that He comes to end things as we know it now. It's amazing in our day and in every day.

In the morning, men will believe anything but the triumph of good and the punishment of evil.

[9 : 55] Let me say to you my friends, let me say to myself, good will ultimately triumph and evil will ultimately be punished.

And this is the record of God in the day when it all begins. This passage then is a look into God's tomorrow when the second part of Joel's prophecy and John's prophecy are brought to pass.

And that's what we want to look at tonight because we are all to be involved in it. Everyone in this congregation is to be involved in it at that moment in God's tomorrow when every creature he has created will know even as they are known.

And so we find in this chapter, first of all, a promise ultimately fulfilled. And we are all there.

If I had maybe the courage, I would ask everyone to look around and I would tell you, you'll all be there.

[11 : 37] Not one of you, young or old, will be missing. And as I look at this passage of scripture, I then see not only this promise being ultimately fulfilled, but I see a people totally unprepared.

Are you prepared for that day? The picture here is of a people who are totally unprepared.

And it's very interesting in that it is a sort of graphic picture, a sort of thumbnail sketch of humanity.

Let me illustrate what the scripture says of this people who are totally unprepared. When this great cosmic catastrophe takes place, when the earthquake sounds and the heavens are opened and the Son of Man comes in the glory of his angels, when good is about to finally and totally triumph, there's going to be another group, it says here.

Listen. And the kings of the earth, and the great men and the rich men, and the chief captains and the mighty men, and every bondman and freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains.

[13 : 21] We go over that quickly. Let's look at it just for one minute. Kings, what do kings represent?

They represent royal power. Kings were powerful in their day. They had power given to them by God.

And kings will give an account for the power given to them for what they did with their power, how they led their nation, how they taught their nation, how they prayed for their nation, how they led their nation.

It would be good if those in royal authority would take this text very seriously, for here we see royal power at the top of the list.

Then we speak, hear the prophets speak, of the great men. We could say political power. Who rules us? Political people.

[14 : 30] Great men. Great men perhaps in their own opinion. Great men in the eyes of their contemporaries. Contemporaries. But the prophet here speaks of the great men.

Political power. Rich men. Financial power. The wolves. Then the chief captains. Military power.

The mighty men. Intellectual power. Bond and free. Industrial power. This is a picture of the whole of humanity.

This is a picture of you and me. And the day comes like a thief in the night.

Now for a moment the prophet tells us that there is an awful knowledge before the experience.

[15 : 40] When it happens the mountains move the heavens roll the people all of a sudden know and yet this is a preliminary knowledge not the full experience that they are yet to undergo.

And what we see in this picture is the fear of mankind when this knowledge hits them. We don't know in this chapter we go to another chapter to find out what their feelings will be when they experience the judgment of God.

This chapter is only what they feel when this knowledge ultimately reaches them and they believe it. There is a God after all. He exists. He's about to act. His plan is unfolding right up until the judgment throne.

He's revealing himself and everything they ever knew rushes to their mind. There is a God after all. And this people are totally unprepared and what is more from what we gather here not only are they unprepared but they can never be prepared.

[17 : 23] They can never be prepared. You know that my friends? You can never be prepared after this moment of knowledge.

There is no faith needed now. There is no repentance to be experienced now. Only remorse. There is no hope to be grasped now. There is no gospel to be preached now. There is no Christ to be offered now.

And they know it all. They haven't yet gone to the great white throne. They haven't yet stood before the throne of God and the Lamb.

they haven't yet heard the awful sentence depart from me you cursed into everlasting darkness. They have heard nothing but they know that the day the terrible day of the Lord has come.

[18 : 34] What effect does it produce on them? We read this in the chapter and we see we see them running running we see them looking we see them believing we see them hiding crying as the rocks fall as the earth erupts as the heavens open as the Son of Man comes as the bride of Christ goes up to meet Jesus and his angels in the air they're running seeing believing hiding crying praying fearing realizing waiting my friends my dear friends you and I are the creatures of God either we are in rebellion against him or we have been reconciled to him through

Jesus Christ there is no middle of the road and what we do when we look into the window of God's tomorrow is to see a picture of ourselves in that day we may have been among the kings and experienced royal power we may have been among the great men and wielded political power we may have been among the rich and we might have ruled by financial power we may have been among the chief captains and we might have had certain amount of military power to control people we might have been among the mighty men we are men of intellect we are men of standing we are men of science we are men of medicine my friends we are men before God that's what God says what we wear in this world is of no standing we are running and seeing and believing and hiding and crying and praying and fearing and realizing that there's no hope and waiting for it all to happen oh the minutes and the hours if we can use that term are frightening deprived of power now we stand before the creator before the creator and we see something that we never thought to see we see the evidence of moral power the power of the creator and those who knew how to use power see the one who is all power holy power and he's going to use it in dealing with them now that's what the prophet speaks to us about here a promise then ultimately fulfilled a people totally unprepared now we see a third thing we see a prayer forever unanswered listen to it and they said to the mountains and the rocks fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the lamb there will be no misconceptions in eternity there will be no muddled thinking there will be no arrogant pride there will be no stuck out chests here our souls now on the brink of eternity still to face the judgment and the great white throne and they know in their minds through what they have heard that the condemnation of the great white throne will be final and they know from what they have heard that their evil will be punished in the penitentiary of God which the Bible calls God's hell and here they are now on the brink of eternity and they are praying their eyes are open there's no blindness their minds are clear they know the truth their hearts are fearful their lips pray and no not a hand has touched them the sentence has not yet been exacted there's no thought of denial of the charges that they are to face their prayer is hide me kill me put me out of existence get me away from Christ because priority then is given to what we are because this is the day of God's wrath hide me he says it's interesting hide me from the face of him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the lamb hide me from the face it's all written there formally there was love expressed in the face of the

Nazarene pity as he walked the streets of time promise on his lips when he called sinful people to himself and gentleness when he dealt with the woman caught in adultery and many others now as they look and as John looks at them looking the spirit of God opens his eyes and he sees the sheer

horror and terror and fear and he looks at the saviour that he walked with and he sees the reason not just the wrath to come that's fearful but the expression of holy hatred for evil on Jesus pure face my friends evil will be punished for what it has accomplished and evil will yet be punished at source the great day they say has come the great day has come they didn't expect it they didn't want it they didn't think of it they didn't prepare for it they often laughed at it you may do it yourselves but they say here it's come life after death yes sin and evil to be accounted for yes wrath to be endured yes the great day has come we cannot then hope it might not be we cannot laugh and say I'm not afraid we cannot think it will not happen to us it's come it's here it's arrived it's on us yes a prayer forever unanswered two more things we're finished the fourth thing we see in this chapter is a punishment forever unrelieved it's the day of his wrath that's come what is this wrath against why this punishment well basically if you can look at evil and see its immensity you'll find that evil has something to tell us this wrath of

[28 : 55] God is against that which attempted and still attempts to destroy God to destroy God evil will always attempt to destroy good evil when it succeeds always hurts it destroys it's destructive it causes pain it causes heartache you go into a home with a child or two children sitting around the fireside with mum and dad's living it up in another home with another woman I say my friend that's moral evil it brings heart it brings pain and no amount of personal selfishness is an excuse for it evil destroys good you go and see a widow evil her husband has been knocked down by a drunken driver evil of drink destroys good you see a person's purity taken away and left with nothing evil destroys good you see a jealous woman or a jealous man erupting in the home week by week month by month year by year that evil destroys good and I tell you my friends these are only small pictures of evil and I tell you from the word of

God that if you project that picture evil would destroy everything and anything that would prevent it from enjoying itself and if you die with an unregenerate soul you have a soul that lives in evil that produces evil that wants evil and you will destroy God if you get the chance now that's the real problem with evil it's no light thing and that's why evil will be punished it's against that which attempted once and still attempts to destroy God this punishment is against creatures who have rebelled against the creator who say in their heart there is no God there is no heaven there is no hell there is no law I will be as

God and this is not Sinatra made famous I'll do it my way you do it your way I speak to young and I speak to old you do it your way and in this day God will do it his way that's what the prophet speaks about and except you and I repent except you and I be saved by the Lord Jesus and given a new nature except we have something implanted within us that's good and the evil power annulled we will meet the wrath of God on that day as creatures who have rebelled against the creator let's not be mistaken in this why does God punish why is it unrelieved because it's against that which attempts to destroy God it's against the creatures rebelling against the creator and this punishment is against two and here we come in it's against the

Christless who have rejected the Christ of God this we are told in the scriptures is unrelieved punishment now in this unrelieved punishment whereby good triumphs and let us not forget that we want to forget we have a body and we'll see that body go into the coffin we'll see our bodies get old and frail and shaky and some of us will say that's me no that's not you my friend that's not me that's the shell the frail shell the fraying shell the shell that has the seeds of decay in it that's the shell that contains you and me you and me God says we're made in his image and we were made for eternity and we will be for what eternity just as we are at the moment of death regenerated dead or dead in trespasses and in sin and rebellion let's not mistake that however we may be someone says

I don't believe it oh no you are perhaps among the those who are grouped in intellectual power very proud some of you maybe here you're quite rich you you've good power of riches not you yes you whatever power whatever group you and I belong to this is unreleased punishment and we are told four things about it first of all we're told it's penal you know what penal servitude is it's punishment for what we've done it's not just been put away it is that it's not just been put where we'll do no more harm it is that but it is penal in the sense that we will be punished for what we have done to it's perpetual it is as an ending as human rebellion it is as an ending as our nature's it is as an ending as our evil it's painful three it's felt it will be felt in a resurrection body fitted for destruction it will be felt in the mind and in the soul it's painful and it's personal it's for our own sins for our own sins we'll not be able to blame anyone the righteous judge will judge fairly and so we find that this group of people now are on the brink of eternity their prayer is forever to be unanswered and they know it

their punishment is forever to be unrelieved it's to be penal it's to be painful it's to be perpetual and it's got to be personal you see sin is not just some acts that we do acts are the outward expression the part of me and this punishment will be dealt in the source and those who are gathered round waiting for the judgment throne they cry to be put out of existence because they know that this is it this is when God will do it his way let me say this to you if you want any more proof that God is in earnest you go to Calvary and see what he did to his son that's all finally we see in this passage a personal question to be asked here it is

[37 : 26] I want you to ask it yourself this evening what is it it's in the last verse for the great day of his wrath has come who will be able to stand who will be able to stand religious people no rebels no those who profess to be sincere no who will be able to stand only those who are cross atoned what do I mean by that those will be able to stand whose sins have already been punished two thousand years ago at Calvary when God laid the iniquity of his people upon his son and he died instead of them he atoned for them he took their punishment those whose sins have been atoned for by the cross they'll be able to stand those whose sins have been blood cleansed they'll be able to stand those whose lives after they've committed themselves to

Christ and depended upon his cross they'll be able to stand only the saved sinner will be able to stand can we put it another way who will be able to stand in those days those who stand in another's righteousness those who have the covering of what Jesus wove on the cross who will be able to stand those who trust their souls in another's death who will be able to stand those who believe in another's promise those who trust in the righteousness of Jesus those who trust trust in the death of

Jesus those who trust in the promises of Jesus those who are saved by Jesus way back in the prophecy of Joel you hear the response to this reality and it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered now this evening I want to ask you a question I have tried sincerely and honestly to portray to you the truth of God I have sought to give you a look into God's tomorrow now

I'm asking you will you be able to stand on that day I'm asking you tonight have you trusted the Lord Jesus as your savior I think the last time or the time before I was here I told some of you the story of a learned doctor in hell and with this I finish he knew nothing of the gospel he was a minister and he was a liberal minister he got his degrees at university his BD's at divinity hall his PhD's in later studies and then he came to a very select congregation in hall he preached that if you did your best and tried hard that everything would be alright for you in the end one night there was a knock at his door and there was a girl there she looked filthy she had the smell of alcohol on her clothes were torn she was a woman of ill repute and she said to him sir she says will you come and get my ma in he says what will you come and get my ma in he says what do you mean she says my ma is dying and she wants you to come and get her in he didn't know what she meant but she persisted very reluctantly put on his coat and his hat and down he went to the very very lower lower class of how in those days the stench of the in the song of the in in clambered in his ears he went through it all and he went up to a garret and there he saw a line in the corner a far more decrepit woman than the one who came to his door she was lying in some socks and she said oh sir will you get me in he said what do you mean she says

I'm dying will you get me into heaven you