



BULLEEN BAPTIST CHURCH

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SERIES : "THE LAST THINGS"

Study 2 "The Day Of The Lord" August 13, 2006

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INTRODUCTION : to the series

The "Last Things" is a Series on God's ultimate purposes for his people and his creation. The Series will pick up on the main themes through the Scriptures; themes which find their ultimate fulfilment when Jesus returns to the world. Then the whole of creation is renewed, his people are "clothed with immortality," and God reigns supreme.

INTRODUCTION : to Study 2

Six years ago 10 year old Damilola Taylor was brutally murdered in Peckham, South London. Over \$A10 million has been spent on the investigation. 4 youths were found not guilty at a first trial. All of the evidence was carefully re-examined, and last Thursday, six years later, the two teenagers who did kill him, now aged 18 & 19 were found guilty. Damilola's parents said :

"(it was a) great comfort that justice has finally been done for Damilola. We pray that his gentle soul can now rest in peace." (Herald Sun, 11.08.06 p35)

For the Authorities, Justice was IMPORTANT - no amount of effort or money would be spared. Often in such cases the Police involved become obsessed about tracking down those responsible.

For the human spirit, Justice is ESSENTIAL and even has significance BEYOND death- the parent's comments are not unusual and are evidence of a deeply held belief that, in spite of appearances, this is a moral world and moral outcomes are required.

From Psalm 6 comes a cry that all humanity can identify with :

My soul is in anguish. How long, O LORD, how long? Turn and deliver me. (v3-4) All my enemies will be ashamed and dismayed; they will turn back in sudden disgrace. (See also Ps13, 35, 74,94

The Psalmist, suffering the anguish of injustice, demands that God ACT and VINDICATE him.

Revelation 5:9-10 has a similar plea that justice be done : *I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. 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 universal cry of the human heart that justice be done is given witness in the Scriptures by the use of the phrase : "The Day Of The Lord." or, sometimes, simply, "That Day."

A. WHERE THE CONCEPT BEGAN : God "visits" his world.

God is revealed in the Bible as intimately involved with his Creation.

1. IN CREATION : By the power of his Word was everything made and by that same power is everything sustained.

... in these last days (God) has spoken to us by his Son ... through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. Heb1:1-3 (also Col1:16-17; Jn1:1-3,10)

2. IN REDEMPTION : God breaks into history to accomplish a specific redemptive purpose

The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out ... and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them Ex3:7-8 also Jer29:10; Is64:1-4)

Jesus used similar language about himself : *As (Jesus) approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, "If you ... had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes ... you did not recognise the time of God's coming to you." Lk19:41-44*

This concept of God "visiting" to redeem / to save gave rise to the phrase "the Day of the Lord" as "shorthand" for the activity and presence of God in the world.

B. DAY OF THE LORD ... the main ideas.

Three common themes emerge from the "Day of the Lord" passages of Scripture :

THAT DAY 1. God alone will be openly GLORIFIED

Go into the rocks, hide in the ground from dread of the LORD and the splendour of his majesty! ... The LORD Almighty has a day in store for all the proud and lofty, The arrogance of man will be brought low and the pride of men humbled; the LORD alone will be exalted in that day. Is2:10-12,17

THAT DAY 2. A Day of JUDGEMENT for the nations.

An oracle concerning Babylon ... See, the day of the LORD is coming - a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger ... The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light. I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins. I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless ... I will stir up against them the Medes Is13:1-17 (See also Ez30:3, Joel1:15, 2:1,11)

This particular "Day of the Lord" is PAST - the phrase is most often used to indicate a catastrophic national / political end; in this case of the Babylonian Empire by the Medes.

Note the use of Apocalyptic language re the sun, moon & stars - not to be taking literally! but indicating God bringing a nation to an end because of its cruelty / disobedience or arrogance. (Even for Israel, see Am5:18)

THAT DAY 3. A Day of Security for God's PEOPLE

For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon will be darkened, and the stars no longer shine. The LORD will roar from Zion and thunder from Jerusalem, the earth and the sky will tremble. But the LORD will be a refuge for his people. Joel 3:14-16 (also Mal3:16-17)

C. DAY OF THE LORD ... a later development.

The "Day of the Lord" was not only used by the prophets for God's localised judgement in contemporary history. The phrase was also used of a future "end-times" visitation from God that would bring on the end of the age. Here the Day of the Lord is UNIVERSAL in scope

Shake off your dust, rise up ... O Jerusalem ... You were sold for nothing, and without money you will be redeemed ... in that day they will know that it is I who foretold it. ... How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!" The LORD will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God. Is52:2-10 (see also Is49, 60 and 61)

As the Old Testament closes, Malachi is still looking FORWARD :

Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. ... for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings ... "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. Mal4:1-6

Notice the Messianic references both in the Isaiah passages listed and Malachi. Jesus identified John the Baptist as "Elijah" (Mat11:12-15, 17:10-13) so the Day of the Lord had begun in Jesus. (A theme we have no time to develop this morning)

D. DAY OF THE LORD - FINAL CONSUMMATION

In the New Testament the Day of the Lord, ultimately, is the RETURN of Jesus

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. 1Ptr3:10

On that day, all the LOOSE ENDS of human history and experience will be settled. All the issues of outstanding justice and all the elements of God's redeeming actions will be seen openly.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away ... I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God ... And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. ... I am making everything new!" Rev21:1-5

MARANATHA : "Come, O Lord!" (1Cor16:22)