

Dr. James T. Jeremiah
God's Judgment on the World
October 31, 1984

Transcript

James T. Jeremiah:

Thank you, brother Ellington. I don't know of a song or message that would better fit the study of 2 Peter with the promises, a blessing, along with a clear description of opposition and of ultimate destruction. It's great to have a song in the light of all of that. Now before I came to the platform this morning, I was pressured into becoming aligned with politics and politicians. I was given a sheet of paper that says that I should vote for the proper party, whichever one that may be. I would suggest that any of you who are not voting for the opposition, should vote for this party. I have a button that says, "Support the new deal." That's a problem. I voted against it, twice. Now I am in trouble.

James T. Jeremiah:

Well, anyhow, it's a lot of fun, isn't it? And I hope you have a great, great election day. None of you really is working at it as diligently as the Democratic Republicans or the Republican Democrats. At least I had an absentee ballot, and I'm leaving town tomorrow. Don't have a chance to vote on Cedar what, whatever Cedar what was or is.

James T. Jeremiah:

I want to say a word about Dr. Johnson, and all of his gracious introductions. I want to tell you how much that man has meant to me, and means to me. I don't believe that I could have lasted as President of this college without his help, and you young people today, who are enjoying the excellent academic program of this institution, need to realize that what we have in that area, is due in great measure to this man, who has labored long and hard to make the school what it is, from the academic standpoint. I thank God for him, and for what he's doing, what he's done. It's great to have him as my friend.

James T. Jeremiah:

I'm also grateful for God's leading in bringing Dr. Dixon here. It's a thrill to me to see the school grow. It's a thrill to me to see the emphasis that is placed upon the school or in the school, on the matter of evangelism and soul-winning, Bible study, discipleship, missions, and I appreciate Dr. Dixon's emphasis and his friendship. We've had a great time in these years we've worked together. I told one congregation, we work together like a father and a son. I'm the son, he's the father. It got back to him, and I heard about that, but don't tell him about that, please. But we thank God for what's going on, what's happening, and thank God for that man who God put here. Pray for him, and the others who labor with him and the administration, the faculty of the college. We're so grateful for our college here in Cedarville.

James T. Jeremiah:

We will plan to leave soon for warmer climate, seven grandkids, and lots of opportunities of preaching. We trust you'll pray for us as we go to California and other places before we come back. We'll probably be in the state of Washington for two weeks, and it's nice to see the country, and be able to enjoy these things together as my wife and I travel. I appreciate your prayers.

James T. Jeremiah:

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Will you open your Bibles this morning to the third chapter of 2 Peter. This is a book that has a lot to say about responsibility. We are to realize that God has given us all things that pertain unto life and to godliness. And then we are reminded that the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation. Peter deals with the awful tragedy of denial of the Lordship of Christ, the deity of Christ, and tells the ultimate outcome of what apostasy will be, and what will happen to it.

James T. Jeremiah:

In chapter one, we have something said about spiritual development in the life of a Christian. So we study the attitude and the actions, the viewpoints, of the apostates. We see the awful result of satanic delusion. And we need to understand that we're living in a day when Satan is the god of this age, and the prince of the power of the air, and he seeks to deceive. And there is no deception greater than that which has a religious connotation. He's in the business of trying to get our eyes away from the Lordship of Christ, the deity of Christ, the sacrificial work of Christ, the living Christ. We need to keep our eyes on Him.

James T. Jeremiah:

And now as we come to this third chapter, the apostle Paul, or apostle Peter, rather, deals with the coming of Christ and sudden destruction. The false teachers in chapter two, verse one, seem to carry over in Peter's thinking, as he deals with the subject of the coming of the Lord in this passage. Where is the promise of his coming? To show the apostles' concern for his people, or those to whom he is writing, and that includes us, he has several things to say about the beloved ones. Let me give you just a brief outline of what he has to say about beloved people. Follow this in your Bible, have your Bibles open. In chapter three, one to seven, he is reminding the beloved to be mindful. Beloved. God's beloved people. Be mindful. Think seriously about matters that are important.

James T. Jeremiah:

And then in chapter three, 8-11, he talks about, "Beloved, be not ignorant." I've often thought of the people who say there are no denominations in the Bible. Well, Paul dealt with them. He talked about the ignorant brethren and the beloved brethren. And Peter is saying, "Don't be one of the ignorant brethren." And then in chapter three, 11-14, he says, "Beloved, be diligent." That means be about God's business. And then the last part of it, "Beloved, beware." The day of the Lord is mentioned in this passage, verse 10, "The day of the Lord will come." That's an extended period of time. It begins with a great tribulation period, and continues throughout the millennium. The Word of God speaks often about it coming unexpectedly, and of course we think of it beginning with a tribulation, and that begins with a rapture of the saints, and thereafter, it will be a sudden day of judgment upon the world.

James T. Jeremiah:

Chapter two reminds us of God's judgment on the apostates. And here we see what will happen in the world, what's going to take place when the coming Lord returns. When you think of responsibility placed upon Christians in chapter one of growing and going for our coming Lord. You see now what's going to happen to this world in which we live, when God finally wraps it all up, and creates a new heaven and a new earth. The coming of the Lord, the promise of His coming. In verses one and two, Peter deals with a declaration of this promise. The Bible reminds us in these verses that you may be mindful of these words, which were spoken before, of the Holy prophets, and of the commandment of the apostles of the Lord and savior. The prophets said he would come, and we haven't time to go through much of this,

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but even that great Christmas text in the old Testament, Isaiah 9:6-7, speaks about the coming Christ, who will reign upon the throne of David, and will have His kingdom.

James T. Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 23, the prophet says, "He shall execute judgment and righteousness." He hasn't done that yet. Daniel 2:45, the prophet of God says, "The stone cut out of the mountain will destroy the image." And that speaks about the judgment day in the future. The very last words of the old Testament, in Malachi, deal with the prophet's viewpoint of the coming of the Lord, when he comes the second time. Listen to it. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse judgment." The very last thing in that book, the Old Testament, the prophet said he would return. The apostles said he would come.

James T. Jeremiah:

Paul, in 1 Thessalonians 4, speaks about the day when the "trumpet shall sound, and the dead in Christ shall be raised first. Those of us who remain, who will be called up together with them in the clouds to be with the Lord forever." Titus deals with the "Blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and savior." James deals with "The coming or the waiting for the coming of Christ, as one who plants his fields, and anticipates the day when the crop shall be harvested." John says, "Be not ashamed before Him. It is coming." This, we're told, "Is a day when we shall see Him and be like him, for we shall see Him as he is."

James T. Jeremiah:

As we think of this, the prophets declare it, the apostles declare it, the whole Bible declares it, for the coming of the Lord is mentioned some 1800, more than that, 1800 times in the Bible. 318 of these times are in the New Testament. 17 Old Testament books deal with it. Seven out of every 10 chapters in the New Testament refer to this prophetic event. Men through the years have preached it. Martin Luther said, "I live as though Jesus Christ died yesterday, rose again today, and were coming again tomorrow." Tyndale, the man who had so much to do with our English, our King James Bible, said, "Christ and his apostles warned us to look for Christ coming again every hour." It is said that Charles Wesley wrote 7,000 hymns, and included this great theme on the second coming, at least referred to it, in 5,000 of the 7,000 he penned. Spurgeon told his audience, "The coming of the Lord is far more the hope of the church than any remedial process evolution or progresses among mankind."

James T. Jeremiah:

Now, I've said all of this to remind you that the Bible teaches it, God's people through the ages have believed it, it has been declared, and we're living in a day, it seems to me, when there are converging trends, to think, to make us be reminded that his appearance in heaven for His people is not far away. I have thought of them, converging trends or signs. There's lawlessness, spoken of as a trend. Spiritism, as we've never seen it before. Apostasy, ecumenism, Israel in the land, continued warfare, earthquakes, famine, on and on it goes. You say, "They've always been here." True, but it seems to me, they've never converged like this.

James T. Jeremiah:

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And when you stop and think of signs, there is no sign in scripture pertaining to the rapture of the saints. The signs began to develop and multiply in the passage of scripture, the passages of scripture that deal with the coming of Christ in power and great glory, beginning of the tribulation period. Now, let me ask you something. If we are seeing the trends today, and we're reminded that there are signs that pertain to His coming after the rapture of the saints, and the coming of Christ upon the earth is seven years beyond the rapture. We can almost hear the trumpet sound. We're living in crucial days.

James T. Jeremiah:

In spite of it, the Word of God says, "It has not only been declared, but it's been denied." Verses three and four, "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last day, scoffers walking after their own lust and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming?" I mentioned last time that a good many of these apostates, unbelievers, and scoffers do not face the evidence at hand. They just say, "I don't believe it. I will deny it." And turn away from the evidence. And here they are now. They deny it. The Last Days scoffers.

James T. Jeremiah:

These scoffers use two arguments. Why don't they believe it? Well, Peter deals with these arguments. Number one, the promises are delayed so long, it never will be fulfilled. That's what he's saying. "Where's the promise of His coming, for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were, or as they are." Why, they haven't happened. It hasn't happened yet. So why should we expect it would happen? Well, let me tell you, the fact that it hasn't happened doesn't negate the fact that it will happen. And since it hasn't happened, and it's promised to happen, it's a lot nearer than it was.

James T. Jeremiah:

His coming is not far away, we believe. promises delayed so long that they never will be fulfilled." And the world is going on now as it always has, no place for miracles, and no place for hope. I guess the no hope concept is an existential viewpoint. We're so far gone down, that there's no hope for the future, no coming of Christ. And that's the reason why, in many institutions of higher learning, they're concerned now about the problems of teenagers ending their lives without hope. You kids have hope. You young people in this place, with the gospel in your heart, and Christ as your savior, and the coming of the Lord drawing nigh, have hope. You don't have to live like that crowd in a hopeless society. Thank God for that.

James T. Jeremiah:

Then the other concept is, "Everything continued as it has. It will continue as it always has, no place for miracles." I don't know too many big words. Existentialism is a big one. Uniformitarianism is another one. And what a great day some of them have made on that. But because it hasn't happened and it hasn't changed, it will continue unchanged. We eliminate when we take that viewpoint, what Peter dealt with in the preceding chapter, and here too, on the flood. "No miracle, no cataclysm, no resurrection." You can't put that in the understanding of the unregenerated, unknowing person, who has no basis for believing in miracles. They deny it. Why do they deny it?

James T. Jeremiah:

Why do people deny the Second Coming? Let me give you some reasons. There's moral blindness, verse three. Scoffers walking after their own lust. They prefer to think God is not going to judge the world or

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them because they love their sins. You're here today without Christ. You've gotten into the school without really having an experience with him. You don't want to believe this. You don't want to believe in judgment. Moral blindness.

James T. Jeremiah:

I believe more people reject Christ as savior because of moral situations than they do for intellectual ones. They reject him because they love their sins. That's what Peter is saying. Notice in verse four, they have intellectual arrogance. "All things continue as they were." Who are they to know so much? Have they been around here for all the millions of years they suppose they put on the age of the earth in the first place? If they say it goes back 50 million years, more or less, were they there during that period of time, to say all things continued as they were?

James T. Jeremiah:

Willful ignorance. Verse five. "They willingly are ignorant." It escapes their notice. They willingly forget. Sinners insist on living in darkness, even when light is available. Jesus said, "Ye will not come to me that you might have light." These scoffers, incidentally, are one of the signs. "In the last days, scoffers shall arise, saying..." One of the signs.

James T. Jeremiah:

Let me talk briefly about the demonstration Peter gives of what will happen. In verses four, nine, 13. "Where is the promise of His coming? The Lord is not slack concerning his promise." Some of them count slackness. "There's long suffering to us. We're not willing that any should perish, but all should come to repentance. The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise. And the elements shall melt with fervent heat. The earth also in the works that are therein shall be burned up." You see, the past performance God gave in verse six. "The world that then was, was destroyed."

James T. Jeremiah:

And there's evidence of that great cataclysm outside of the scriptures. The Bible's record, of course, is the true one. The fact that God has preserved the universe till now, verse seven. "Now kept in store." Aren't you glad God keeps it going? By Him, all things consist. All things hold together. Since it has held together this long under the control of almighty God, it's a good argument for the eternal plan of the Second Coming. God has it in his control.

James T. Jeremiah:

Many years ago, back in August of 1873, Charles Haddon Spurgeon preached on these texts. It's interesting what he had to say in 1873. "Faraday says that there was enough latent electricity in a drop of water for an ordinary flash of lightning. What reserves of destructive forces, there must be, in and around the globe. God's dreadful armies lie in ambush everywhere. What if I say God's bodyguard is sleeping in his guard chamber? He has but to speak the word of the servant of his omnipotence, will rise terrible in his destructive power. Earth is a pile of wood, and the torchbearers stand ready to kindle it at any moment. There has always been a cry of fire among men and the cry grows louder every century, for the burning is near." He had just come back from a trip to Italy, where he had seen Mount Vesuvius, and he was preaching on this passage of scripture.

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James T. Jeremiah:

Back in 1948, Dr. Wilbur Smith wrote a book. You want to look at it if you can find it in the library, *The Atomic Age and The Word of God*. The whole book of 350 pages deals with this matter, particularly in verse 10 of this passage of scripture. God has a day in his plan. The day of judgment. Verse seven. We need to see time as God sees it. He does not pay every Friday night. We need to remember that. God has a day in His plan, and He has a plan for his day. In verse eight, "One day is a thousand years. The day of the Lord will come" we're told in verse 10. "A thousand years." Go back to the 90th Psalm.

James T. Jeremiah:

We think of time, and I know how you feel, some of you are here, and you can't wait to get out and get to work. And some of you preacher boys want to go out and preach, and you just think the Lord's coming before you're going to get there. I know. But time goes by, and time hastens on. And you better use the time you have, where you are, to glorify God, and be in His will. "A thousand years as yesterday, a watch," the Psalm says. A flood, sleep, grass, time. Not very much. A thousand years. God has it all in his day, and a plan for his day.

James T. Jeremiah:

Back in World War II, Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse was preaching. Having some reference to Adolf Hitler, he said, "We need not fear Adolf Hitler. He's just a dot on a dot, in a crack between two eternities." Now that must have really challenged that German, if he'd ever heard it, "Just a dot on the dot, in a crack between two eternities." Just because God's delayed his action, there's no sign it won't act. And this is what that chapter is saying. I say, "What's that have to do with us?" In the light of the ultimate dissolution and destruction of everything around us, we need to remember that the only permanent, everlasting thing we have is what we have in Jesus Christ.

James T. Jeremiah:

We ought then to see the importance of growing and going for our coming Lord. Everything we think is valuable will burn. You may own a Cadillac. It'll be more than rust, it'll be dust. You may live in a palace. It'll go. But I want to tell you my friend, that when you trust Jesus Christ as your savior, and you go on to live for Him, you're knowing that which is eternal, and you're putting your life, involving your life, in that which will not pass away.

James T. Jeremiah:

You think of it in the light of what He says about the dissolution of all things. And I haven't had time today to deal with this as I'd like to, because I want to come to the conclusion of this chapter that deals with some very practical demands of His coming. I'd like to speak about this more, concerning the meaning of the words. Let me just say this about it. Back in the days when the first atomic bomb dropped, and they began to think about it, they came to this passage of scripture to find out if that spoke of it. Listen. It probably does describe what it will be like, for the word, here has something to do with a noise, like the rumbling of thunder, the crackle of flames, the rushing of water, the hissing of a serpent. But let me remind you, God Almighty does not need the atomic hydrogen bomb to carry out his judgment. He may use them. I don't know. But He's still the God of all things, and what he has promised, He will fulfill.

James T. Jeremiah:

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What does this demand of us? Verses 14-18, "Live like saints." Verse 11. It gets back to that. 14, "Be diligent, that they may be found of Him in peace, without spot and blemish." What should it do? It should say, "Live a godly life." It implores us to trust scripture. Verse 15, "An account that the long suffering of our Lord is salvation, even as our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom, given unto him, hath written unto you. And also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are those things hard to be understood, which they, that are unlearned and unstable, rest as they do also the other scriptures."

James T. Jeremiah:

Make the book your book. Make that Bible your guide. Make that Bible the source of your strength. Verse 17, it says we ought to beware of falling. "Ye therefore, beloved, seeking in all these things before, beware lest ye also being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." Listen, friend. I believe when God saves us, He saves us forever. But I also believe that we Christians can miss out on a whole lot by falling from our steadfastness, and walking in disobedience.

James T. Jeremiah:

Last of all, He tells us, believe it or not, the very last thing of the text, "Continue to grow." That's the great theme of the book. "Grow in grace in the knowledge of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ, in the glory both now and forever." You say, "Isn't that a strange way to close that chapter." No, that's a great way. Wonderful way. For in that passage of scripture, God says to us, "In the light of what's coming upon the earth, Christian, beloved one, see to it that you're farther along in your Christian life, another day than you are now. Grow. Advance and go, for our coming Lord."

James T. Jeremiah:

Our Father, thank you for today, for your presence with us, your goodness to us. Thank you for these students and this faculty. For Dr. Dixon, Dr. Johnson, and the others who labor here, bless them and use them in a mighty way in the weeks, in the months, and the years to come. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Dr. Clifford Johnson:

Thank you very much, Dr. Jeremiah, and you have a great time in California, and may the Lord bless you there. Have a good day.