

## I. INTRODUCTION: THE BIBLICAL DAY OF THE LORD CONTEXT

- A. Though many approaches could be taken in addressing the mission and purpose of the church in context to the eschatological culmination of human rebellion, cosmogeny must remain the foundation for all theological inquiry.

***They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever (cf. Day of the Lord). Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him." (NIV Jude 1:13-15)***

- B. As the people of God who are looking forward to the promised Seed who will restore all things (Gen. 3:15), we are fundamentally a sojourning people eagerly awaiting the Day of the Lord. In this light, patient endurance and a faithful witness are the two primary functions of the church throughout redemptive history—how much the more at the end of the age.

***He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses (Gk. martus) whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify (Gk. diamarturomai) that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. (NIV Acts 10:41-42)***

***Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water." ... This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus. (NIV Revelation 14:6-12)***

- C. This faithful endurance is ultimately reflected in a lifestyle of consecration to and communion with God, individually and corporately. Coming before the Lord in prayer, individually and corporately, has always been the primary calling of the people of God as they await the Day of the Lord.

***Seth also had a son, and he named him Enosh. At that time men began to call on the name of the LORD. (NIV Genesis 4:26)***

***The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him. Then he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel...there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD. (NASB Genesis 12:7-8)***

- D. This individual and corporate gathering before the Lord in prayer, worship and faith remains the primary function of the people of God, which sets the stage for a faithful witness to Jesus and the Day of the Lord.

***To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ...For in him you have been enriched in every way—in all your speaking and in all your knowledge—because our testimony (Gk. *marturion*) about Christ was confirmed in you. Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. (NIV 1 Corinthians 1:2-8)***

## II. THE PROPHETICAL CALL IN LIGHT OF THE DAY OF THE LORD

- A. The prophets assume and build upon the Day of the Lord theology established in Genesis. Throughout the prophets, the call is made to come before the Lord in repentance and mourning in light of the great and terrible Day of the Lord.

***The great day of the LORD is near-- near and coming quickly...That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of trouble and ruin, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness...Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them on the day of the LORD's wrath. In the fire of his jealousy the whole world will be consumed, for he will make a sudden end of all who live in the earth. Gather together, gather together, O shameful nation, before the appointed time arrives and that day sweeps on like chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD comes upon you, before the day of the LORD's wrath comes upon you. Seek the LORD, all you humble of the land (Hb. *erets*, "earth" NASB/KJV/NKJV), you who do what he commands. Seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you will be sheltered on the day of the LORD's anger. (NIV Zephaniah 1:14-2:3)***

***Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming. It is close at hand—a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness...The LORD thunders at the head of his army; his forces are beyond number, and mighty are those who obey his command. The day of the LORD is great; it is dreadful. Who can endure it? 'Even now,' declares the LORD, 'return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.' Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity...Blow the trumpet in Zion, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly. Gather the people, consecrate the assembly; bring together the elders, gather the children, those nursing at the breast...Let them say, 'Spare your people, O LORD...' And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people...The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved. (NIV Joel 2:1-32)***

- B. This prophetic context informs the ministry of John the Baptist, who came preaching the imminence of the Day of the Lord and the judgment to come. Thus, the response was to assemble before the Lord in repentance and renewed consecration.

***In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."...Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, and they were baptized by him in the***

***river Jordan, confessing their sins...Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.***  
(<sup>ESV</sup> Matthew 3:1-10)

***In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar...the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the desert. He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet...John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?" ... The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Christ. John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come...His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." (<sup>NIV</sup> Luke 3:1-18)***

- C. This prophetic context also informs the ministry of the apostles, since they likewise saw the Day of the Lord to be imminent, i.e. "near/at hand" (cf. Rom. 13:12; Phil. 4:5; Heb. 10:25; Jam. 5:8; 1 Pe. 4:7; 2 Pe. 3:3ff).

***Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is near ("at hand" KJV/NKJV/ESV). Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. (<sup>NASB</sup> Romans 13:11-12)***

***Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer (cf. Lord) waits for the land to yield its valuable crop (cf. resurrection of the righteous) and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains (cf. Holy Spirit as means of resurrection). You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near ("at hand" ESV/NKJV). (<sup>NIV</sup> James 5:7-8)***

***But they (pagans) will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead...The end of all things is near ("at hand" KJV/NKJV/ESV). Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. (<sup>NIV</sup> 1 Peter 4:5-7)***

- D. Thus, the apostles gathered in Jerusalem, seeking the gift of the Spirit before the great and terrible Day of the Lord, as is evident by Peter's choice of scriptural justification in Acts 2:17-21.

***He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God...So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." ... Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives...They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers. (<sup>NIV</sup> Acts 1:3-14)***

***When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house***

**where they were sitting...Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" ... Then Peter stood up with the Eleven..."this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel (cf. 2:28:32): 'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy...The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' ... When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins." ... With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day (i.e. assembly of the righteous). (NIV Acts 2:1-41)**

- **Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners...the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. (NIV Psalm 1:1-5)**
- **Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.** (NIV Daniel 7:27)

E. Likewise, the gathering of Acts 4 reveals the Day of the Lord expectation in the quoting of Psalm 2. As the nations of the earth had conspired against Jesus to kill, so did they conspire against the apostles representing Jesus in Acts 4:1-22, and so will they continue to build in their wicked conspiracy unto the Day of the Lord.

**On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people...they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: "'Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One.' Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed...Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. (NIV Acts 4:23-29)**

F. The goal of the Church has always been to get as many people into the fold of righteousness as possible before the Day of the Lord. This is accomplished by gathering together before the Lord and consecrating ourselves to God in holiness and righteousness.

**Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. (ESV Hebrews 10:23-25)**

**By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of**

**judgment and destruction of ungodly men. But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day...He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. (NIV 2 Peter 3:6-10)**

### III. THE ESCHATOLOGICAL CALL IN LIGHT OF THE DAY OF THE LORD

- A. The Church in the Book of Acts models the mission and lifestyle of the Church at the end of the age, since they truly believed they were living in the generation of the Antichrist and the culmination of Babylon.

**Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world-- the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever. Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. (NIV 1 John 2:15-18)**

**Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God. Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? (NIV 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5)**

- B. Peter thus relates the church in Asia Minor to the prophetic writings concerning Babylon because he believed that the infrastructure of his day would soon transition to that which had been written.

**The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins...Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed...And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away...Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast...She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark. (NIV 1 Peter 4:7-5:13)**

- C. The eschatological call of the angel thus mimics the prophetic call to “come out of her” in consecration and devotion to God.

***Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great! She has become a home for demons and a haunt for every evil spirit, a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird...Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues; for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes... Rejoice over her, O heaven! Rejoice, saints and apostles and prophets! God has judged her for the way she treated you...In her was found the blood of prophets and of the saints, and of all who have been killed on the earth. (NIV Revelation 18:2-24)***