

SERMON

Boast About God

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“In God we make our boast all day long,
and we will praise your name forever.”
(Psalms 44:8)

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...the world is a better place...
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Chapter 3

The Mission of Watchmen and Signs of the Present Time

A watchman is a person who keeps watch over something or someone. The mission of a watchman is to keep awake even while people are sleeping and to keep a close eye on things so that he can help people prepare themselves by telling them if there is any sign of an attack from the enemy or of a disaster.

God has entrusted the mission of a spiritual watchman to the children of Zion. The mission of a spiritual watchman is to awaken the world with the word of God, **whether they listen or not**, to help them escape disasters and to lead them to salvation (Eze 3:11, 17-18).

Various disasters that are occurring these days are the message of God's warning to human beings. Considering this, we, the spiritual watchmen, must not remain mere spectators. We need to carefully study what the Bible prophesies about the current situation and how human beings can escape so many disasters they are facing today. By taking a close look at the teachings of God and the signs of the present time, we should make it known to all people.

This is an age when disasters are prevalent

Recently, unheard-of disasters have been rampant. Climate change caused by global warming and unpredictable disasters that occur consequently are being reported through various mass media outlets every day. Furthermore, earthquakes are occurring more frequently and **causing greater damages**

than ever before.

According to a detailed report by the mass media, in Africa where the average annual low temperature used to be over 10°C [50°F], some people froze to death because the temperature dropped to below zero celsius [32°F]. On the contrary, Siberia, the frozen land, suffered from a record-breaking heat wave which caused multiple deaths. When people on one side of the earth were suffering from an unprecedented drought, those on the other side of the earth suffered from heavy rainfalls; torrential rains poured down even in dry desert areas, and many people died from floods. Antarctic glaciers and Mt. Kilimanjaro's ice cap and the Himalayan glaciers are melting at a rapid and alarming rate, and island countries in the South Pacific are being submerged due to rising sea levels and most of the residents have moved to nearby countries. The world is now being driven into such abnormal situations.

Korea is not an exception. Its climate is gradually becoming subtropical. Cultivation of tropical fruits is increasing, whereas that of alpine plants is decreasing. As the temperature of the sea goes up, a catch of cold water fish species in the East Sea is drastically decreasing.

Since the situation is so serious, all the countries of the world are making efforts in various fields, convening international meetings to discuss countermeasures and concluding relevant treaties. However, there are not many countries that join the treaties because they promote their own national interest and the treaties are not so effective and restrictive.

God has already prophesied and warned of disasters occurring in this age, through the Bible. Let's take a look at the related Bible prophecies, which give us insight into how to discern the present time, one after another.

An unheard-of disaster is coming

Isa 24:1-6 「See, the LORD is going to lay waste the earth and devastate it; he will ruin its face and scatter its inhabitants—it will be the same for priest as for people, for master as for servant . . . The earth will be completely laid waste and totally plundered. The LORD has spoken this word. The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers, the exalted of the earth languish. The

earth is defiled by its people; they have disobeyed the laws, violated the statutes and broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore a curse consumes the earth; its people must bear their guilt. Therefore earth's inhabitants are burned up, and very few are left.」

God says that the earth will be laid waste and devastated because its inhabitants have disobeyed **His laws and broken His covenant**. This generation is rushing into the situation prophesied. Considering the ongoing problems such as the extinction of many species of life caused by climate change and natural disasters and the rapid desertification because of drought and famine, we cannot help but pay closer attention to the prophecies of the Bible.

Eze 7:3-10 「... This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Disaster! An unheard-of disaster is coming. The end has come! The end has come! It has roused itself against you. It has come! Doom has come upon you—you who dwell in the land. The time has come, the day is near; there is panic, not joy, upon the mountains. I am about to pour out my wrath on you and spend my anger against you; I will judge you according to your conduct and repay you for all your detestable practices. I will not look on you with pity or spare you; I will repay you in accordance with your conduct and the detestable practices among you. Then you will know that it is I the LORD who strikes the blow. The day is here! It has come! Doom has burst forth, the rod has budded, arrogance has blossomed!」

Jer 25:31-33 「The tumult will resound to the ends of the earth, for the LORD will bring charges against the nations; he will bring judgment on all mankind and put the wicked to the sword,」 declares the LORD. This is what the LORD Almighty says: "Look! Disaster is spreading from nation to nation; a mighty storm is rising from the ends of the earth." At that time those slain by the LORD will be everywhere—from one end of the earth to the other. They will not be mourned or gathered up or buried, but will be like refuse lying on the ground.」

According to God's prophetic warnings, unheard-of and unprecedented

disasters are now rampant all around us. As mentioned earlier, some villages are completely submerged in floods caused by runoff from melting glaciers, a heat wave is striking the frozen land, a cold wave is hitting Africa which has a tropical climate, and floods are occurring in deserts. All these are new disasters that human beings have never experienced or imagined before.

Moreover, as God said, “Disaster is spreading from nation to nation,” the disasters that are occurring today are rapidly spreading and affecting the whole world beyond national borders because of the air traffic development. SARS that started in China once scared the whole world, and now there are many infectious diseases caused by new viruses—AIDS which is called the plague of the 20th century, AI [Avian Influenza], BSE [Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy], FMD [Foot and Mouth Disease] and H1N1. All these have already become global disasters, not just the problems of a certain region.

Christ's prophecies concerning disasters

As there is a sign for everything, all things that are happening these days are the signs which awaken this generation and predict what is going to happen in the future (Lk 12:54-56). 2,000 years ago, Jesus told His disciples about the signs of disasters which would take place at the end of the age.

Mt 24:3-8 『As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” Jesus answered: “. . . You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.”』

Lk 21:10-26 『Then he said to them: “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences

the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD. The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.”」

Isa 33:20-22 「Look upon Zion, the city of our **festivals**; your eyes will see Jerusalem, a peaceful abode, a tent that will not be moved; its stakes will never be pulled up, nor any of its ropes broken. There the LORD will be our Mighty One, ... For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; it is he who will save us.」

Zion is the church that keeps the feasts of God. God has given the promise of salvation to the people of Zion and let disasters pass over them through the Passover, which is one of His feasts.

Not only in the the time of the Exodus but throughout all ages, people were saved from disasters when they kept the Passover, the covenant of God. Jesus has also established the law of the new covenant to give us the flesh and blood of God through the bread and wine of the Passover, and has put the **seal** of salvation on His children who keep the new covenant

(Mt 26:17-28; Lk 22:7-20). Even though a disaster attacks, which spreads from nation to nation and lays waste the earth and devastates it, **it will not befall** those who celebrate the Passover in Zion, the city of God's appointed feasts, just as God has promised.

Let us preach the good news of salvation by faithfully carrying out the mission of a watchman

It is the Passover of the new covenant that we must quickly preach to those who are trembling with fear and perplexity because of rampant disasters. We should blow loud the trumpet of salvation and lead all people in the world to Zion, the safe refuge, as soon as possible.

Jer 4:5-9 「Announce in Judah and proclaim in Jerusalem and say: 'Sound the trumpet throughout the land!' Cry aloud and say: 'Gather together! Let us flee to the fortified cities!' Raise the signal to go to **Zion! Flee for safety without**

delay! For I am bringing disaster from the north, even terrible destruction." . . . Your towns will lie in ruins without inhabitant. So put on sackcloth, lament and wail, for the fierce anger of the LORD has not turned away from us. "In that day," declares the LORD, "the king and the officials will lose heart, the priests will be horrified, and the prophets will be appalled."

God warns us of an impending disaster. In this situation, let us all try our hardest to lead many people to Zion, the refuge of salvation, by blowing the trumpet of warning.

Now is the time to extend the hand of salvation to those who are trembling in fear for disasters, forsaking the selfish thought, 'I've already been saved and that's enough.' Also, now is high time to wake up the people who have fallen into a deep sleep spiritually without discerning this present time.

God said, "Flee to Zion without delay." So we must not delay our mission to let people flee to Zion. As the watchmen of the truth, let us follow God's command to save the world by leading all people to Zion where Elohim our Father and Mother dwell, who protect us from disasters through the Passover of the new covenant and give us the blessings of eternal life, so that we can repay Elohim for Their grace.