

October 24, 2021

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "A Discerning Eye for Divine Province"

—Trusting in the Word of God—

Text: 2 Peter: 3:3~7

3:3 knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.

3:4 They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation."

3:5 For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, 3:6 and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.

3:7 But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

Introduction

My friends! Baseball is one of the most popular sports in Japan and America. Shohei Ohtani is an extremely popular baseball player these days. He is a Japanese baseball player and plays an active part in America. When we click on the link to learn more, **the breaking news of Shohei Ohtani** first appears. The public in Japan and America are paying attention to the player who is a "two-way" player, being both a pitcher and a batter.

A little while ago, a certain professional baseball player wanted to become more of an active player in the major leagues. To do this, he sought a new batting coach. Until then, he worked as a professional baseball player. However, he changed his way of batting because of the coach. As a result of this change, he became more productive. The player said that after hearing a piece of the coach's' advice, it was like **the scales fell from his eyes**.

You may know the saying, "**the scales fell from one's eyes**." It is quoted from Acts,

Chapter 9 in the Bible. (A dictionary of proverbs, Gakken dictionary 2nd version)
Acts 9:18 And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight.

We read the Bible. We listen to messages from the Bible. One day, the Scripture of the Bible seems to speak to us. It is because that the Spirit of God works on us to see things from a new perspective. It is true that **the scales fall from our eyes.**

Sometimes, God speaks to us like this. The important thing is having **an eye for divine providence.** Approximately 2000 years ago, the false teachers and the false prophets appeared, and the saints were enticed with the sensual passions of the flesh.

There are false teachers among us, who try to guide us to the incorrect way. The teachings of heresy work actively in our time. Therefore, it is especially important how we should judge things.

Today, I would like to speak the message entitled "A Discerning Eye for Divine Province"

Let us study the following two points.

Main Points

1 . What We Should Know First of All

3:3 knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.

3:4 They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation."

1) The Beginning of **the Last Days**

The last days are also said to be the end times. When you hear about the last days, you may imagine a fearful time when unusual events and natural disasters occur as if everything is over.

The last days that the Bible refers to means **the beginning time** for us because it means coming of God's kingdom and the time of fulfilment that God promised. It is the time that God's righteousness is revealed even though honesty does not always

pay, and absurdity goes on openly in society. Therefore, those who trust in God are asked to correctly figure out how to live in the present time by looking forward to the last days that are fulfilment of God's righteousness.

What do you think? We usually look towards the future through the present circumstances. It is particularly important that we think about the present and the future through the viewpoint of the past. However, the Bible teaches another point of view where we look at the present with the future in mind (the last times).

The saints who are cleansed of their sin by Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, are given the promise that they are allowed to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. When we look at ourselves with this in mind, we come to know divine province. God as the potter makes us the saints into his favorite vessels.

Let us open Jeremiah, Chapter 18.

Jeremiah 18:1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD:

18:2 "Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will let you hear my words."

18:3 So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was working at his wheel.

18:4 And the vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to do.

18:5 Then the word of the LORD came to me:

18:6 "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done? declares the LORD. Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.

God is the true potter. We are spiritually the Israelites.

Let us read Chapter 18, verse 6 again.

18:6 “O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done? declares the LORD. Behold, like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.

God made us His people and sees us as **completed in the near future**.

- ① The Lord Jesus knew the future of Peter who would stumble after the Last Supper. Jesus knew Peter’s weakness.
- ② At the same time, Jesus knew that Peter would be restored, and love the Lord and would be a faithful servant until his martyrdom. God saw the future.

The secret is applicable to us. God kindly looks at us who are helpless at the present but looks **at us in the future** who grow and will be made ready by the Lord’s care. My friends, you need not worry about the present nor become discouraged. You need not grieve over your helplessness, because the Lord already prepared His work for you.

Like this, it is important to look **the last days** of this world as **the beginning time** for the Lord’s people. On top of that, we also need to think of what we shall be in the future.

What viewpoint do you think we have? Let us take time and think about it.

2) Remember God’s Grace

Peter taught the saints to remember God’s grace through his second epistle. They should remember what they have been taught and stand steadfastly and live godly lives. And he taught the importance that they should live faithfully in the present by looking towards **the last days**.

The Holy Spirit encourages those who listen to God’s word to have hope under hardship and stand up with faith. At the same time, the Holy Spirit advises us to pay closer attention to power of heresy.

Those who, gave in to the enticement of heresy, once listened to the Gospel and received God’s love. However, they did not want to look back their own lives and change themselves by God’s word. Jesus spoke **the Parable of the Sower** to teach the foolishness of those who only hear but do not follow the word.

James 1:22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves

We understand that verses 3 and 4 record about people who drop out of Christian faith. They **scoff** and **follow their sinful desires** and **doubt**. They tried to stick to their own ways. They said,

3:4 They will say, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.”

They doubted the promise of the Bible and the word of God. They also doubted the existence of God and His guidance. It means that they did not recognize the divine province in human history.

We sometimes do not realize that in our lives.

The divine province is not always dramatic, but it happens in each of our lives as if it is nothing important and unusual. When we try to look it through faith, we understand it for the first time.

2. You Should Exercise Your Faith

3:4 They will say, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep,”

They say, **“All things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation,” in Verse 4.** Peter argues back against them in Verse 5 as below,

3:5 For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God,

He takes the example of the story of Noah and the flood again and said,

3:6 and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.

In those days, civilizations were thriving in the land between the Tigris and Euphrates. They did not undertake flood prevention works in that area, they probably had great damage by the flood. Flood disasters are reported every year in Japan and over the world. The flood was not just an ancient story.

Then, we wonder if the flood of Noah was mere a natural disaster or not. It is a very important problem. When we read the Bible, we come to know that God spoke to the people about their problem and gave a warning that they would perish. We study a lesson from the story.

In the days of Noah, God came to know the gross immorality of people and gave a warning to repent of it. God judged the people who took God's warning lightly and completely ignored Him. Peter argued back that God worked in human history and He will continue to do so.

Do we recognize the work of divine province or not? It also asks us if we recognize divine province in our lives.

My Testimony - I Remember One of God's Blessings

When I look back my life, I really understand that I was put into divine province. Forty-four years have passed since I was called by God and began to preach the Gospel. God gave me a lot of blessings in my life and now I remember one of them.

I began to miraculously meet people in the former Soviet Union and former Eastern Europe. Then, God allowed me to preach the Gospel inside the Iron Curtain. I had neither the courage nor power nor money. However, God prepared me to encounter with **his living witnesses** who lived in the atheistic society.

I, who was still too young, was shaken with emotion when I met God's people like Paul the apostle. Then, the missionary work of 'The Voice of Mission' developed from my encounter with them.

When I look back at my life, there are lots of events and I believe that my life was **on a certain path**. It was by divine province. It was not the track that I made, but the one that God made. And it was the really blessed one.

God knew what would happen in my life beforehand and He watched me, guided me, and supported me. Now, what I can speak to you because of my many experiences is that it is very important to accept the God of the Bible with faith and follow Him. My dear brothers and sisters, please exercise your faith and walk by trusting in God.

Conclusion

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God spoke to us this morning. He taught us what we should remember and how to walk.

Let us summarize the main points of the message

1. We should live by remembering God's grace.
2. We should walk by exercising faith.

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

* God bless you!