

The Day of the Lord

Understanding This Prophetic Term

- Introduction

- The Day of the Lord is a term used in prophetic passages to refer to a future time during which God will fulfill His promises regarding His people Israel, bring judgment upon the nations and establish His kingdom on earth.
- This eschatological period is also sometimes expressed as “that day”, “the last day”, “the day of wrath”, etc.
- These expressions, used in both the Old and New Testaments, should not be confused with the terms “the day of Christ”, “the day of the Lord Jesus”, etc. which are used only in the N.T. [1 Cor 1:8; 5:5; 2 Cor 1:14; Phil 1:6, 10; 2:16] and refer to the Rapture and Judgment Seat of Christ – mysteries not revealed to the O.T. prophets.
- Some passages describing the Day of the Lord indicate that there is a dual nature to this eschatological period...
 - Sequential – The Day of the Lord encompasses a period of judgment and wrath followed by a time of blessing.
 - Spiritual – The Day of the Lord brings judgment and wrath upon the enemies of God and blessings for the people of God.

- Time Period

- There is much confusion concerning the time period encompassed by the Day of the Lord.
- The key to avoiding this confusion is to remember that all Scripture is God breathed, so all passages in the Bible referring to the Day of the Lord must be understood as true.
- In 1 Th 5:2-3 Paul tells us that the Day of the Lord will come suddenly during a time of perceived peace and safety.
 - This is the time of false peace which takes place after the signing of the covenant in Dan 9:27 beginning the 70th week.
 - This is also the peace which comes to an end when Jesus Christ breaks the 2nd seal in Rev 6:3-4.
- The prophet Joel explained that the sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the Day of the Lord comes [Joel 2:30-31].
 - These signs occur after the breaking of the 6th seal in Rev 6:12ff.
 - Jesus Christ explained that these signs come after a period of tribulation, not a time of “peace and safety” [Matt 24:29].

- Peter wrote that when the Day of the Lord comes the heavens, the earth and all the elements will be destroyed [2 Pet 3:10-11].
 - This will occur after the end of the 1,000 year reign of Jesus Christ [Rev 20:11], not during the Tribulation.
 - This also follows a period of rebellion, not peace [Rev 20:7-10].
- So who is right, Paul or Joel or Peter?
 - They are all right.
 - The Day of the Lord judgment will begin with the breaking of the 2nd seal.
 - Seals 2-6 bring war, famine, pestilence, martyrdom, quaking of heaven/earth, etc.
 - With the signs of the 6th seal people everywhere will recognize that the Day of the Lord is well underway [Rev 6:15-17].
 - The “great and awesome” Day of the Lord [Joel 2:31] will come after the 6th seal is broken and will include the period known as the Great Tribulation [Matt 24:21].
 - When Jesus Christ is ruling on the Davidic throne He will administer judgment with a “rod of iron” [Rev 12:5; 19:15].
 - The Day of the Lord judgment will come upon creation itself after the Millennial reign of Jesus Christ has been completed.
- Will the Church experience the Day of the Lord?
 - Paul addresses this exact issue in 2nd Thessalonians chapter two.
 - After the writing of his first letter, false teachers had deceived the believers in Thessalonica into thinking that the persecutions they were experiencing were the judgments of the Day of the Lord.
 - Paul starts by distinguishing between the 2nd Advent and the Rapture [2 Th 2:1].
 - He then makes it clear that the Day of the Lord is yet future [2 Th 2:2].
 - Paul then explains that there are two things that must occur first before the Day of the Lord will come [2 Th 2:3-4]...
 - The Rapture (“apostasy” is a Greek word meaning “departure”).
 - The revealing of the Antichrist.
 - Paul reminds them that he had told them that they will be saved from the wrath to come [2 Th 2:5 cp. 1 Th 1:10; 5:9].
 - Paul explains that after the “restrainer” is taken out of the way, the Antichrist will be revealed [2 Th 2:6-13].
 - The “restrainer” is a “what” [v6] and a “he” [v7] which are terms used of the Holy Spirit.
 - He is taken out of the way by the fact that the believers [v13] (i.e. the Church) are gone.
 - Conclusion: The Rapture of the Church will occur before Antichrist is revealed which must take place before the Day of the Lord comes.
 - While other passages support the pre-trib Rapture of the Church, this passage is the most definitive because Paul was clarifying this exact issue in order to comfort the Thessalonians [2 Th 2:15-17].

- Day of the Lord Passages
 - The Day of the Lord (D-L) will have an impact world-wide [Zeph 1:18; 3:8].
 - God will judge the proud in the D-L [Isa 2:12-17; 13:9-11].
 - God will judge the nations in the D-L for what they have done to His chosen people Israel [Isa 34:2-8; Jer 46:10; Ezek 30:3-8; Joel 3:19; Obad 15-16].
 - Faithless Israel should not long for the D-L [Amos 5:18] because it will be a time of darkness and gloom [Amos 5:20; Joel 2:1-11] during which Israel will undergo great distress [Jer 30:7; Zeph 1:14-17] so that many will turn to the Lord and be saved [Jer 30:10-11; Joel 2:32; Zeph 2:2-3].
 - The D-L is a day of destruction [Joel 1:15], but will be followed by a time of blessing [Isa 61:2-3; Jer 30:8-10; Joel 2:28-29; 3:17-21] after the Lord comes to conquer [Zech 14:1-5].
 - The Lord will gather the people of Israel [Matt 24:31] so that they will finally possess all of the Promised Land [Amos 9:11-15; Obad 17].
 - From these passages we can see that the events of 70 A.D. cannot be the fulfillment of the D-L prophecies...
 - The impact was localized (Jerusalem), not world-wide.
 - Israel underwent judgment, but not the nations which opposed her.
 - The events of 70 A.D. were not followed by a time of blessing for Israel.
 - The Lord did not come to conquer His enemies.
 - Israel remains dispersed, not gathered to the Promised Land.
 - Israel remains in unbelief, not restored to a right relationship with God.
 - Conclusions
 - The preterist notion that the D-L has already come and gone is badly mistaken.
 - The D-L is yet future and will be a time of distress like nothing ever seen before [Jer 30:7; Dan 12:1; Mark 13:19].
 - The events of the D-L will accomplish God's perfect plan to restore Israel both spiritually and physically.