

Thursday Evening Bible Study

Series: the End Times – Bible prophecy about future events and periods

Teaching Summary for Week 40

The Tribulation Period

Part 2. Overview

In this section, we will treat the Tribulation Period as a whole. We will study the title “the Day of the Lord”, the external chronology of the Tribulation, the nature and description of the period, the source and purpose of the Tribulation, a high-level look at the internal chronology, and the major events of the Tribulation.

The Day of the Lord

Several Old Testament prophets use the title “the Day of the Lord” to refer to that period that comes just before the Millennial kingdom.

We have now studied passages in **Joel, Isaiah, and Ezekiel**.

Here’s a summary of what we found:

The Day of the Lord is **described** as dark, gloomy, full of clouds, fire, destruction, pain, anguish, terror, cruel, fury and anger, desolation, doom, and devastation.

Events occurring in the Day of the Lord include earthquakes; the sun and the moon growing dark and the stars lose their brightness; a great and mighty people from many nations wipe out everything in their path; the Lord’s army appears. Sinners are exterminated.

The Day of the Lord is a **world-wide** phenomenon; everyone on the earth will experience it; the entire world will be punished, and mankind will be nearly wiped out.

Nations mentioned by name include Egypt, Ethiopia, Put, Lud, Arabia, and Libya. The sons of Judah and the city of Jerusalem are also mentioned.

The **source** of the Day of the Lord is the Almighty, specifically the Lord's burning anger.

Now we will complete our picture of the Day of the Lord by studying the **remaining prophets** that speak of it.

Amos 5:14-24

14 Seek good and not evil, that you may live;
And thus may the Lord God of hosts be with you,
Just as you have said!

15 Hate evil, love good,
And establish justice in the gate!
Perhaps the Lord God of hosts
May be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

16 Therefore thus says the Lord God of hosts, the Lord,
"There is wailing in all the plazas,
And in all the streets they say, 'Alas! Alas!'
'They also call the farmer to mourning
And professional mourners to lamentation.

17 "And in all the vineyards there is wailing,
Because I will pass through the midst of you," says the Lord.

18 Alas, you who are longing for **the day of the Lord**,
For what purpose will **the day of the Lord** be to you?
It will be darkness and not light;

19 As when a man flees from a lion
And a bear meets him,
Or goes home, leans his hand against the wall
And a snake bites him.

20 Will not the day of the Lord be darkness instead of light,
Even gloom with no brightness in it?

21 "I hate, I reject your festivals,
Nor do I delight in your solemn assemblies.

22 "Even though you offer up to Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings,

I will not accept them;
And I will not even look at the peace offerings of your fatlings.
23 "Take away from Me the noise of your songs;
I will not even listen to the sound of your harps.
24 "But let justice roll down like waters
And righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Questions:

1. What people are addressed in Amos's prophecy? How do you know?
2. How does Amos describe the Day of the Lord?
3. What does the metaphor in verse 19 mean?

Obad 10-21

10 "Because of violence to your brother Jacob,
You will be covered with shame,
And you will be cut off forever.
11 "On the day that you stood aloof,
On the day that strangers carried off his wealth,
And foreigners entered his gate
And cast lots for Jerusalem —You too were as one of them.
12 "Do not gloat over your brother's day,
The day of his misfortune.
And do not rejoice over the sons of Judah
In the day of their destruction;
Yes, do not boast
In the day of their distress.
13 "Do not enter the gate of My people
In the day of their disaster.
Yes, you, do not gloat over their calamity
In the day of their disaster.
And do not loot their wealth
In the day of their disaster.
14 "Do not stand at the fork of the road
To cut down their fugitives;
And do not imprison their survivors
In the day of their distress.
15 "For **the day of the Lord** draws near on all the nations.
As you have done, it will be done to you.
Your dealings will return on your own head.

16 "Because just as you drank on My holy mountain,
All the nations will drink continually.

They will drink and swallow
And become as if they had never existed.

17 "But on Mount Zion there will be those who escape,
And it will be holy.

And the house of Jacob will possess their possessions.

18 "Then the house of Jacob will be a fire

And the house of Joseph a flame;

But the house of Esau will be as stubble.

And they will set them on fire and consume them,

So that there will be no survivor of the house of Esau,

"For the Lord has spoken.

19 Then those of the Negev will possess the mountain of Esau,

And those of the Shephelah the Philistine plain;

Also, possess the territory of Ephraim and the territory of Samaria,

And Benjamin will possess Gilead.

20 And the exiles of this host of the sons of Israel,

Who are among the Canaanites as far as Zarephath,

And the exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad

Will possess the cities of the Negev.

21 The deliverers will ascend Mount Zion

To judge the mountain of Esau,

And the kingdom will be the Lord's.

Questions:

1. Who is the Lord speaking to through the words of Obadiah?
2. Who are those who escape in verse 17?
3. What will happen to the house of Esau during the Day of the Lord?

Zeph 1:7-18

7 Be silent before the Lord God!

For **the day of the Lord** is near,

For the Lord has prepared a sacrifice,

He has consecrated His guests.

8 "Then it will come about on **the day of the Lord's sacrifice**

That I will punish the princes, the king's sons

And all who clothe themselves with foreign garments.

9 "And I will punish on that day all who leap on the temple threshold,
Who fill the house of their lord with violence and deceit.

10 "On that day," declares the Lord,
There will be the sound of a cry from the Fish Gate,
A wail from the Second Quarter,
And a loud crash from the hills.

11 "Wail, O inhabitants of the Mortar,
For all the people of Canaan will be silenced;
All who weigh out silver will be cut off.

12 "It will come about at that time
That I will search Jerusalem with lamps,
And I will punish the men
Who are stagnant in spirit,
Who say in their hearts,
'The Lord will not do good or evil!'

13 "Moreover, their wealth will become plunder
And their houses desolate;
Yes, they will build houses but not inhabit them,
And plant vineyards but not drink their wine."

14 Near is the **great day of the Lord**,
Near and coming very quickly;
Listen, **the day of the Lord!**
In it the warrior cries out bitterly.

15 A day of wrath is that day,
A day of trouble and distress,
A day of destruction and desolation,
A day of darkness and gloom,
A day of clouds and thick darkness,

16 A day of trumpet and battle cry
Against the fortified cities
And the high corner towers.

17 I will bring distress on men
So that they will walk like the blind,
Because they have sinned against the Lord;
And their blood will be poured out like dust
And their flesh like dung.

18 Neither their silver nor their gold
Will be able to deliver them
On the **day of the Lord's wrath**;
And all the earth will be devoured

In the fire of His jealousy,
For He will make a complete end,
Indeed a terrifying one,
Of all the inhabitants of the earth.

Questions:

1. Who is the Lord speaking to through the prophet Zephaniah?
2. How is the Day of the Lord described?
3. How widespread is the destruction?
4. What period of time is called the Day of the Lord by Zephaniah?

Zech 13:7-14:8

13:7 "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd,
And against the man, My Associate,
"Declares the Lord of hosts.
"Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered;
And I will turn My hand against the little ones.
8 "It will come about in all the land,
"Declares the Lord,
"That two parts in it will be cut off and perish;
But the third will be left in it.
9 "And I will bring the third part through the fire,
Refine them as silver is refined,
And test them as gold is tested.
They will call on My name,
And I will answer them;
I will say, 'They are My people,'
And they will say, 'The Lord is my God.'"

14:1 Behold, a day is coming for the Lord when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you. 2 For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. 3 Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle.

4 **In that day** His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south. 5 You will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the

mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the Lord, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him!

6 **In that day** there will be no light; the luminaries will dwindle. 7 For it will be a unique day which is known to the Lord, neither day nor night, but it will come about that at evening time there will be light.

8 And **in that day** living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea; it will be in summer as well as in winter.

Questions:

1. Who is Zechariah addressing in this prophecy?
2. What does Zechariah describe in Zech 13:8-9?
3. What period does Zechariah describe in Zech 14:1-8? How do you know?

At Christ's Second Coming, there will be a **judgment of the nation of Israel**. Zechariah refers to this judgment in Zech 13:8-9.

The judgment separates the believing remnant - true Israel – from the unbelieving Jews.

Ezekiel also describes the judgment of Israel at Christ's Second Coming:

Ezek 20:33-38

33 "As I live," declares the Lord God, "surely with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out, I shall be king over you. 34 "I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out;

35 and I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there **I will enter into judgment with you face to face**. 36 "As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you," declares the Lord God. 37 "I will make you **pass under the rod**, and **I will bring you into the bond of the covenant**; 38 and **I will purge from you the rebels and those who transgress against Me**; I will bring them out of the land where they sojourn, but **they will not enter the land of Israel**. Thus you will know that I am the Lord.

Christ will also judge **the Gentiles**.

In Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus prophesied about the judgment of the Gentile nations which will also occur at His Second Coming:

Matt 25:31-46

31 "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. 32 "**All the nations will be gathered before Him**; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; 33 and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.

34 "Then the King will say to **those on His right**, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, **inherit the kingdom** prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

35 'For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; 36 naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.'

37 "Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? 38 'And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? 39 'When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' 40 "The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'

41 "Then He will also say to **those on His left**, '**Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels**; 42 for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; 43 I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.' 44 "Then they themselves also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?'

45 "Then He will answer them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' 46 "These will go away into **eternal punishment**, but the righteous into **eternal life**."

By the way, this is an individual judgment, not a national judgment. Also, notice that it is the righteous who will go into the kingdom.

During the Tribulation, the eternal gospel will be preached to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people (Rev 14:6-7). Those who believe the gospel are the righteous.

Both judgments - of Israel and of the Gentiles - result in **all the believers** entering the kingdom. The unbelievers are left in the outer darkness, the place of eternal punishment.

In the New Testament, Peter uses the expression “the Day of the Lord” to refer to a different set of events from those of the prophets.

Read 2 Peter 3:7-13 and see if you can identify what these future events will be.

2 Peter 3:7-13

7 But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for **fire**, kept for the **day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.**

8 But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. 9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

10 But **the day of the Lord** will come like a thief, in which **the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.**

11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of **the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!** 13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

So when Peter uses the title “the day of the Lord”, he means the **Great White Throne Judgment and the destruction of the (old) heavens and the earth.**

Peter does not include the Millennial Kingdom either when he describes this Day of the Lord.

The **New Testament** speaks about the Day of the Lord in three additional passages.

Acts 2:19-21

This is a quotation from Joel 2. One thing to notice here is that the great wonders in the sky and on the earth PRECEDE the glorious Day of the Lord.

For future reference, these signs and wonders correspond with the 6th seal of the book of Revelation (see Rev 6:12-17).

1 Thess 5:1-11

2 Thess 2:1-15

Here are the things we have learned about the Day of the Lord:

It is a very violent and destructive event, and it is associated with judgment.

The scriptures that mention the Day of the Lord describe the period in **extremely negative terms**: a time of darkness, torment, death, mourning, massive destruction, and judgment.

The title “Day of the Lord” is never used to describe the Millennial Kingdom.

Among the nations of the earth, Israel will be front and center during the Day of the Lord. The Tribulation Period will serve to chasten and purify the nation of Israel.

Nevertheless, the prophets tell us that the Day of the Lord will be global in scale. All the nations of the earth will be judged.

The prophets use the “Day of the Lord” to designate the **Tribulation Period, the Second Coming, and the Judgments of the Second Coming** (the Gentile nations, the nation of Israel).

The prophets place special emphasis on **the Second Coming and the battle of Armageddon**.

And Peter describes another Day of the Lord: **the Great White Throne judgment and the destruction of the (old) heavens and the earth**.

The one thing that all of the “Day of the Lord” passages have in common is that they all speak of **JUDGMENT**.

The Day of the Lord is not to be confused with **the Day of Christ** (the Lord Jesus).
Show those scriptures (Pentecost pages 231- 232).