

Thursday Evening Bible Study

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

Teaching Summary for Week 41

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

We have now completed our study of the Day of the Lord in the writings of the Old Testament prophets.

Here is a summary of what we learned:

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

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.

Some prophets address the nation of Israel in the day of the Lord, while others address Gentile nations.

Prophets who address the nation of Israel:

Amos
Zephaniah
Joel

Prophets who address Gentile nations (nation(s) in parenthesis):

Isaiah (Egypt, Ethiopia, Put, Lud, Arabia, and Libya)
Joel (Egypt and Edom)
Obadiah (house of Esau)

In terms of events, the prophets emphasize the Great Tribulation, the battle of Armageddon, and especially the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The **Great Tribulation** corresponds to the second half of Daniel's seventieth week. We will see more of this of course. We will study Daniel 9:23-27 and we will also study where the Great Tribulation is found in the book of Revelation.

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: in Eze 20:33-38

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

19 'AND I WILL GRANT WONDERS IN THE SKY ABOVE
AND SIGNS ON THE EARTH BELOW,
BLOOD, AND FIRE, AND VAPOR OF SMOKE.

20 'THE SUN WILL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS
AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD,

BEFORE THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS DAY OF THE LORD SHALL COME.

21 'AND IT SHALL BE THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE
LORD WILL BE SAVED.'

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).

Paul writes about the Day of the Lord in two passages, both written to the church of the Thessalonians:

1 Thess 5:1-11

1 Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. 2 For you yourselves know full well that **the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.** 3 While they are saying, "**Peace and safety!**" then **destruction will come upon them suddenly** like labor pains upon a woman with child, and **they will not escape.** 4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; 5 for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; 6 so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. 7 For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. 8 But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. 9 For **God has not destined us for wrath,** but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, so that

whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

Let's discuss the things that are in bold above. In particular, let's point out the connections between this passage in 1 Thessalonians and the things that the prophets wrote about the Day of the Lord.

What did Paul describe right before this passage?

The second Day of the Lord passage in Paul's writings is found in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-15

As we read this together, pay close attention to the things that must happen BEFORE the Day of the Lord comes.

2 Thess 2:1-15

1 Now we request you, brethren, with regard **to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him,** 2 that **you not be quickly shaken from your composure** or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, **to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.** 3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless **the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,** 4 **who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.** 5 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? 6 And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only **he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way.** 8 Then that **lawless one will be revealed** whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; 9 that is, the one whose coming is in accord with **the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,** 10 **and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.** 11 For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that **they will believe what is false,** 12 in order that they all may be **judged who did not believe the truth,** but took pleasure in wickedness.

13 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. 14 It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15 So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us.

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There is a passage in the book of Revelation that corresponds with 1 Thessalonians 2:9-10.

Let's read chapter 13 of the book of Revelation together now.

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 Christ

The Day of the Lord is not to be confused with **the Day of Christ** (the Lord Jesus).

The Day of Christ is not found in the Old Testament, or in the Gospels, or in the Book of Revelation.

In fact, the Day of Christ (Christ Jesus, the Lord Jesus) is only mentioned by **Paul.** What does that suggest about the Day of Christ?

1 Cor 1:4-9

4 I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, 5 that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge, 6 even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, 7 so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, 8 who will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the **day of our Lord Jesus Christ.** 9 God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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1 Cor 5:3-5

3 For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present. 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, 5 I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in **the day of the Lord Jesus.**

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2 Cor 1:13-14

For we write nothing else to you than what you read and understand, and I hope you will understand until the end; 14 just as you also partially did understand us, that we are your reason to be proud as you also are ours, in **the day of our Lord Jesus**.

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Phil 1:3-11

3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, 4 always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, 5 in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now. 6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until **the day of Christ Jesus**. 7 For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me. 8 For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. 9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, 10 so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until **the day of Christ**; 11 having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

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Phil 2:14-16

14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing; 15 so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, 16 holding fast the word of life, so that **in the day of Christ** I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.

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The word “day” in Scripture does not necessarily refer to time, but may be used for the events which fall within any period.

What event or events constitute the Day of Christ? Prove from the scriptures.

There are other phrases that New Testament writer use to mean the Day of the Lord or the Day of Christ. They include:

“day of redemption” (Eph 4:30) = Day of Christ

“day of judgment” (2Pe 2:9, 2Pe 3:7, 1Jo 4:17) = Day of the Lord

“day of wrath” (Rom 2:5) = Day of the Lord

The Day of Christ is identified with **reward and blessing** for the church saints, while the Day of the Lord is identified with **judgment** for Israel and the Gentile nations.

The church is instructed to **wait eagerly** for the revelation of Jesus Christ to them, while the Day of the Lord is something to be **dreaded** by all who dwell on the earth

Two separate programs are in view.

The Day of Christ and the Day of the Lord cannot both refer to the same event (or events).

The book of Philippians has the most references to the Day of Christ (3). It also speaks of waiting eagerly for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Phil 3:20-21

20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also **we eagerly wait** for a Savior, **the Lord Jesus Christ**; 21 **who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory**, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

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