

THE DAY OF THE LORD
1 THESSALONIANS 5:1-11

***1 THESSALONIANS 5:2**—“For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.”*

INTRODUCTION:

We are in the midst of some very **PERILOUS TIMES** that seem very much like those described by the **APOSTLE PAUL** in *2 Timothy 3:1-7 and 13*, which was written just prior to his death!

Many question why the **LORD** seemingly is allowing bad men to prosper and to go unpunished such as appears to be happening on a wide-scale basis today!

There are many who view the **LORD GOD** as a **PACIFIST**—i.e. They see **HIM** as too loving, too gentle, too kind, too good, too meek and too mild to judge and punish the world and its inhabitants that have a callous disregard for **HIS STANDARDS, HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND HIS WAY!**

However, be assured that **THERE IS COMING A DAY** when the **LORD** will deal with the unrighteousness of all men! That will be when **HE** reconciles accounts in the time period known as *“The Day of the LORD!”*

Three phrases in these verses need careful consideration.

1. Times and Seasons. (Vs 1)

This phrase is found only three times in the **BIBLE**, and refers primarily to **GOD’S** plan for **ISRAEL**.

The word *“times”* means *“a space of time or interval”*; *“an individual opportunity”*; *“by implication delay.”*

The word *“seasons”* means *“an occasion, that is, set or proper time.”*

Ecclesiastes 3:1—*“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:”*

Daniel 2:20-21—*“20 Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: 21 And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:”*

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Acts 1:7—*“And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.”*

GOD has a definite plan for the nations of the world, and **ISRAEL** is the key nation in **HIS PLAN!**

2. The Day of the LORD. (Vs 2)

In the **BIBLE**, the word *“day”* can refer to a **24 hour period!**

In **GENESIS** it is clear that it is talking about a literal 24 hour period!

But the word *“day”* can also refer to a longer time during which **GOD** accomplished some special purpose.

The phrase *“DAY OF THE LORD”* is referring to a particular special period of time. We’ll look at that more closely in a moment.

3. Thief in the Night. (Vs 2)

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST used this image in **HIS** own teaching!

It describes the **SUDDENNESS** and the **SURPRISE** involved in the coming of the **DAY OF THE LORD!**

In **Revelation 3:3**, **JESUS** used this image to warn **BELIEVERS** not to be caught napping. It was initially addressed to the **CHURCH** at **SARDIS!** But it was also to whoever has ears to hear! Jesus said: *Revelation 3:3*—*“Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.”*

Luke 12:37-40

Now we can put these three concepts together and discover what **PAUL** wanted to teach the **CHURCH** of the **THESSALONIANS!**

He had just told them about the coming of **CHRIST FOR HIS CHURCH!** (*1 Thessalonians 4:13-18*)

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He then reminded them here of something that he had, no doubt, previously taught them! (5:1-2)

What he reminded them of was about this matter of “*the day of the LORD*” that will be a period of intense suffering and **TRIBULATION** on the earth following the **RAPTURE** of the **CHURCH!**

These **times and seasons** that relate to **ISRAEL** and the nations of the earth do not apply to the **CHURCH** or affect the **TRUTH** of the **LORD’S COMING FOR THE CHURCH!** **HE** may come at any time, and that will usher in the **DAY OF THE LORD!**

Paul emphasis here was simply that believers were “*in the know*” while the unbelievers were living in ignorance of **GOD’S PLAN!**

The suddenness of these events will reveal to the world its ignorance of **DIVINE TRUTH!**

I. LET’S UNDERSTAND THE DEFINITION OF THE DAY OF THE LORD!

The term “*THE DAY OF THE LORD*” occurs 25 times in 23 verses, including the **OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETICAL BOOKS** of *Isaiah, Ezekiel, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Zephaniah, Zechariah, Malachi*, and the **NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS** of *Acts, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, and 2 Peter*.

Now “*THE DAY OF THE LORD*” is not a term which applies to a twenty-four hour period. **It rather refers to a sequence of events** that begin on earth following the **RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH** and **includes the seven-year period of JUDGMENT** known as the **TRIBULATION PERIOD.**

I want to read you a quote from a preacher and author by the name of John Walvoord. He wrote this that I’m going to read in his commentary on “*The Thessalonian Epistles*”, p 76,

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“The Day of the Lord is a period of time in which God will deal with wicked men directly and dramatically in fearful judgment. Today a man may be a blasphemer of God, an atheist, can denounce God and teach bad doctrine. Seemingly, God does nothing about it. But the day designated in Scripture as the ‘day of the Lord’ is coming when God will punish human sin, and will deal in wrath and in judgment with a Christ-rejecting world. One thing we are sure of, God in His own way will bring every soul into judgment.”

During the period known as “*THE DAY OF THE LORD,*” **JOHN THE REVELATOR** describes to us various judgments that will take place—There are **SEVEN SEAL JUDGMENTS, SEVEN TRUMPET JUDGMENTS, and SEVEN VIAL JUDGMENTS** spoken of in the **BOOK OF THE REVELATION!**

Turn to Isaiah 13:9-11 (Mark your place here!)

II. LET’S UNDERSTAND SCRIPTURE’S DESCRIPTION OF THE DAY OF THE LORD! (3 Things)

A. The Word “Darkness” Is Both Implied And Used!
Vs 2 of our text says—“...*the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.*”
I believe there is an implication here of **some very dark times right before that day...which we ARE seeing!**

(Zephaniah 1:14-18; Joel 2:1-2; Amos 5:18-20)

This period will include times of both **LITERAL, PHYSICAL DARKNESS** as well as **DEEP SPIRITUAL DARKNESS!**

LITERAL PHYSICAL DARKNESS will occur in the **TRIBULATION** as stated in *Revelation 8:12* where the celestial heaven is **DARKENED** by 1/3 and in *Revelation 16:10* when **TOTAL DARKNESS DESCENDS** upon the **ANTICHRIST** and his kingdoms!

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Consider the **TERROR** and **PARALYSIS** of **DARKNESS!**

SPIRITUAL DARKNESS is seen in *2 Thessalonians 2:7-12!*

But listen to *verse 4-9* of our text! **WE** are not in **DARKNESS!**

B. The Word “Destruction” Is Used!

1 Thessalonians 5:3 "For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then **sudden destruction cometh upon them**, as travail upon a woman with child; and **they shall not escape.**"

THE DAY OF THE LORD will be a time of **CATAclysmic DESTRUCTION!**

While the world is scrambling for **peace, safety, security and freedom from terrorism**, the **greatest devastation that the world will ever experience is yet out on the horizon!**
(Go back to *Isaiah 13:6-8, 13*)

Everything on earth will be affected—The seas, fresh water, vegetation, islands, and mountains all will be affected!

Joel 1:15—"Alas for the day! **For the day of the LORD is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come.**"

Ezekiel 7:25—"**Destruction cometh; and they shall seek peace, and there shall be none.**"

C. The Word “Distress” Is Used And “Despair” Is Implied!

The author, H. G. Wells (1866-1946) is quoted as saying that "**Despair is a frightful queerness ... that there is no way out, or around, or through the impasse. It is the end.**"

i.e. DESPAIR COMES WHEN THERE SEEMS TO BE NO HOPE!

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Luke 21:25-26—"**And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.**"

Revelation 9:6—"**And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.**"

John 3:36 declares "**He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.**"

There is **no greater horror** or **nothing more despairing** than the hopelessness of that fact—the **WRATH of GOD** abiding on you!

How sad it is that men should hear the **GOSPEL** over and over again while constantly turning away from it and rejecting it and go out facing a hopeless future having the **WRATH OF GOD** hanging over them!

Revelation 6:15-16—"**And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:**"

Great fear will grip all unbelievers! Every unbeliever will be struck with a maddening terror! No unbeliever is going to escape the judgment of God and they can sense it. It is a period when all unbelievers must face the fierce **WRATH OF THE LAMB OF GOD**, whom they have rejected, denied, cursed, disobeyed and disbelieved!

THE DEFINITION...THE DESCRIPTION...

III. LET'S UNDERSTAND THE DEFINITIVE NATURE OF THE DAY OF THE LORD!

It is going to happen! (*2 Peter 3:3-10*)

The May 1984 National Geographic showed, through color photos and drawings, the swift and terrible destruction that wiped out the Roman Cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum in A.D. 79.

The explosion of Mount Vesuvius was so sudden, the residents were killed while in their routine: men and women were at the market, the rich in their luxurious baths, slaves were at toil. They died amid volcanic ash and superheated gasses. Even family pets suffered the same quick and final fate.

It takes little imagination to picture the panic of that terrible day. The saddest part is that these people did not have to die.

Scientists confirm what ancient **ROMAN** writers record—weeks of rumblings and tremors preceded the actual explosion. Even a plume of smoke was clearly visible from the mountain days before the eruption. If only they had been able to read and respond to Vesuvius's warning!

There are similar "*rumblings*" in our world: *warfare, earthquakes, the nuclear threat, economic woes, breakdown of the family and moral standards.*

While these things are not exactly new, they are increasing and do point to a coming **DAY OF JUDGMENT!**

People need not to be caught unprepared. **GOD** warns and provides an escape to those who will heed the rumblings.

Matthew 24:36-39

The DAY OF THE LORD IS EMINENT!

"Rising above others. . .exalted; distinguished"

Matthew 24:21—"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."

The DAY OF THE LORD IS IMMINENT!

"Likely to happen without delay. . .impending."

IV. LET'S UNDERSTAND THE ONLY DELIVERANCE FROM THE DAY OF THE LORD!

1 Thessalonians 5:9—"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,"

John 5:24—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that hears my word, and believes on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation (judgment); but is passed from death unto life."

Conclusion

The **DAY OF THE LORD** is a **DAY OF DARKNESS, DESTRUCTION, DESPAIR**, and it is **DEFINITE!**

But, you don't have to be afraid of **THE DAY OF THE LORD!**

You don't have to live in fear of having to go through the day of the **LORD!**