

Before It Happens: “The Day of the Lord in the New Testament”

Now, let's get into the final part of our study – because that's why we are here...

- **One week one, we have looked at Joel 2** and discerned a basic _____ framework for the Day of the Lord.
- **Last week, we scanned all the rest of the Old Testament** for the nineteen other references to that time period used by _____ different prophets.
- Tonight, we intend to add to that lexicon another **study, specifically from the places in the _____ Testament where the “Day of the Lord” is explained.**

Three voices did add information about the “Day of the Lord,” and they were _____, **Paul and Luke.**

The **earliest mention** of the “Day of the Lord” in the New Testament was taken from a “**quote**” of Simon Peter’s preaching, recorded by Dr. Luke for the church’s records. It can be found in Acts 2:20, but we’ll back up to verse fourteen for context of what Peter talked about. It reads:

Acts 2:14 “But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: “Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words. 15 For **these men are not drunk, as you suppose**, for it is only the third hour of the day; but **this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: 17 ‘And it shall be in the last days,’** God says, ‘That I will pour forth of My Spirit on **all mankind; And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, And your young men shall see visions, And your old men shall dream dreams;** 18 Even on My **bond slaves, both men and women,** I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit And they shall prophesy.

Look at those words carefully. Peter said: “Something is happening right here, right now! It was prophesied before by _____. Heaven is breaking out of the shadows and speaking into the earth. The time of revelation was promised

to flow from men AND women, free AND bonded, young AND old. The Spirit of God is responsible, and the words related are prophetic.

Peter went on to say the “Day of the Lord” included physical signs:

Acts 2:19 “... ‘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**.’

Obviously, Peter referred to a _____ time for the signs, since there was no record in the text that anything happened to the sky, the earth, the moon or anywhere else. Then, Peter headed right for the _____ of Jesus Christ. He said:

Acts 2:22 “Men of Israel, **listen to these words**: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know— 23 this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, **you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death**. 24 But **God raised Him up again**, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was **impossible** for Him to be **held** in its power.

So, Peter gave us some excellent information! Peter continued to include that theme and the “Day of the Lord” in his later teachings as well. Many years later he wrote in 2 Peter 3:1-11:

2 Peter 3:1 “Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, 4 and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, **all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.**”

Peter said, some people just keep mocking God’s promises. They say, “You say it will happen, but the moon looks fine tonight!” Then, he said, they forgot the past... He wrote:

2 Peter 3:5 “For when they maintain this, it **escapes their notice** that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, 6 through which the world at that time was destroyed, being **flooded** with water. 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. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, **what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness...**"

His point was clear: the coming judgments of the "Day of the Lord" ought to get our attention and call us to live _____, to walk intentionally before God.

Paul also addressed the subject, and he included a sign of the coming of the day that echoed Peter's preaching in Acts, but explained it more *thoroughly*. He wrote in 1 Thessalonians 5:

1 Thessalonians 5:1 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.

Paul made clear that the wrath of the "Day of the Lord" was not directed to the _____, and that God had a rescue plan for them. He picked up that theme in 2 Thessalonians 2, where he wrote:

2 Thessalonian 2:1 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?

Paul made clear that some were sending _____ messages as if they came from Paul, and the subject was the part of the “Day of the Lord” that referred specifically to the judgments on the earth. Paul noted the judgment won’t come until the apostasy or “great falling away” comes first. The man of sin will be revealed before the destruction comes. He then explained what is **holding all morality together** right now. He wrote:

2 Thessalonian 2:6 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.

Here, Paul stated that the “mystery of lawlessness” is at work. Let me unpack that a bit.

“*Musterion*” is a Greek word that means “*one who is initiated*.” *Musterion* is a secret that must be _____.

“Lawlessness” is the word “*anomia*.” It is not simply “no rules,” like Outback Steak House. It is the idea of “_____ rules that match your made-up version of reality.”

One of the most severe judgments of God ever directed toward the rebel is giving them what they _____. Be careful what you ask God for, He may give you exactly what you beg Him for, and you will be shocked at how that works out!

Now, let’s say then, the “Day of the Lord” is a protracted period of _____ that includes from Joel 2 a “_____” that falls on the people of Israel after generations of God sharing Himself with them in deep ways. If you are Jewish,

don't despair – because the day doesn't end in terror, but in rescue for you and your people.

It is a time when Jews will _____ with trying to find an identity and connection to the God of their fathers, and may even become jealous of many believers who seem more connected to the Old Testament, and **more connected** to their God than they are!

When does it end? It seems to end, according to our study in Zechariah 14, when they behold the Messiah, the Rescuer that delivers them at the end. Jerusalem faces a severe attack. The world turns its back, but the Savior comes to rescue them and they "look upon Him whom they have pierced," according to the prophet.

Before we go, I want to make sense of something that Christians misunderstand about God's work in the church before the end of the Church Age, and the "times of the Gentiles" as Jesus referred to them.

In Acts 2, God's Spirit descended on men. The gift of the Spirit that became obvious in that hour was that of "tongues." It was the God-given ability of men to speak languages they had not studied or learned, but with God's enabling, they could preach and teach.

In 1 Corinthians 14:20-40, Paul turned his attention to God's gift of _____, but his reference requires a deep understanding of the promises God made to the Jewish people about the gift's presentation before it ever appeared. **Paul made clear what tongues meant to God's program for both Jews and Gentiles, and it wasn't something small.**

Look for a moment at the second half of the chapter:

1 Corinthians 14:20 Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature. 21 In the Law it is written, "By men of strange tongues and by the lips of strangers I will speak to this people, and even so they will not listen to Me," says the Lord. 22 So then **tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophecy is for a sign, not to unbelievers but to those who believe.**

The tongues were a sign of God's program and work. They were NOT primarily directed to _____, but to those who _____ God's work. They were the sign of a lowering of a blindfold, a "spiritual spanking" if you will. **From the knowledgeable Jewish perspective: tongues were given as a sign of God's judgment.**

Paul said that _____, on the other hand, wasn't enabled by God primarily as a witness to the world – it was **for the believers to know and perceive God at work, particularly in tough times.**

When the church met together after Pentecost, some people got enamored with the gift of tongues and didn't understand that while it was essential to God's sign of "showing up at the meeting," it was not a gift to elevate the vessel who got it – but a means for God to show all this came from Heaven, not a secret church council or something. Paul continued:

1 Corinthians 14:23 Therefore if the whole church assembles together and all speak in tongues, and ungifted men or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad? 24 But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; 25 the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you.

Paul warned the people about not trying to misuse the gift as an evangelism proof. Like many things God does in and through us, to the uninitiated it all looks "cooky." Then he turned his attention to prophecy and noted that it had a "wider sweep" in the room. Prophecy, even though it was intended for believers, could still speak to both disobedient believers and even _____.

His point was that prophecy offered more than tongues ever did. The careful discernment of Scripture and the teaching of it prophetically and carefully would yield more than tongues ever could. He didn't say it to stop the use of tongues. He said it to get them to understand a bigger picture of what God was doing. The same tongues that excited the early believers (and some today) were DEPRESSING to Jews who knew a bigger picture of what that promise entailed. Paul ended the words with this command:

1 Corinthians 14:39 Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues. 40 But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner.

He said: seek God to understand and rightly discern prophecy, and share what He shows you. You can speak in tongues if you are so led, but only if you'll do it in an orderly way.

So, exactly how was the speaking in tongues a sign to unbelievers? It was an **application of the bitter penalty that Isaiah had warned Israel about** (Isaiah 28) of the veil of God on the hearts of unbelieving Israel.

Many believers are surprised to learn the application of Isaiah 28 by Paul was to say that the coming of tongues was a blessing to the church, but a sign of a temporary curse to a veiled Israel, but that message wasn't only found in Isaiah. God promised through the prophet Joel at the end of chapter two that He would send a time of terrible darkness, and later... there would come another day when **He would shine His face on Israel anew**. Yes, he said, Israel would suffer for a time, but they would, one day, find comfort that would never be taken away.

The unshakeable shame that followed Jewish people through the ages – not because of some inner lack, but because of the chastening of the Lord – would one day be lifted... and both Peter and Paul's point was the **coming of tongues was the beginning of that new time of shame**. What causes Charismatic believers to **shout** should cause Jews to **weep**. **Tongues are a sign to those who have been temporarily veiled.**

Yet, if Peter had any doubt about the **true salvation of this Gentile family**, it was dispelled by the **Spirit's coming**, a fact restated at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:8) and reiterated by Paul (Acts 15:12). The tongues truly were given as a sign that "God was in the house!"

So, what does all that mean to us?

- The "Day of the Lord" shows that God has a plan that He promised in advance and has executed meticulously over many years.
- Israel came under a veil, but the promise of God will again fall upon her as a people. God is not done with the Jewish people. The gifts and calling of God on them is irrevocable. They have a future walk with God coming when the "times of the Gentiles" are fulfilled.

- On tongues, believers shouldn't be seeking to become a spectacle, and shouldn't be seeking to be the center of attention in the use of our gifts. **God gave the gift of tongues primarily as a sign to the lost; not to elevate the gifted.** Every gift was given to help believers build our lives *together*, not to elevate a *few*.