

THE DAY OF THE LORD- GOD'S DAY WITH THE NATIONS

Introduction:

Psalm 2:1-12 "Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, "Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us." He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision. Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure: "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion." "I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.'" Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, And rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.

I. THE THREE "DAYS OF THE LORD" IN THE BOOK OF JOEL

- A. We see three "days of the Lord" in the book of Joel. First, in Joel 1, we see the agricultural crisis (Joel 1:15). Second, in Joel 2, we see the Babylonian military invasion of Israel (Joel 2:1, 11). Third, in Joel 3, we see God's blessing on Israel and judgment on the antichrist's empire (Joel 2:31; 3:14).
- B. There was a progression of judgment in the book of Joel involving three different time frames referred to as the Day of the Lord. These three "days" were each associated with a catastrophe.
 1. The first Day of the Lord involved an ***agricultural crisis*** caused by a locust plague (Joel 1:4-12), accompanied by a drought (Joel 1:16-20) and raging fires (Joel 1:19-20).
 2. The second Day of the Lord was a ***military crisis***. The Babylonian army invaded Israel (Joel 1:1-2:9).
 3. The third Day of the Lord pointed to God's activity at the ***end of the age*** (Joel 2:18-3:21). This Day of the Lord crisis is seen in the book of Revelation (Rev. 6:17). All three Day of the Lord descriptions must be studied together to get a complete picture.
- C. The crisis in Joel's day became progressively worse. The agricultural crisis (Joel 1:1-19) was followed by a military crisis (Joel 2:1-9). This agricultural devastation brought Israel to the brink of starvation as four waves of locusts destroyed Israel's food. As the people and animals died, disease broke out. The entire population was threatened. The locust plague crisis probably lasted three to five years (Joel 1:15; 2:25a).

1. As the negative impact of the agricultural locust plague was passing, the word of the Lord came again to Joel. This time God spoke about a coming Babylonian military invasion. This was far more severe than the agricultural conflict. The locust plague was still fresh in everyone's mind because the negative effects were still felt in the land.
2. It was at this time that Joel called the people to a solemn assembly of prayer with fasting (Joel 1:14). Why did it come in three stages? God wanted to give Israel time to repent before the next invasion came. Why? Because repentance could minimize some of the lingering fallout from the agricultural crisis, as well as stop the coming military invasion.
3. Israel did not repent. Joel may have prophesied about this for ten to twenty years before it began. God's judgments sometimes gradually intensify, so as to give those who persist in rebellion the opportunity to repent before the next wave of judgment comes.

II. OTHER KEY DISTINCTIONS OF THE DAY OF THE LORD- GREAT DAY

A. Another characteristic of the greatness of the Day of the Lord is God's supernatural protection. It is what I call the ***Goshen principle*** (Ex. 8:22-23; 9:4-6, 26; 10:23; 11:7).

1. In the time of the plagues of Egypt, God did not allow His judgments to touch the place where His people lived, a place called Goshen (Ex. 8:22). God protected His people from the plagues He released in Egypt. The Lord said to Pharaoh, "I will make a difference between My people and your people" (Ex. 8:23).
2. Though the plagues were poured out in Egypt and all around the Israelites, nobody in Goshen was sick or affected, not even their livestock. In Goshen, none of the hail or fire fell, and none of the flies swarmed (Ex. 9:4, 6, 26).

Ex. 8:22-23 "I will set apart the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell that no swarms of flies shall be there, in order that you may know that I am the LORD in the midst of the land. ²³ I will make a difference between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall be"

B. **Protection**-The same idea of the Goshen principle is seen in Scripture when the mark or seal of God is put on the saints to protect them from the judgment of God.

1. **Rev. 9:4 "They [demons] were commanded not to harm the grass but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads."**

Rev. 7:2-3 "He [angel] cried to the four angels...³ saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads"

***Ezek. 9:4-6** “The LORD said to him [angel], “Go ... through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry [intercession] over all the abominations that are done within it.”⁵ To the others [angels] He said, “Go through the city and kill...⁶ Utterly slay old and young ... but do not come near anyone on whom is the mark.”*

2. For Noah God provided an ark- Gen 8:18-21, 9:12-17
For Lot God provided Angels, Gen 18:16-19:22
For Moses God provided blood from a lamb, Ex 12:12-23
For the End-Time Church God provides a seal, Eph 4:30, Rev 7:3

- C. **Direction**- Another expression of the greatness of the Day of the Lord will be in receiving supernatural direction. The Lord will direct His people that they may find safety, protection, and provision. Isa 30:21, Jer 31:9, Joel 2:28

***Psalm 78:52-53** “But He made His own people go forth like sheep, And guided them in the wilderness like a flock; And He led them on safely, so that they did not fear; But the sea overwhelmed their enemies.”*

- D. **Provision**- A major distinction in the Day of the Lord is God’s supernatural manifestation to provide for His people. In the midst of all the judgments and the widespread destruction, the earth’s food supply will be greatly affected. The saints will begin to see the miracles of God’s supernatural ability to multiply food and direct His people to hidden sources of provision that the unbeliever will not be privy to.

1. Israel in Egypt- Ex 9:1-5
2. Israel in the wilderness- Ex 16:10-16
3. Elijah in the midst of the drought- 1 Kings 17: 1-7
4. The starving widow and her dying son- 1 Kings 17:8-16
5. Elisha and the poisoned stew- 2 King 4:38-41
6. Elisha feeding 100 men in famine- 2 Kings 4:42-44
7. Jesus multiplied food, provided wine, provided tax money, brought healing and deliverance to the oppressed. He declares that the Church would operate in greater miracles on a worldwide scale.

***John 14:12-13** “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.¹³ And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”*

III. TERRIBLE DAY – GOD WILL RAISE UP AN EVIL LEADER TO JUDGE SIN

A. At the foundation of this evil, global empire is the ***great paradox that it is God Himself who will raise it up***, though, certainly, Satan will have his role in it and the sin of man will play into it. Jesus will open the first seal to release the Antichrist to conquer rebellious nations (Rev. 6:1-2).

B. God raised up evil Pharaoh in Moses' day. He was the most powerful man in the world.

Rom. 9:17 “The Scripture says to Pharaoh, “I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.”

Ex. 9:16 “Indeed ... I have raised you up [Pharaoh] that I may show My power in you.”

C. God raised up an evil Assyrian leader named Sennacherib to judge Israel in 721 BC.

Isa. 10:5 “Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger... the staff in whose hand is My indignation.”

D. God called Nebuchadnezzar, His servant, to judge Israel in 586 BC.

Jer. 25:9, 12 “Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will [come] against this land...and will utterly destroy... ¹² Then...when seventy years are completed...I will punish the king of Babylon and the Babylonians, for their iniquity,” says the LORD.”

Jer. 27:6 “I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar...My servant...”

Jer. 43:10 “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: “Behold, I will send Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will set his throne above these stones...”

Hab. 1:5-7 “Look among the nations and watch—be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days which you would not believe, though it were told you. ⁶ For indeed I am raising up the Chaldeans [Babylon], a bitter and hasty nation... ⁷ they are terrible and dreadful”.

Jer. 22:7 “I [the Lord] will prepare destroyers against you [Babylon against Jerusalem]”.

- E. God will raise up the antichrist to great authority for 3½ years to bring the entire earth to a place of decision for righteousness or unrighteousness (Dan. 7-12; 2 Thes. 2; Rev. 13). God will grant authority for sinful events to be walked out (Rev. 6:2, 4, 8; 9:1, 3, 5; 11:2; 13:5, 7, 14-15).

Rev. 13:5, 7 “***He [Antichrist] was given...authority [by God] to continue for forty-two months. ⁷ It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. Authority was given him [by God] over every tribe, tongue, and nation.*”**

Dan. 7:25 “***He [Antichrist] shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High...Then the saints shall be given into his hand [3½ years].*”**