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The Day of the LORD

Radio Sermons



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As a Thief in the Night

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not precede them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. 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.” I Thess. 4:13 — 5:3.

The Apostle Paul taught the Thessalonian Christians to anticipate the imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. These disciples at Thessalonica were so impressed with this doctrine that they were literally living moment by moment in expectation of “His glorious appearing.” (And, by the way, this is what all Christians down through this age of grace have been expected to do. Scripture teaches us to live each moment in expectation that the Lord might appear, but we’re to continue our service for Him as though His coming were years away.)

But the Thessalonian church was so caught up in the anticipation of the Lord's coming that they erroneously assumed there would be no physical death among Christians until the Lord Himself appeared. They had not allowed for the fact that time might stretch on for years — even beyond their normal life expectancy — before the Lord called for His church. So when certain members of their fellowship died, they were faced with a question they could not answer.

This question concerned the time sequence of the resurrection of those who had recently died and the transformation and catching away of the living saints. The significant doctrine contained in I Thessalonians 4:13 — 5:3 was the Holy Spirit's clear and direct answer, through the Apostle Paul, to this question.

The Church Will Be "Caught Away"

After first giving them assurance that this answer came to him by direct revelation from the Lord, Paul told the Thessalonian Christians that the souls and spirits of those who died in Christ would be with Him when He comes from heaven. The bodies of the "dead in Christ" would be resurrected first, but then (only a moment later) the living Christians would be transformed. After that, all would be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air. All those involved in the rapture, or the "catching away" will remain with Him for all eternity. Then Paul said that Christians were to find comfort and also to "comfort one another with these words."

After giving his clear and concise answer to this direct question, the Apostle Paul directed his attention to a time period that he called "the day of the LORD." It is unfortunate that later translators inserted a chapter division between I Thessalonians 4:18 and I Thessalonians 5:1, for in the original manuscripts there are no such interruptions, nor is there any break in the thought sequence. In the passage that begins at I Thessalonians 4:13 and ends at I Thessalonians 5:11,

Paul revealed a chronological sequence of events which consists first of the resurrection of the "dead in Christ," then the transformation and translation of the living saints, and shortly thereafter the beginning of the "day of the LORD." He declared that "the day of the LORD" would come (to the people of the world) "as a thief in the night."

In this passage, Paul, "by the word of the Lord," clearly taught that immediately after the "catching away" of the saved ones of this age (the church, the bride of Christ), there will descend upon this world a time of God's judgment and wrath such as has never been known before. The beginning of this time period is here designated by the apostle as the coming of "the day of the LORD."

Mentioned Throughout the Old Testament

The expression "the day of the LORD" was not coined by the Apostle Paul nor by any of the New Testament writers. It is an expression that was very well known to the Old Testament prophets. In fact, all but two of the writing prophets referenced this time period in their books. It therefore must be a time period of great significance to God and to His plan of the ages.

In this brief treatment we will follow the concept of "the day of the LORD" as it is developed century by century, considering certain Old Testament passages in the chronological order in which they were given. During the period of history in which the prophets of God "spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit," they made many other references to "the day of the LORD." All who love the Word are urged to look up these additional Old Testament passages, and see how men of God referred to a time drawing ever nearer — "the day of the LORD."

Obadiah's Introduction of "The Day of the LORD"

"For the day of the LORD is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head. For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been." Obad. 15-16.

Obadiah is considered by many conservative Bible scholars to be the earliest of the writing prophets of the Old Testament. His short prophecy was written almost nine hundred years before the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Chronologically, Obadiah was the first sacred writer to use the specific term "the day of the LORD."

In verse 15 of his short prophecy, Obadiah wrote, *"For the day of the LORD is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head."*

Since this is the first time that the expression "the day of the LORD" is used in Scripture, the immediate context in which it is used provides a key for understanding its meaning throughout the Bible. Therefore, we should give careful consideration to Obadiah's usage of this expression.

The prophet was considering the sins of Edom against God's chosen people, Israel, and the certainty of God's visitation in wrath upon the Edomites. Obadiah then spoke of the approach of a future time period that he designated as "the day of the LORD." He revealed that this period is to include a time of judgment upon all the Gentile nations. Then he

went on to say, "But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions." Verse 17. The remaining four verses of the prophecy go on to complete Obadiah's picture of final judgment toward heathen nations in general and upon Edom in particular. And these four verses also include what appears to be a time of great blessing upon Israel.

Notice that the general context of the last seven verses of this little book indicates that all these things are included in the time period that Obadiah has introduced in verse 15 as "the day of the LORD." Thus it seems evident that "the day of the LORD" includes both a time of judgment and a time of great blessing upon the earth.

From the general sequence of Obadiah's revelation, it would seem to follow that the time of judgment is to precede the time of blessing. This conclusion is also supported by the fact that the word "day" is used to introduce the expression that God uses to designate this future time period.

Although the context definitely indicates that a single twenty-four hour day is not in view, the use of the word "day" may signify that the time period has certain similarities to the single rotation of the earth that we call a "day." We should remember that the Jewish day begins at sundown and that it consists of an evening and a morning. In other words, a "day" begins with a period of darkness that is dispelled by the rising of the sun.

This analogy seems to further confirm that "the day of the LORD" is a period of judgment followed by a period of blessing. The blackness of the night of judgment will come first. But this blackness of night will give way to the blessings of a wonderful bright day of prosperity and blessing.

Joel's Elaboration on the Theme

"Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand; A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations. A fire devoureth before them, and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them." Joel 2:1-3.

Only a few years after Obadiah's prophecy, the Prophet Joel elaborated on the theme initiated by the former prophet. Joel's vivid description of the time of trouble "such as has never been and never will be again," that is to come upon the people of Israel continues on down through verse 14. And Joel's testimony provides assurance that this dreaded time is a part of the coming "day of the LORD."

Obadiah previously revealed that "the day of the LORD" is to include a time of judgment on the Gentile nations and a time of blessing for Israel. And Joel stated that "the day of the LORD" is also to include a time of intense tribulation for the children of Israel. But how can God's chosen people experience both tribulation and blessing during this period? The logical explanation is that "the day of the LORD" refers to an extended period of time that is to be initiated by a time of tribulation and then followed by a period of great blessing. That's why Joel commanded the blowing of a second trumpet to "call a solemn assembly." Verse 15. Then the remainder of the chapter provides a magnificent picture of millennial blessing.

The figure of Joel 2:2, "a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains," enforces the concept that "the day of the LORD" is initiated by a short period of judgment and tribulation. However, that time soon gives way to a much longer time period filled with God's richest blessing. Harry Ironside interpreted this figure "as the darkest hour precedes the dawn, so, before the break of the millennial morn, the world in general, and Judah in particular, will pass through the darkest period of tribulation that has ever been known."

The morning star shines brightly in the heavens during the early part of the morning. But after it passes below the horizon, the earth is left in thick darkness until the rising of the sun brings relief. The passing of the last feeble testimony of the church in a darkening world seems to be pictured in the setting of the morning star. We can equate this to the "rapture" of the church.

To "he that overcometh" in the church of Thyatira, the Lord said, "I will give him the morning star." See Revelation 2:28. Then comes the blanket of thick darkness "as the morning spread upon the mountains." That is the time of judgment, the tribulation. Relief comes with the dawn of the millennial morn when "the Sun of righteousness arises with healing in his wings." See Malachi 4:2.

4.

Amos's Expanded Warning

"Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to what end is it for you? the day of the LORD is darkness, and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a

serpent bit him. Shall not the day of the LORD be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it? Amos 5:18-20.

Approximately three-quarters of a century after Joel penned his prophecy, the herdsman-prophet Amos stressed the judgment aspect of those dark hours of "the day of the LORD," which will come just prior to the dawning of the millennial morning. He reinforced Joel's description of that black time as he emphasized the fact that there is no possibility for the children of Israel living in that day to escape those solemn judgments.

Many Held False Ideas

There were apparently some in Israel during the time of Amos who hoped that "the day of the LORD" was just a step away. They believed that it would afford them an escape from all their troubles. But the prophet warned that it is not going to be light for them; it will be darkness. To run from one danger will only be to encounter another.

"The day of the LORD" will begin with a time of judgment. God is going to deal with the world, both apostate Israel and the heathen nations alike, in the way that it so richly deserves. "The day of the LORD" is not a time to be desired by anyone still living in any sins!

Amos did not forget the blessings that are to be inherited by that remnant which survives the awful hour of trial. In Amos 9:11-12 we read, *"In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the LORD that doeth this."* It is obviously "the day of the LORD" that is in view because Amos opened this prophecy

with the words "In that day." These words refer back to Amos's earlier reference to "the day of the LORD."

Coming: A Wonderful Millennial Day

This introduction to the blessings which are to come after the initial period of judgment is followed by a beautiful and vivid description of that wonderful millennial day. Listen to God's words. *"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them.* Verses 13-14.

Amos closed his prophecy with the LORD God's words of comfort to those of Israel found worthy to attain that day. *"And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God."* Amos 9:15.

So the prophecy of Amos not only supports the concept of the coming "day of the LORD" given by Obadiah and Joel, but it also provides additional details concerning a time when even the climate of this present earth is to be modified for a year-round, springlike growing season. "The plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed." Planting and harvesting shall overlap in the pleasant climate of the great millennial age that is to then envelop the earth.

The Old Testament doctrine of "the day of the LORD" receives added dimension by each prophet who deals with the subject.

Isaiah's Detailed Disclosures

"Enter into the rock, and abide thee in the dust, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low." Isa. 2:10-12.

Isaiah, perhaps the greatest of the writing prophets, disclosed many details relating to that coming day when Immanuel, God in the flesh, the Messiah of Israel, will reveal His great power and will reign on the earth.

Isaiah was a contemporary of the herdsman-prophet Amos. While Amos's ministry was directed primarily to the northern kingdom, Isaiah's ministry was concerned with Judah and Jerusalem. Isaiah's ministry came at a very crucial period of Judah's history (approximately 739 to 700 B.C.), and the history of this time formed the background for his prophecies.

Several of Isaiah's most significant messages are directly related to the circumstances encountered by Judah in this critical part of her history. Isaiah's ministry spanned such events as the Syro-Ephraimitic War (734 B.C.) and the Sennacherib crisis (701 B.C.). However, his prophecies are by no means limited to Judah and her immediate historical circumstances. A major part of Isaiah's prophecy looks on to the glorious age of Messiah's reign on the earth and the wonderful conditions that will prevail in that day.

Isaiah also spoke of "the day of the LORD." Although he used this exact expression only three times in two separate

passages of his prophecy, his description of "the day of the LORD" is not confined to just those two passages. Elsewhere he referred to "~~the day of the LORD~~" as "that day." The great wealth of Isaiah's detailed disclosures of prevailing conditions in "the day of the LORD" are found in those passages that are introduced by the simple expression "in that day." In our search for the Old Testament definition of "the day of the LORD," we will consider only those passages where the exact expression is used.

A Rebuke and An Offer of Grace

Isaiah's opening chapter includes God's stern rebuke to His rebellious children, His offer of grace to those who will turn to Him and His warning of destruction for those who do not. This leads to the vision of the future in chapter 2. This glance into the future opens with a promise of blessing. Isaiah 2:2 reads, "*And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.*"

In spite of the disobedience and the great shortcomings of God's chosen nation, He will yet raise that people up in the days of Messiah's righteous reign. But as the prophecy continues, it is made clear that this time of blessing will come subsequent to a time of God's judgment on the earth. This is to be a time in which men of the earth are to be humbled before God. It is within the context of judgment that we find Isaiah's first mention of "the day of the LORD."

The LORD's warning to the remnant of His people who are to be alive in those last days begins in Isaiah 2:10. "*Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty.*" The LORD's warning, penned here by Isaiah, was repeated by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself when He was here in the flesh during the days of His earthly ministry. As He sat on the Mount of Olives, He

spoke of this same time when He said, "*Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains.*" Ma^tt. 24:16.

Judgment Will Humble Men

The LORD speaks of His purpose for this time of judgment in the earth as Isaiah penned the words found in verse 11. "*The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.*"

The specific meaning of "that day" is brought out in verse 12 as Isaiah, for the first time, used the expression "the day of the LORD." "*For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon everyone that is proud and lofty, and upon everyone that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low.*" Isaiah confirmed that which had been spoken by the earlier prophets. "The day of the LORD" is to open with a period of great judgment upon the earth, designed to humble proud men who have defied God's authority over the earth.

The result of this judgment period is further confirmed in verses 17 and 18. "*And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day. And the idols he shall utterly abolish.*"

The tribulation period described by Isaiah as the opening part of "the day of the LORD" is further described in the verses that follow. These detailed prophecies of Isaiah correspond precisely with those expanded prophecies of this period given by the Apostle John in the book of Revelation.

"And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; To go into the clefts of the

rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth." Isa. 2:19-21.

Isaiah's additional mention of "the day of the LORD" is found in chapter 13 as a part of "the burden of Babylon." Just as the book of Revelation associates a judgment on end-time Babylon with the judgments of the opening period of "the day of the LORD," so does Isaiah associate both historical Babylon and its anti-type, end-time Babylon, with the judgments of those last days.

Isaiah 13:6-8 reads, *"Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt: And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames."*

Once again Isaiah depicted the coming of "the day of the LORD" as the coming of a great turmoil upon the earth. "It shall come as a destruction (devastating judgment) from the Almighty."

Fear and Pain Associated With Judgment

The LORD Himself will bring this period of judgment upon the earth. It will affect all men living on the earth at that time. Fear and pain are associated with this time of judgment. Isaiah said that the pains will be as severe and as intense as birth pangs that come upon a woman who is travailing with child. Men are to be astonished as they see what comes upon one another.

Isaiah continued to speak of this time in verses 9 through 11. *"Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the*

sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible."

God is going to purify the earth during that time of His judgment which will initiate "the day of the LORD." This intense time of trouble will literally lay the land desolate. And by the end of this judgment period, God will have destroyed all sinners of the earth. This judgment period will not only affect the earth, but it will reach to the stars of heaven and to the constellations thereof. Even "the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine."

Man's Pride Will Be Cast Down

The LORD says that He intends to punish the world for its evil, and as He does so He will bring down the pride of the arrogant. He will lay low the haughtiness of "the terrible." This expression seems to be a direct reference to that evil dictator of the tribulation period.

But "the day of the LORD" is not just the time of judgment. Again, Isaiah confirmed what has been revealed by the earlier prophets. "The day of the LORD" begins with a time of great judgment, but it terminates with a period of great blessing. Isaiah 14:1-3 is still speaking of "the day of the LORD."

"For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob. And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the LORD for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors. And it shall come to

pass in the day that the LORD shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve."

6.

Zephaniah's Cry of Warning

"The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness. A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land." Zeph. 1:14-18.

It was during the reign of godly King Josiah, about three-quarters of a century after the ministry of Isaiah, that the Prophet Zephaniah penned this description of "the day of the LORD." The thought of this little book of prophecy centers almost entirely upon one central theme — the coming of "the day of the LORD." Zephaniah's prophecy is almost wholly occupied with the subject of judgment. The book begins with the announcement of a universal judgment, not only upon Judah, but upon the world in general. Zephaniah made it clear that the opening part of "the day of the LORD" will be a time of overwhelming terror in which the

wrath of God will consume the whole earth. Zephaniah's prophecy fully supports, and to a degree expands, the concepts provided in the revelations of the earlier prophets.

It is a sobering picture indeed that depicts those conditions that will prevail upon this planet when "the day of the LORD so cometh as a thief in the night." I Thess. 5:2. *"Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy."* Zeph. 3:8.

Zephaniah confirmed the concept that although "the day of the LORD" begins with a period of great judgment on the earth, this time of judgment is immediately followed by a time of great blessing. In Zephaniah 3:14-15 we find the following words:

"Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The LORD hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the king of Israel, even the LORD, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more."

Thus Zephaniah also reveals that the Scriptural expression "the day of the LORD" refers to a period that includes a time of great tribulation on the earth followed by the blessings of the earthly kingdom of the Messiah.

7.

Jeremiah's Coordinating Comment

"Come up, ye horses; and rage, ye chariots; and let the mighty men come forth; the Ethiopians and the Libyans, that handle the shield; and the Lydians that handle and bend the bow. For this is the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries: and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood: for the Lord GOD of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates." Jer. 46:9-10.

The ministry of the weeping prophet, Jeremiah, began in the 13th year of the reign of Josiah, probably the year 627 B.C. Jeremiah's ministry overlapped that of Zephaniah. God chose Jeremiah to warn Israel of the coming of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, to ravish Jerusalem and to lead the residents of Judah captive into Babylon. Jeremiah's ministry continued into the time of the Captivity, although Jeremiah himself was not carried to Babylon. He was exiled into the land of Egypt, and it is believed that he died there.

Jeremiah's prophecy contains only one direct reference to "the day of the LORD," and this is found in Jeremiah 46:10. After Jeremiah's ministry to the rebellious men of Judah was completed, he was commissioned to announce the judgment soon to fall upon the Gentiles. When Jeremiah was called to the prophetic office, God appointed him to be a prophet to the nations. Because of this commission, Jeremiah was selected to bring the Word of the LORD to the various Gentile nations surrounding the land of Palestine.

Nine different nations are mentioned before this prophecy closes. The first nation to come to Jeremiah's attention is Egypt. With the exception of the last two verses, all of

chapter 46 is devoted to the judgments which are to come upon that once rich and powerful nation. Some of the judgments, but not all, were fulfilled shortly after Jeremiah wrote the prophecy, in Babylon's defeat of Egypt at the Battle of Carchemish.

Egypt: A Type of the World

In Scripture, Egypt is invariably a type of the world, either as the oppressor or the would-be patron of the people of God. Because of this, Egypt's prophesied judgment speaks of that which is yet to befall the satanic order of things in this present world system. Therefore, it is appropriate that future judgments upon the present world system are given through the pen of the prophet as he writes of those specific judgments upon the land of Egypt.

Jeremiah 46:9 introduces the concept of great conflict in battle: *"Come up, ye horses; and rage, ye chariots; and let the mighty men come forth; the Ethiopians and the Libyans, that handle the shield; and the Lydians, that handle and bend the bow."* The combatants mentioned make it appear that this battle is to be associated with the future campaign of Gog and Magog, prophesied by Ezekiel 38 and 39. According to Ezekiel's description, that battle seems to involve Egypt on the side of Israel warring against the Russian hordes from the north and their Ethiopian, Libyan and Lydian allies who come up from the south. It is God who brings the judgment of this battle upon Egypt.

Verse 10 provides the setting for the time of this conflict. Jeremiah has written, "For this is the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries." The expression "the Lord GOD of hosts" is a slightly different form of title from that used by the earlier prophets who spoke of "the day of the LORD." Jeremiah's Hebrew, which the King James Version translates as "the Lord GOD of hosts," is Adonay JHWH Tseba'ot. The Hebrew

expression of Jeremiah only differs from that of Isaiah by the addition of the word Adonay. That Hebrew word actually means "Lord" in the sense of one who has authority.

A Dark Time of Judgment to Come

It is obvious that Jeremiah had the same time period in view as was foreseen by the earlier prophets. The prophet foresaw a black judgment in the time that he knew as "the day of the Lord GOD of hosts." His view coordinates with that of the other prophets.

Jeremiah had little to say about the great blessings that are to come to Israel, and also to the nations, after God's initial judgment is over. But he did hint at this in the closing verse of chapter 46. *"Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith the LORD: for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee; but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure; yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished."*

The remnant will remain to inherit the millennial kingdom. *"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."* Matt. 25:34.

8.

Ezekiel's Confirmation of Dark Judgment

"The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Howl ye, Woe worth the day! For the day is near, even the

day of the LORD is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen." Ezek. 30:1-3.

Ezekiel was Israel's prophet of the Exile. He was deported to Babylon in 597 B.C., at the time of the captivity of King Jehoiachin. Ezekiel was of priestly ancestry, but his deportation into Babylon probably came before he entered into his duties as a priest. His ministry overlapped that of Jeremiah, and he was a contemporary with the Prophet Daniel. The ministry of this prophet of the Exile covered a period of some 21 years, from 595 B.C. to 574 B.C.

Ezekiel (whose name means "God strengthens") was primarily the exponent and revealer of God's divine government. Ezekiel dwelt upon the fact that God is over all, working out His plan of the ages in spite of satanic oppositions designed to thwart His purpose. Satan is the god of this present world system, but over and above all of Satan's rule stands the throne of the God of heaven. It is God who controls the destinies of Israel and of all the nations. He "worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will." Eph. 1:11.

While the Prophet Daniel carried on his ministry from the court of the king of Babylon himself, Ezekiel was among the captive peoples of Judah as they maintained their existence along that Babylonian canal known as the river Chebar. Ezekiel endured the bonds of Babylonian captivity under the same circumstances as those others who were deported with him.

A significant part of Ezekiel's writings deal with that coming time period when Israel and the nations are to be judged, Messiah's righteous kingdom is to be established and the blessings of the millennial reign are to be poured out on the earth. The last nine chapters of the book are devoted entirely to a description of the millennium and to the system of worship that is to be established during the day of the promised kingdom.

Earlier Testimony Confirmed

Ezekiel used the specific designation “the day of the LORD” in only two places. In both of these passages Ezekiel confirmed the testimony of the earlier prophets, that “the day of the LORD” is to include a time of dark judgment upon the earth.

Ezekiel’s first specific mention of “the day of the LORD” occurs in chapter 13, which also contains his scathing denunciation of the false prophets.

The Lord caused Ezekiel to write the following words: *“O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts. Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the LORD.”* Ezek. 13:4-5.

Gaps in the Hedge

These words confirm that “the day of the LORD” is a future time period in which the nation Israel will be engaged in a great struggle for survival. Ezekiel pictured the word of prophecy as a great hedge erected about Israel for her protection. There are gaps in this hedge, and the false prophets do nothing to fill those breaches. Their words actually serve to weaken the defense of God’s chosen nation during the day of battle. The circumstances of “the day of the LORD” are such that help for God’s chosen people comes only from the true word of prophecy.

The second mention of “the day of the LORD” by Ezekiel is found in the opening words of chapter 30. The major part of Ezekiel 30 deals with a prophecy of judgment upon the nation Egypt. The context of this prophecy is amazingly similar to the context of Isaiah’s prophecy of “the day of the LORD” of Isaiah 13. Again, we should remember that Egypt is a type of the world. God’s judgment upon Egypt stands in type for God’s judgment upon the evil world system of the “times of the Gentiles.” The Lord Jesus Christ Himself spoke

of "the times of the Gentiles," and His words are recorded in Luke 21:24. He said, "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

Ezekiel spoke also of "the time of the Gentiles," and he associated the end of this time with the judgment of "the day of the LORD." Ezekiel 30:3 reads, "*For the day is near, even the day of the LORD is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen.*" The word "heathen" is a translation of the Hebrew word for "Gentiles." The last clause of this verse could be translated, "It shall be the time of the Gentiles."

Ezekiel's mention of "the day of the LORD" confirms that this time period was yet future from his own viewpoint. It includes both "a day of battle" for Israel and the catastrophic judgments that will bring an end to "the time of the Gentiles." The events of "the day of the LORD" were not fulfilled by the Babylonian Captivity. Ezekiel saw "the day of the LORD" as coming upon the earth in the prophetic "near future" but not as being fulfilled in his own lifetime. In those passages that contain his direct mention of "the day of the LORD" he confirmed that this time is to include dark judgment upon the earth.

9.

Zechariah's Message to Jerusalem

"Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle." Zech. 14:1-3.

Zechariah was a post-exilic prophet and a contemporary of Haggai. Zechariah's first message was delivered in the eighth month of the second year of Darius (520 B.C.). This was about two months after the first message of Haggai.

The prophecies of both Zechariah and Haggai came during the time of the movement to restore the temple in Jerusalem, after the return of the exiles from Babylon. The ministry of Haggai served primarily to rouse the people to the outward task of building the temple. The ministry of Zechariah was directed toward a prophetic view of God's future program for that chosen nation, and he sought to lead the people into complete spiritual change. In chapter 14, Zechariah concentrated on those events that form the dividing line between the time of tribulation and the time of blessing and prosperity.

"Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee." Here God is speaking to Israel, and He tells His chosen people that "the day of the LORD" is going to come upon them. And, as a climax to the great judgments that are to fall during the initial tribulation period of "the day of the LORD," He will gather all nations to do battle around Jerusalem, the focal point of this final great struggle. The goods, the treasures, the possessions of the chosen people are to be divided between the two great armies at this last colossal struggle of unregenerate man.

No Earthly Help for Israel

The final battle will render Israel's existence hopeless, the chosen people of God will appear to be destined for extermination. "The city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity." But then will come the salvation of that faithful remnant, those who have received the Gospel of the kingdom and will have owned the Lord Jesus Christ, not only as their Messiah, but also as their personal Saviour. This remnant will

have looked unto Him "whom they pierced." And their salvation will come, not from man, but from heaven. "Then shall the LORD go forth and fight against those nations as when he fought in the day of battle."

In Revelation 19:11, we read the dramatic description of this event that is to climax human history. "*And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.*" And in verse 16 we read, "*And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.*"

Zechariah 14:4 describes the coming to earth of this "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." "*And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.*"

The Lord's Judgment to Come

The "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" shall make short work of the two great world armies that are struggling in the land of Israel. He will then bring judgment on all the living people of the earth. His judgment on the chosen people, Israel, is described in Ezekiel 20:34-38.

"And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord GOD. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: And I will purge out from among

you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the LORD." ↳ during ^{the} Messianic Age?

The judgment of the living Gentiles is described by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself in Matthew 25:31-46, where we read of the King separating the sheep from the goats.

And then that wonderful time of peace and righteousness on the earth will come. "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD'S house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Zech. 14:20.

10. Malachi's Message of the Millennial Daybreak

"For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and he shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts." Mal. 4:1-3.

The Old Testament closes with the prophecy of Malachi. Writing some four centuries before the birth of our Lord

Jesus Christ, Malachi supplied the finishing brush strokes to the Old Testament picture of "the day of the LORD."

The above passage points to the initial dark period of "the day of the LORD," which is a time of summary judgment upon ungodly Jew and Gentile alike. The context indicates that this judgment is definitely a part of "the day of the LORD" and that it occurs at the coming of the "Sun of righteousness."

The arising of "the Sun of righteousness . . . with healing in his wings" marks the dawning of the millennial day, immediately after those dark hours preceding the rising of the sun. This is a figure of the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Remember, Scripture distinguishes between the figurative "day of the LORD" and a literal day. The first chapter of Genesis defines a "day" as a period of darkness followed by a period of light. To the Hebrews, the dawning of the new day came at the setting of the sun in the evening. "There was evening, there was morning, one day."

In Genesis 1:16 we read, *"And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night."* This, of course, is a description of the literal creation of the sun and the moon. However, Scripture uses the symbols of the sun and the moon in a figurative sense also. The literal sun is the source of the life-giving light that falls on the earth. The sun is an active source of energy, and it is not dependent upon any other heavenly body.

We have just seen that Malachi used the sun as a figure of Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. When the sun is physically present, it is day, and there is brilliant light flooding over the earth. But when the sun is absent, it is night.

God made "the lesser light to rule the night." The moon is not a source of light; it is simply a reflector of the light of the sun. When the sun has passed the horizon and the moon

has risen above it, the moon is still exposed to the direct radiation of the sun. The earth does not obstruct that direct path of illumination between the sun and the moon. Therefore, the moon (even in the absence of the sun as seen from the earth) is bathed in the brilliant light of the sun, and it reflects a portion of this light into a darkened world.

A Figure of the Church

Scripture seems to use the moon as a figure of the church. The glorious light of the Sun of righteousness is reflected into a darkened world by His church, even during His physical absence from this scene.

When the Son of God was physically present in the world, it was day. But He was rejected, and He took His physical presence out of the earthly scene. But the setting of the sun brought the rising of the full moon in all of its brilliance.

It is highly significant that the Jewish Passover season always occurred at the time of the full moon. The early church was a brilliant light in a darkened world. But as the centuries wore on, the moon sank low in the sky; it dimmed, and it is about to set. The setting of the moon brings the brilliant morning star into the sky for a short period of time. This is symbolic of the Lord Jesus Christ's appearing in the air for His church.

But when the morning star is gone, deep darkness again bathes the earth. It is the deep darkness of the tribulation, the beginning of "the day of the LORD." This darkness can only be dispelled by the rising of the "Sun of righteousness" and the dawning of the great millennial day, when our Lord Jesus Christ will once again be physically present in all His glory.

All the good that is to ever happen to this world depends on the second coming of the Prince of Peace, the "Sun of righteousness," the Lord Jesus Christ.

Malachi penned the last two verses of the Old Testament. *"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."*

These words show beyond doubt that the time period known to the Old Testament prophets as "the day of the LORD" had not yet come at the time of Malachi's prophecy. Malachi's book closed the Old Testament canon of Scripture. Four hundred silent years were to intervene before God once again spoke to the world, this time through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The books of the New Testament (which were all written before the end of the first century A.D.) were to complete God's revelation to man.

Elijah Will Return

*my for
Passover*
The Word of God, as given through the Old Testament prophets, closes with a promise concerning that future time period designated "the day of the LORD." That promise is that Elijah the prophet will return to the earthly scene before the "great and dreadful day of the LORD" has its beginning.

Notice, this prophecy says that Elijah will return prior to the beginning of "the day of the LORD." "The day of the LORD" is associated with the second advent of Jesus Christ, not with His first advent. The Lord Himself did say that John the Baptist came in the spirit of Elijah before the beginning of His own earthly ministry. But He did not say that the promise of Elijah's physical return to the earth before "the great and dreadful day of the LORD" had been fulfilled.

The conservative and the orthodox Jewish people of today still look for the coming of Elijah each year as they celebrate the Passover feast. They are aware of God's promise given through the Prophet Malachi. The Word of God says

that when Elijah comes, "He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers." What a time that is to be!

The Apostle John was also given a prophetic view of what many believe to be the fulfillment of the return of Elijah. Many fundamental Bible scholars believe that Elijah himself is to be one of the two witnesses of the tribulation period, as recorded in Revelation, chapter 11.

11.

"The Day of the LORD" Outlined

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season." Rev. 20:1-3.

Our brief exploration of the Old Testament prophets has revealed a vivid picture of the dark tribulation period that initiates "the day of the LORD." These spokesmen of God tell of the judgments of living man at the coming of the "Sun of righteousness" (and remember, these judgments signal the end of the tribulation period). Then the prophets spoke of that golden millennial day that extends for a thousand years.

The prophetic Scriptures that we have considered by no means exhaust the wealth of information that God has provided through His Old Testament prophets concerning "the day of the LORD." But these selected examples adequately

outline the sequence of events that God refers to by His term
“the day of the LORD.”

Both the Apostle Paul (in I Thessalonians 5:2) and the Apostle Peter (in II Peter 3:10) tell us that “the day of the LORD” will come unexpectedly to the people of the world “as a thief in the night.” Paul disclosed that when the unsaved citizens of this world are saying, “Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail (‘birth pains’) upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.” I Thess. 5:3.

“The day of the LORD” begins with a period of great tribulation, *“a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations.”* Joel 2:2.

World Chaos Ahead

God will bring summary judgment on this wicked world, and He will do it through the instrumentality of the wicked religious and political system that man has built with his own hands. The world will be cast into chaos, and the system of man will head toward complete destruction before God Himself brings an end to these troublesome times.

The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in power and glory will then result in the judgment of the people living on the earth. “The day of the LORD” will come “as a thief in the night” to the unsaved people of the world who will be left after the “catching away” of the church by the Lord as He appears in the air. However, the Lord will not leave the earth without witnesses. The “blindness in part” will be lifted from the eyes of God’s chosen people, Israel. One hundred forty-four thousand of God’s elect Israelites will be sealed to go forth and preach the Gospel of the kingdom. Many of those who will respond to this Gospel will die martyrs’ deaths. But

there will be a remnant left, and the Lord will find faith upon the earth when He returns to establish His kingdom.

The Righteous Will Enter the Kingdom

The righteous living (those who have responded to the preaching of the Gospel during the tribulation and have survived until the King's coming) will be judged worthy to enter the kingdom. But the wicked will be destroyed, and the glorious millennial day will begin. This is the early part of "the day of the LORD."

God has also seen fit to reveal the ending of "the day of the LORD." In Revelation 20, the Apostle John provided a summary time schedule of the millennial day. In verse 2, John told of the binding of Satan for one thousand years. Then in verse 7 we read these words, *"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison."* Satan is to then lead a rebellion of those living persons that have been born into the millennial kingdom but who have not accepted the Lord Jesus Christ into their hearts.

"And fire came down out of heaven and devoured them."

Rev. 20:9.

12.

The End of "The Day of the LORD"

"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall

pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" II Peter 3:8-12.

The Apostle Peter was chosen by God to reveal that great event that climaxes "the day of the LORD" and opens the eternal "day of God." Peter said that the coming of "the day of the LORD" is a certainty on God's calendar. And Peter explained precisely why this day has not already come. "*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*" God desires to have all men turn to Him, but many will not come through the path that He has made by the shed blood of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And on those who are not willing to accept His free gift of salvation, God will pour out His wrath at the beginning of "that great and dreadful day of the LORD." Mal. 4:5.

Peter did not dwell on the details of the tribulation period, which opens "the day of the LORD," nor on the golden millennial age, when the Lord Jesus Christ will personally rule as King over all the earth. Rather, Peter looked forward to the end of "the day of the LORD," to that transient period in which "the day of the LORD" ends and "the day of God" begins. Peter wrote, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." Then he leaped forward to the end of that period, to the time "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

No attempt was made by the apostle to describe the details of "the day of the LORD" itself. The characteristics of

that time were well known to the Christians of Peter's day. But God had not yet revealed what was to transpire at the end of "the day of the LORD."

Peter revealed that at the end of the personal reign of Jesus Christ on this earth this present heaven and earth are to be destroyed by God. But the events that lead up to the closing of this age and to the destruction of this present earth were not considered by Peter. The Apostle John, some years later, provided the missing details.

In Revelation 20:7-10 we read of the Satan-led rebellion of those born during the millennial age who refuse to accept the Lord Jesus Christ into their hearts and thereby receive the gift of eternal life. *"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."*

Peter's prophecy tells of the aftermath of that last great rebellion of man. (This presumably takes place after the saints of the millennial age have been removed from this earth.) *"The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."* II Peter 3:10, 13.

God will create new heavens and a new earth where the saints of God will live forever in the eternal "day of God."

13.

"The Day of the LORD" Biblically Defined

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." II Peter 3:10-13.

This present earth and heaven are to undergo nuclear disintegration in a judgment of fire, and a new heaven and a new earth "wherein dwelleth righteousness" will result from that nuclear disintegration. This new earth and the heavenly city, the new Jerusalem, will be the home of the redeemed of God during all eternity. Peter spoke of that eternity in II Peter 3:12 as "the day of God." That is when "there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever." Rev. 22:3-5.

The representative references to the "day of the LORD," which we have considered, enable us to formulate a Scriptural definition of that term. The late C.I. Scofield, in his reference Bible, has given the following definition:

“The day of Jehovah (called, also ‘that day’ and ‘the great day’) is that lengthened period of time beginning with the return of the Lord in glory, and ending with the purgation of the heavens and the earth by fire preparatory to the new heavens and the new earth.” Within his definition, Dr. Scofield included the rapture of the church, the tribulation period and the second coming of Christ in his expression “the return of the Lord in glory.”

Bible scholar Frank E. Gaebelin made the following statement: “The day of the Lord comprehends Armageddon, the judgment of the nations, the millennium, the resurrection of the wicked dead and their final judgment, and the cleaning of the earth by fire. It is obviously preceded by the signs of the last times, including apostasy and worldwide disruption. More immediately prior to it are the rapture of the church, the manifestation of the antichrist, and the judgments of Revelation chapters 6 through 13.”

14.

The Church to Escape

“For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Thess. 5:9.

“The day of the LORD” is to be initiated by a specific event in history, and the Prophet Daniel was chosen of God to reveal exactly what that event is to be. In speaking of the great, evil political ruler of the end of “the times of the Gentiles,” (who Daniel referred to as “the prince that shall come”) Daniel wrote: “And he shall confirm the covenant with the many for one week” (that is, one seven-year period of time). Dan. 9:27.

“The many” refers to the majority of the people of the politically revived nation of Israel. Daniel said that “the day

of the LORD” is to begin the moment the representative of the nation Israel signs a seven-year covenant of peace with a king of western Europe, who has become the head of a ten-nation political coalition.

Before we close this study of “the day of the LORD,” let’s once again recall Paul’s message to the church at Thessalonica as found in I Thessalonians 4:13–5:11. In I Thessalonians 4:13-18, Paul wrote of the coming rapture of the church, “that blessed hope.” Then, in I Thessalonians 5:1-11, Paul spoke of the coming of “the day of the LORD” as a “thief in the night.”

Twice during this complete passage Paul emphasized that this message is to be one of comfort for Christians. After his description of the rapture in I Thessalonians 4:16-17 Paul wrote, “Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” Verse 18. Then after his description of the coming of “the day of the LORD” he wrote, “*Wherefore comfort yourselves together and edify one another even as also ye do.*” I Thess. 5:11.

Paul was emphatic that this Scripture contains a message of comfort. And that comfort comes from the assurance that the church is not “appointed to wrath” but rather to escape (“to obtain salvation”) from that wrath “by our Lord Jesus Christ.” Thus Paul has assured all Christians by the Word of the Lord that the church will not enter “the day of the LORD.”

Paul’s exhortation for the Christian of this age is found in Titus 2:11-13. “*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and (even) the glorious appearing of the great God and (even) our Saviour Jesus Christ (that is, the rapture of the church).*”

The End