



**The Day of the Lord?
What Does that Mean?
Joel 1:15
2 Thessalonians 2:1-12**

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Test time – what is the book of Joel really all about? It is about the Day of YAHWEH, the Day of the Lord. The idea of the day of YAHWEH, also called the Day of the Lord, is a topic first broached in Obadiah 15, predating Joel, but Joel is the one who develops it. It is something that we as believers need to be aware of, but we will not be here to go through it as it begins, but we will be here for most of it as Christ rules and reigns on this planet.



Joel 1:15

“Woe for the day! For the day of the LORD is near, And it will come as destruction from the Almighty.” (NASB 2020)

When we see this term, the Day of the Lord, used, we realize that the idea “is that this is Gods’ time. Man has his “day,” and the LORD has His day. In the ultimate sense, the day of the LORD is fulfilled with(sic) Jesus judges the earth and returns in glory. In a lesser sense, a time of judgment as Judah experienced with the locusts and drought is also an example of the day of the LORD.” (Guzik 2000, Joe 1:15-20)

As believers in Christ, the scriptures are very clear that we who believe today, prior to His return for the church, also known as the rapture of the Church, will not be subjected to the wrath of the Day of the Lord.

2 Thessalonians 2:1–12

“Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, regarding the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, 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. No one is to deceive you in any way! For it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 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. Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? And you know what restrains him now, so that he will be revealed in his time. **For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is removed. Then that lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will eliminate with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not accept the love of the truth so as to be saved.** For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.” (NASB 2020)

Something to remember as we look at this.

1 Thessalonians 5:9–10

“For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him.” (NASB 2020)

The phrase, the day of the Lord, has reference to the direct intervention of God in the affairs of man. The theme has a twofold meaning. First, the phrase, day of the Lord, refers to God’s judgment which came upon Judah after Joel penned the prophecy. Second, it has reference to the Tribulation period which will culminate in Christ’s coming in glory and the establishment of His Millennial Kingdom. (Levy 1987)

What do we mean when we say the Day of the Lord? First of all, it is not a single day.

The Day of the Lord is a technical expression in Scripture which is fraught with meaning. It includes the millennial kingdom which will come at the second coming of Christ, but Joel is going to make it very clear to us that it begins with the Great Tribulation Period, the time of great trouble. If you want to set a boundary or parenthesis at the end of the Day of the Lord, it would be the end of the Millennium when the Lord Jesus puts down all unrighteousness and establishes His eternal kingdom here upon the earth.

The Day of the Lord is also an expression that is peculiar to the prophets of the Old Testament. It does not include the period when the church is in the world, because none of the prophets spoke about a group of people who would be called out from among the Gentiles, the nation Israel, and all the tribes of the



earth, to be brought into one great body called the church which would be raptured out of this world. The prophets neither spoke nor wrote about the church. (McGee 1997, 657)

The Day of the Lord "is a time of divine intervention into the affairs of men. This phenomenon has taken place historically, which is but a picture of that future intervention of judgment beginning at the Tribulation. The "light" or blessing aspect of the Day will be experienced during the Kingdom age after Israel has been brought to repentance in keeping with the "unconditional" nature of the OT promises." (Hullinger 2015, 101)

Joel teaches us tons about this major Old Testament Doctrine of the Day of the Lord. The origins of this day can be found in Genesis. "One of the most meaningful statements ever written, and one of the most terrifying, is found in Genesis 6:3. There the Lord God declares, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." The Book of Joel, in my opinion, drives that fact home and hammers it out more forcefully than any of the other prophetic books.

The theme of this prophecy is "the Day of the Lord." Joel speaks of "the Day of the Lord" five times in these three short chapters. Joel tells us that history is moving constantly to an appointed end called "the Day of the Lord" (1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14)." (Fortner 2007, 325-326)

Yes, "the day of the Lord is a major doctrine of the Old Testament and an extremely important teaching in all Scripture. It describes an unparalleled time when the Lord Himself will directly bring about defined judgments and desolations on the entire planet. Nothing and no one will be spared in all His creation including the heavens and the angelic world during the day of the Lord. The day of the Lord is so central that a thorough understanding is essential for any proper interpretation of eschatology.

While Scripture clearly teaches the premillennial pretribulational rapture of the church, the terminology pretribulational rapture might be better phrased and more biblical using the term 'pre-day-of-the-Lord rapture.'" (Olander 2008, 269)

We are living in the church age at this present moment. The church was founded with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. Jesus warned of this.

Acts 1:6–8

"So when they had gathered together, they began to ask him, "Lord, is this the time when you are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" He told them, "You are not permitted to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. **But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you**, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the farthest parts of the earth.'" (NET 2nd ed.)

Acts 2 gives us the events that took place on the day the church was founded, a day that also is referenced in Joel. Jesus also said He would come back.

John 14:2–3

"There are many dwelling places in my Father's house. Otherwise, I would have told you, because **I am going away to make ready a place for you. And if I go and make ready a place for you, I will come again and take you to be with me, so that where I am you may be too.**" (NET 2nd ed.)

There is a day coming, and very soon, that the church age will end. Jesus will come back, as He promised, to take us to be with Him. That is what John 14 is telling us.

Paul also talks about this upcoming event.



1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

“But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.” (ESV)

This event we are looking forward to is called “the caught up together,” or in the Greek the *harpazo* (rapture - Latin) of the Church.

We tend to simply call this the rapture of the church, also referenced in Revelation 4:1 when John is told to “come up here.”

This event must take place before the Day of the Lord can begin. Why?

We must take note of this teaching from the scriptures, “it is critical to understand that the day of the Lord cannot possibly begin until the church has been removed from the earth. Paul consistently taught the rapture of the church must take place first, and only then can the day of the Lord begin.” (Olander 2008, 271)

1 Thessalonians 5:9

“For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,” (ESV)

Are there any signs or prophecies that need to happen before Jesus can come and “snatch” the church away to be with Him? No. The rapture is imminent, Paul believed it could happen in his lifetime. The only difference between then and now is the massive convergence of other fulfilled prophecies related to what Jesus said would be characteristic of the end of the age (Matthew 24) as well as other prophecies regarding Israel.

The term imminent means “ready to take place” or “impending.” The New Testament teaches that the rapture is imminent—that is, there is nothing that must be prophetically fulfilled before the rapture occurs. It could happen at any moment. (Rhodes 2022, 43)

We are currently waiting for His return for us and in the interim, being busy about the mission He has given us. Already, but not yet.

1 Thessalonians 1:8–10

“For from you the message of the Lord has echoed forth not just in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place reports of your faith in God have spread, so that we do not need to say anything. For people everywhere report how you welcomed us and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus our deliverer from the coming wrath.” (NET 2nd ed.)

Once the rapture of the church has taken place, then all who are left on the earth will go into the Day of the Lord once the man of sin has been revealed (2 Thess 2:1-12).

When Jesus removes His body, the church from this planet, that clears the way for the Day of the Lord to begin.



The Thessalonian church understood this to be the case. Paul made it clear to them that they would not be subjected to the wrath of God. Their confusion was making connections that did not exist between ordinary persecution from the world and the wrath of God connected with the Day of the Lord.

Paul pointed that out to them making it clear that the Day of the Lord will not start as long as the church is still here.

I believe that Jesus saw our generation as the terminal generation. The events that He described in the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24 & 25) as well as in Luke 17, are all converging in terms of fulfillment in this current time.

We are rapidly approaching the time that would see the time of gentile come to an end.

Again, the church; let me rephrase that, true believers in Jesus Christ, will not be here when it does start. I say that because Jesus related in Revelation 2 & 3 that some who are in the church but not in Christ will remain behind as they do not know Him.

Meanwhile, let me point out some of the preconditioning taking place in the media today preparing this world for an invasion not of aliens, but of the supernatural that we read about in Revelation. Satan is busy prepping his people for this. By the way, we are not only talking about astronomical phenomena, but phenomena associated with the prince of the power of the air...Satan (Ephesians 2:2). "If we examine the so-called UFO abduction theories, we see something interesting. "The thousands of contacts with the entities indicate that they are liars and put-on artists. The UFO manifestations seem to be, by and large, merely minor variations of the age-old demonological phenomenon." (Keel 2013, 326)

This term, Day of the Lord, shows up a lot in the word. This term, the Day of the Lord, will show up four more times in the book of Joel, 2:1, 11,31 and 3:14 and 19 more times in the Old Testament, where it appears in the same context as seen here in Joel, in Isaiah 2:12, 13:6, 9, 34:8; Jeremiah 46:10; Ezekiel 13:5, 30:3; Amos 5:18 (x2), 5:20; Obadiah 15, Zephaniah 1:7, 8, 14, 18, 2:2, 2:3; Zechariah 14:1; Malachi 4:5. The term is also used another 5 times in the New Testament, Acts 2:20; 1 Corinthians 5:5; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:2 and 2 Peter 3:10.

Dr. Charles Ryrie tells us that "as used in the Bible, the broad concept of the Day of the Lord always involves God's special intervention in the affairs of human history. The concept includes three facets:

1. A historical facet, which concerns God's intervention in the affairs of Israel (Joel 1:15; Zephaniah 1:14–18) and in the affairs of heathen nations (Isaiah 13:6; Jeremiah 46:10; Ezekiel 30:3);
2. An illustrative facet, in which a historical incident of God's intervention also illustrates a future intervention (Isaiah 13:6–13; Joel 2:1–11); and
3. An eschatological facet, that is, God's intervention in human history in the future (Isaiah 2:12–19; 4:1; 19:23–25; Jeremiah 30:7–9)." (Ryrie 1981, 93-94)

Our takeaway... this day is about to begin. First the church is removed, and then the Day of the Lord begins and it begins with judgment.

Let's pray.



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