

Session 4

The Day of the Lord

A. The Importance of Understanding the Day of the Lord

1. The “Day of the Lord” is a prominent theme concerning the End of the Age. It is mentioned at least 100 times in the Bible — 80 times in the Old Testament and 20 times in the New Testament.
2. Understanding the Day of the Lord will enable us to understand major and minor prophets and important eschatological books such as the book of Joel, Daniel and the book of Revelation.
3. The Day of the Lord speaks specifically and mostly about that final hour of human history before the Second Coming of Christ as depicted in the book of Revelation. It is known as the “future” Day of the Lord or the “ultimate” Day of the Lord. There is only one “Great Day of the Lord” and it is at the End of the Age.
4. The judgments of God seen throughout history and nations today are called the “lesser” Days of the Lord.
5. They serve as foreshadows that teach us of the Great Day of the Lord at the End of the Age so that we can understand God’s heart and gain confidence in Him.
6. When we understand this prominent theme, we begin to see various events unfolding as part of God’s entire narrative, rather than isolated individual events.
7. This grants us the basis to understand God’s heart and what He is going to do at the End of the Age. It points us to the main Person behind the things that will begin to unfold.

B. Defining the Day of the Lord

1. The “day of the Lord” indicates a unique time frame when God acts in an unusual manifestation of power for His people and against His enemies.
 - a. This is a time when God manifests Himself as the Warrior-King who wars against sin as He decisively intervenes against His enemy with open displays of His power.

- b. In the day of God's power, it is not people who are His enemy but the sin that is lodged in their hearts. He openly confronts sin even when it is found in the midst of His people — Israel and the Church.
 2. We need to understand the principle of God's judgment.
 - a. The heart of God is filled with an intense jealousy for holiness. His normal mode of leadership over the earth and mankind is to restrain His intensified judgments against sin with great patience so that more people would have the opportunity to repent and be saved (2 Pet. 3:9).
 - b. However, there are unique times in history when God will openly manifest His zeal in the natural realm, taking nations to account for their rebellion against Him.
 - c. Often, He lets man do what he has determined to do, allowing sin to slowly grow until it reaches certain boundary lines that He has set. This is commonly referred to as the "fullness of iniquity" (Gen. 15:16; Dan. 8:23).
 - d. On occasion, God alters His usual mode of operation by breaking into the natural realm to confront sin openly on a large scale.
 3. These open demonstrations of His zeal are called the judgments of God and the time of their occurrence is called the Day of the Lord. He displays His sovereign power over sin as He confronts rebellion in a unique way. When He shows His power and wisdom in this way, it is His day, and thus He calls it, "the Day of the Lord".

C. Two Dimensions of the Day of the Lord

1. There are two dimensions to the Day of the Lord — the "great" and the "terrible" aspects.
 - a. Joel proclaims the Day of the Lord as both great and very terrible (Joel 2:11);
 - b. Malachi calls the Day of the Lord both great and dreadful (Mal. 4:5);
 - c. Isaiah calls it the year of favor and the day of God's vengeance (Isa. 61:1–3).
2. This is the two-fold strategy of God. The tension of these two realities will perplex the people of the earth. God has brought them together to bring about the greatest turning and transformation of the human heart and the greatest manifestation of divine activity on earth.

3. This is not new doctrine. The Lord uses this two-fold strategy throughout Scripture.
 - a. The story of Moses in Exodus is a picture of the “great day” of the Lord. God’s miraculous deliverance is released for those who call on Him
 - b. The historical event of the Babylonian military invasion in 586 BC portrayed the “terrible day” of the Lord. God warred against the sin and rebellion that existed in the nation of Israel.
 - c. These two events teach us God’s principles related to both the End-Time judgment of God and the End-Time blessings of God. God considers these events as central in expressing His nature.
 - d. It is through grappling with and understanding the issues of these two historical realities that we will be more prepared to understand God’s deliverance and judgment related to the final Day of the Lord
4. Our experience of the greatness or dreadfulness of this coming Day will depend on our response.
 - a. For those who respond to God by living righteously, the coming Day will be a glorious day. Though it will include suffering and testing, it will be a day that the righteous would look forward to. The great dimension of that Day will include the outpouring of the Spirit with extraordinary signs and wonders (Joel 2:28–32).
 - b. For those who resist God, it will be a terrible day. It would be a day of destruction across the globe. The terrible dimension of the Day of the Lord speaks of God’s judgments coming upon the earth as He shakes all that can be shaken (Heb. 12:26).

D. The Great Day of the Lord

1. There is one global great Day of the Lord that happens in relation to the Second Coming of Jesus. It is characterized by a worldwide move of God.
 - a. The whole earth will be caught up and swept up into an unusual manifestation of God’s zeal for righteousness. It is a great Day because it will be the greatest demonstration of revival power in world history.
 - b. There will be heightened activity of the Holy Spirit’s blessing for the responsive Church. There will be an increase in the winds of the Spirit that the Body of Christ has never witnessed.

- c. It will far surpass the Book of Acts, the early Church and the miracles in the Book of Exodus. It will be like Acts and Exodus combined and multiplied on a global dimension!
2. The greatness of that Day will be characterized by supernatural provision, protection and guidance.
 - a. Supernatural provision (Mic. 7:15)
 - i. The greatest example in Scripture of God's extravagant provision in crisis is found in the book of the Exodus when God brought Israel out of captivity in Egypt. Exodus is a significant book to prepare the Church for the coming hour.
 - ii. It contains God's centerpiece deliverance story. He powerfully delivered His people when all the odds were against them and miraculously provided for all their needs as they journeyed through the wilderness. He caused food to fall from the sky and He brought water from a rock in the desert.
 - iii. Dynamic and supernatural provision was the norm for the Israelites. Jehovah-Jireh, the great Provider, was on magnificent display as He exhibited His kindness time and time again through His provision. The Exodus story will be our story because it really is going to happen again!
 - iv. This will be a great Day for God's people in terms of receiving supernatural provision. God will manifest His provision like He did in Exodus. In that day, we will be filled with amazement at the different ways in which the Lord provides food and water. We will be utterly astounded in that Day at just how easy it is for Him to continually provide for our needs.
 - b. Supernatural protection
 - i. Another characteristic of the greatness of the Day of the Lord is God's supernatural protection. This is commonly known as the "Goshen Principle" in the Bible. When Egypt was hit by the plagues, God did not allow His judgments to touch the place where His people lived — a place called Goshen (Ex. 8:22).
 - ii. God protected His people from the plagues He released on Egypt. Though the plagues were poured out on Egypt, among the Israelites, nobody in Goshen was sick or affected, not even their livestock. In Goshen, none of the hail or fire fell, none of the flies swarmed. The

Israelites found themselves in a pocket of mercy, a city of refuge (Ex. 9:4–26).

- iii. The same idea as the Goshen principle is seen in Scripture when the mark or seal of God is put on the saints to protect them from the wrath of God (Rev. 7:2–3; 9:4; Ezek. 9:4–6).
 - iv. Pockets of mercy refer to geographical areas where God's people will be hidden or protected from God's wrath in the End Times (Zeph. 2:3).
 - v. The Lord will apply this “Goshen Principle” again in the great Day of the Lord. He will have His geographical “Goshens” all over the earth. These cities of refuge will be strategically located and have divine protection, provision and guidance with an open heaven over them.
- c. Supernatural guidance
- i. Another mark of the greatness of the events before the Second Coming will be the supernatural guidance of the Lord.
 - ii. Jeremiah prophesies of a time when Israel will have to escape again, and that God will lead them by supplications in that day. Their prayer life will be on fire and anointed as they experience two-way communication with God. He will direct them to places of food, water and refuge (Jer. 31:9).
 - iii. Isaiah 30:21 also teaches us that we will hear the voice of God clearly. In that Day, the Lord will direct His people according to His perfect knowledge of where they will find safety and protection. We see in these promises the supernatural way He will lead His people through the maze of the global conflict at the end of the Age.
 - iv. There will be a unique kind of supernatural guidance to find food, to reconnect in relationships, to be at the right place at the right time, to escape earthquakes, to emerge unscathed from bombs and the ambushes of the enemy. He will lead us every step of the way.
- d. This will be the Church's most glorious hour in all of human history! The multiplication of food, angelic visitations and supernatural guidance will be our way of life. Signs and wonders will explode and the greatest harvest of souls will be seen. This is when the miracles of Acts and Exodus will be multiplied and combined at a global level!

E. The Terrible Day of the Lord

1. To those who say “no” to God, this coming Day of the Lord will be exceedingly terrible. It is bad news to those who do not want His leadership. The most severe divine judgment and wrath in human history will emerge on this Day.
2. If the great Day of the Lord is the greatest day of revival ever, the very terrible Day of the Lord means the most severe judgments ever. The intensity of God’s judgments will far surpass any other period in human history.
3. We must understand the distinction between divine wrath and discipline. They are two entirely different concepts.
 - a. God releases His wrath to punish rebellion. He releases His discipline to help free His sincere people who are stuck in compromise. He disciplines people who sincerely love Him.
 - b. The divine motive of wrath is punishment for persistent rebellion. The motive of divine discipline is love and redemption.
4. These two activities of God — wrath and discipline — will be manifested together with the manifestation of the demonic rage of Satan. Satan has tremendous hatred for the righteous and seeks to destroy them.
 - a. It is not easy to differentiate between the three: God’s wrath, God’s discipline and Satan’s rage. Often, they happen simultaneously and overlap to some degree even within the same crisis events. Therefore, we should not be quick in making sweeping judgments as to the reasons and causes of crises in the earth.
 - b. We can only speak about general principles: the rebellious experience God’s wrath, compromising believers come under God’s discipline and the righteous encounter Satan’s rage.
5. Different dimensions of the Terrible Day of the Lord
 - a. A divinely-appointed evil empire
 - i. One of the terrible dimensions of the Day of the Lord is that an evil empire led by the Antichrist will invade nations against their will. He will oppress the nations and seek to rule over them through military dominance and tyranny.
 - ii. God will raise up this temporary evil army that will function as a catalyst for military domination over all the nations of the earth. This will trigger a domino effect of events; nation will rise against nation (Matt. 24:7).

- iii. We do not know to what extent this empire will dominate the earth. The Bible is not detailed about this. But the Bible repeatedly uses terms like “the whole earth” to describe its influence. Thus, we know that it will have some presence and impact, whether small or large, in most nations of the earth (Dan. 7:23; Rev. 13:8).
 - b. God’s judgment through the created order
 - i. The second terrible dimension of the final Day of the Lord will be God’s manifested power in nature. Earthquakes, storms, hurricanes, drought, among others, will shake the earth.
 - ii. Also, plagues, famines and pestilences will abound as taught by Jesus in Matthew 24.
 - c. God’s judgment as a result of the fullness of the iniquity of men (Dan. 8:23)
 - i. The fullness of the sin of men will bring added crisis to the earth as a third dimension to the terrible the Day of the Lord. God will allow the seeds of wickedness to fully ripen on the earth.
 - ii. Sin will reach its highest dimensions at the End of the Age. Sin has never been fully ripe globally but in the hour of the Lord’s return, God will give the human race the opportunity to reach its fullest potential of sinfulness.
 - iii. The Church will enter into a height of radical holiness while the earth will reach heights of perversion unequalled in any time of human history. God will give the human race the chance to reach its full potential in the natural realm on both sides of righteousness.
6. The impact of the Day-of-the-Lord judgments
- a. The impact of the Day-of-the-Lord judgments is that one-third of the human population will die of unnatural deaths. In other words, their deaths will be related to encountering the judgment of God (Rev. 9:15).
 - b. The principle is that God will use the least severe means to draw the greatest number of people to Himself, at the deepest levels of love for Jesus without violating their free will. Anything of less severity would not get the job done.
 - c. All these things will work together for the good of the redeemed. When it is over, we will be in perfect agreement on how much better off we are after having experienced the difficulties (Rom. 8:28).

F. The Broad and Narrow Day of the Lord

1. The Broad Day of the Lord indicates the time from the beginning of the Great Tribulation (final three and a half years of human history) extending to the end of the Millennial Kingdom (1,000-year reign of Christ).
 - a. At the beginning of these three and a half years of human history, it will be a season of unusual and unprecedented positive and negative events.
 - b. These events will suddenly begin to escalate and heighten as the return of Jesus draws near.
2. The Narrow Day of the Lord is a one-time event pointing to the specific time where Jesus will return again in the fullness of His glory onto the earth.