

Doctrine of the Day of the Lord

The Day of the Lord in the Old Testament

1. The Day of the Lord is an expression used seventeen times in the Old Testament by eight authors over a period of at least seven centuries.

The Prophet	The Years of Public Ministry
• Isaiah	740-680 BC
• Jeremiah	627-580 BC
• Ezekiel	592- 570 BC
• Joel	cannot be dated with certainty, c. 835 BC
• Amos	c. 755 BC
• Obadiah	8 th century prophet
• Zephaniah	640-612 BC
• Zechariah	520 BC

2. If the expression in the Old Testament is isolated from its usage in historical context and is catapulted into the future then it may very well refer to one specific end time moment.
3. However, it is not unreasonable to consider the expression in association with the various judgments that God sent Israel for idolatry and rebellion. These judgments are verified by history so that it can be said that the *day of the Lord* predicted came each time it was foretold.
4. In other words, “*the day of the Lord*”, in the *Old Testament*, referred to any “*day*” the Lord came to discipline His people in righteousness.
5. Many men of prophecy communicated this concept in their message.
6. There was the message of Isaiah.
 - *Isaiah 2:12 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:*
 - *Isaiah 13:6 Howl ye; for **the day of the LORD** is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.*

- *Isaiah 13:9 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.*

Commentary. All that Isaiah predicted came to pass in 722 BC when the Northern Kingdom fell. The proud rulers of Israel were brought low; the Assyrians were an instrument of destruction from the Almighty; the lay was desolate and many sinners were destroyed. Once Israel was destroyed the prophet warned Judah of judgment, not by the Assyrians but by the Babylonians, even though this empire had not yet risen to power.

7. There was the message of Jeremiah.

- *Jeremiah 46:10 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.*

Commentary. In Jeremiah, God is presented as being very patient. He has delayed His judgment in order to appeal to the people to repent. But the people defiled God's words, refused to listen to His prophets, and so the day of vengeance came in 586 BC.

8. There was the message of Ezekiel

- *Ezekiel 13:5 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**.*
- *Ezekiel 30:3 For the day is near, even **the day of the LORD** is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen.*

Commentary. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city of Jerusalem in three stages. In 605 BC he forced the surrender of Jehoiakim and took key hostages of leading families including Daniel and his friends. Then, in 597 BC Nebuchadnezzar returned to put down the rebellion against his rule. Ten thousand hostages were carried off into captivity including Jehoiachin and Ezekiel (b. 622 BC, deported 597 BC; died 560 BC). Finally, in 586 BC, after a long siege, the Holy City was destroyed. Ezekiel prophesied among the Jewish exiles in Babylon during the last days of Judah's decline and fall. All that he predicted came to pass. The house of Israel could not stand in the day of Battle. Life was one dark and cloudy day. It was the time of the heathen.

9. There was the message of Joel. According to Joel the day of the Lord should be associated with a plague of locust on the land. Moses had warned that God would (Deut. 28:38, 42).

- *Joel 1:15 Alas for the day! For **the day of the LORD** is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come.*
- *Joel 2:1 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;*

- *Joel 2:11 And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for **the day of the LORD** is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?*
- *Joel 3:14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for **the day of the LORD** is near in the valley of decision.*

10. There was the message of Amos.

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

Commentary. Amos prophesied in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah (reigned, 767-739 BC), and in the days of Jeroboam II (reigned, 782-753 BC) the son of Joash, king of Israel. Amos anticipated the 722 BC Assyrian captivity of Israel (Amos 7:11) and the fact that the sins of the people were so great they desired as it were the day of the Lord or the day of divine visitation in judgment. And the day of the Lord came. Because Amos ministered in a time of economic prosperity and military security his prophetic voice was ignored.

11. The Message of Obadiah.

- *Obadiah 15 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.*

Commentary. The message of Obadiah was a message of destruction against Edom for its cruelty to Judah. What Obadiah predicted came to pass for “**the day of the Lord**” drew *near* and then arrived. Edom was made small among the nations and was cut off. During the rule of the Maccabees the Edomites were completely subdued and even forced to conform to Jewish laws and rites and submit to the government of Jewish prefects. The Edomites were then incorporated into the Jewish nation, and the whole province was often termed by Greek and Roman writers "Idumaea." Immediately before the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, twenty thousand Idumaeans were admitted to the Holy City, which they filled with robbery and bloodshed. From this time the Edomites, as a separate people, disappear from the pages of history. Scriptural indications that they were idolaters (2 Chron 25:14-15,20) are amply confirmed and illuminated by discoveries at Petra. (*The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*).

12. The Message of Zephaniah.

- *Zephaniah 1:7 Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord GOD: for **the day of the LORD** is at hand: for the LORD hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests.*
- *Zephaniah 1:14 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.*

Commentary. Zephaniah describes the coming day of judgment upon Judah. The holiness of God was not going to allow Judah to go unpunished. That day came though a righteous remnant did survive, also according to prophecy (Zeph. 3:9-20) to call upon the Lord with a remnant of righteous Gentiles admist much rejoicing. That remnant is called the Church today.

13. There was the message of Zechariah.

- *Zechariah 14:1 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.*

Commentary. In the Zech 14:1 passage *the day of the Lord* refers to the coming of judgment upon Judah by vindicating His justice, by punishing the wicked, and then saving His elect people (Joel 2:31; 3:14; Mal 4:1,5). And, once more, this happened.

14. There are only a few options to consider. To dismiss the “*day of the Lord*” from its historical usage as a warning of judgment and to deny its historical fulfillment means:

- God *kept* His word and the “*day of the Lord*” came as predicted with each divine visitation. Believing in a literal fulfillment of the predictive message resolves all the questions that are posed by those who either deny the historical narrative or look for future fulfillment on some level.
- God did *not* keep his word and whatever happened historically to the nations is not part of predictive prophecy.
- God *will* yet keep His word and these severe warns directly delivered to specific people in time and will have to be brought forth again on the earth for a literal fulfillment.
- There is a *dual* fulfillment of these Old Testament predictions.

15. Apart from clear New Testament statements that the “*day*” of our Lord Jesus is the same as the “*day of the Lord*” of the Old Testament it would seem to be best to consider that what God said would happen to those people He spoke did happened in a literal manner. The “*day of the Lord*” came and came again and again.

The Day of the Lord in the New Testament

1. The *Old Testament* expression “**day of the Lord**” is adopted by New Testament writers to refer to the Second Advent of Christ.
 - *1 Corinthians 5:5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in **the day of the Lord Jesus**.*
 - *2 Corinthians 1:14 As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in **the day of the Lord Jesus**.*
 - *1 Thessalonians 5:2 For yourselves know perfectly that **the day of the Lord** so cometh as a thief in the night.*
 - *2 Peter 3:10 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.*

2. At the Second Advent of Christ specific events will occur.
 - Individuals will be saved in their totality and that means that bodies will be re-united with their immortal spirits. *1 Corinthians 5:5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in **the day of the Lord Jesus**.*
 - There will be great rejoicing among the believers for one another. *2 Corinthians 1:14 As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in **the day of the Lord Jesus**.*
 - The Second Coming of Christ will come in an unexpected time which might indicate that the fascination with end time prophecy will cease and the Church will be careless on this matter or it could mean that the Lord will come suddenly and with great power whether or not there is anyone “home”. *1 Thessalonians 5:2 For yourselves know perfectly that **the day of the Lord** so cometh as a thief in the night.*
 - When Jesus comes there will be a renovation of heaven and earth. *2 Peter 3:10 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.*
 - On that “**day of the Lord Jesus**”, which is the day of His Second Advent, the saints will rise to greet the Lord in the air in order to escort the coming King to the place where He has promised to return in the same manner in which He went away (Acts 1:11; 1 Thess. 4:16ff).

3. When the Old Testament prophets are quoted in the New Testament the message is that of practical application or that of prophecy being fulfilled. For example, Amos is quoted in Matthew, Acts, and Romans.

- *Amos 4:11 I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.*

Application.

Romans 9:29 And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

- *Amos 5:25-27 Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? 26 But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves. 27 Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the LORD, whose name is The God of hosts.*

Application

Acts 7:42-43 Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness? 43 Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.

- *Amos 8:9 And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord GOD, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day:*

Application

Matthew 24:29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

- *Amos 9:11-12 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: 12 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.*

Interpretation

*Acts 15:13 And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: 14 Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. 15 **And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,** 16-18 After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: 17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith*

the Lord, who doeth all these things. 18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

4. Historically the Old Testament prophecies find fulfillment in the generations to which they applied. When the New Testament takes the Old Testament prophecies and provides an interpretation and/or an application then that is legitimate for the writers of the New Testament were under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
5. What believers cannot do is to take Old Testament passages and thrust them into the future apart from their historical fulfillment as if those today who make the application and/or interpretation are under divine influence. In other words, there is no right to go beyond what the Scriptures teach. That this freedom to find application/interpretation of Old Testament passages takes place is unfortunate.