

The day of the Lord is a time referred to as a time of both judgment and blessing, although the majority of the texts emphasize judgment. It begins immediately after the Rapture of the church and ends with the conclusion of the millennium. This day is a major theme of prophecy with its fullest exposition in Revelation 6 – 19.

I Thessalonians 5:1-2 describes it as an event (season -καιρος) scheduled yet to come and it will take place in a space of time (Χρονος). It is described in Matthew 24:21 and Mark 13:19 as a time of great tribulation consisting as the most severe time of trouble in history.

The term is used frequently in both the Old and New Testaments. Most of the Old Testament passages carry both a near and far reference – two occasions when great suffering is experienced. The near future refers to the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of God's people (Israel). The full extent of the suffering of great tribulation was not totally fulfilled in the first events. Some of the Old Testament passages also speak of a glorious day, which also was not totally fulfilled in Israel's return from captivity. Joel 2 provides a good example of this two-part prophecy.

1. Joel 2:2, 11 – It will be a day of darkness and gloominess, great and terrible. There hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it (Zephaniah 1:14, 15). From this text, this can only take place one time.
2. Joel 2:19, 2:26-27 – It will be a time when God's people will experience great satisfaction...***and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen, as they are to this very day. And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and My people shall never be ashamed. And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed.***

That glorious day will be the millennium following the period of tribulation. These prophecies have not been realized by Israel since the Babylonian captivity. A future day must exist, as God's Word will be fulfilled in every detail.

- Jeremiah 30:7 – Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it.
- Daniel 12:1 - ... and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to the same time.
- Peter's Description – I Peter 3:10
 1. It will come as a thief in the night.
 2. The heavens shall pass away with a great noise – a rushing, sizzling, crashing sound.
 3. All of the elements of the heavens and earth will be leveled.
 4. Everything will be burned. The original language uses the word ***discovered*** to indicate that the earth is completely exposed – nothing else remains.

It occurs 24 times in the Bible and the primary emphasis is on God's judgment on nations or to a future day when Jesus returns and God enacts His final judgment on humankind.

- God, full of fierce anger, destroys Babylon (Isaiah 13:6-22).
- God sends the sword to destroy Egypt – clouds and doom for the nations (Ezekiel 30:2-4).
- A battle occurs (Ezekiel 13:5).
- God destroys Judah with an invasion of locusts on this day of darkness and gloom (Joel 1:15; 2:1-3, 11, 31; 3:14-15).
- God judges Israel and sends the people into exile on this dark day (Amos 5:18-27).
- God sends destruction on the people of Judah for their unfaithfulness (Zeph. 1:4-2:3).
- God punishes Edom and other nations for their cruelty to God's people (Obad 15-18).
- God sends the prophet Elijah to prepare the hearts of parents and children before the coming of this great and dreadful day (Mal. 4:5-6).
- The nations fight against Jerusalem and plunder the city; they take half of the people into exile (Zech 14:1-2).
- God saves those who believe in Jesus I Cor. 5:4-5).
- Both darkness and salvation come (Acts 2:17-21).
- Christ returns (II Corinthians 1:14).
- It comes suddenly, like a thief in the night (Thess. 5:1 – 3; II Peter 3:10).
- God destroys the earth and everything in it, and the heavens disappear (II Peter 3:10).

Chronological Order of Prophetical Events

1. **God's Current Program:** He is taking out of the world a people for His name (Acts 15:14; I Peter 2:9, 10).
 - A. The believer's soul, following physical death, enters into the presence of Christ and is conscious (II Corinthians 5:6, 8; Philippians 1:21-23; Matthew 22:32).
 - B. The unbeliever's soul, following physical death, is imprisoned awaiting final judgment. At this phase of his suffering, there is no final opportunity to be saved (I Peter 3:19; Luke 16:23; Hebrews 9:27).
2. **The Coming of Christ For His Saints** (I Thess. 4:13-18). Christ would not have us to be ignorant of this great event. We refer to this event as the **rapture** of the church which is the taking or "catching up" of the redeemed from this world unto Christ, just prior to the seven years of great tribulation.
 - A. The dead saints will first be resurrected (I Thess. 4:16).
 - B. The living saints will then be transformed and caught up to meet our Lord in the air (I Thess. 4:17; I Cor. 15:51, 52; John 14:1-3- Translated).
3. **The Judgment Seat of Christ** is next to take place. It is here that believers will be judged on the basis of their conduct or works and rewards will be given out (II Corinthians 5:9-10; Romans 14:10-12).
 - Those whose works remain undamaged by fire will receive rewards (I Cor. 3:14).
 - Those whose works are consumed by the fire shall suffer the loss of reward, yet he himself shall be saved (I Corinthians 3:15).
4. **The Marriage Supper of the Lamb** (Revelation 19:7-9). After the church is judged, she will eternally be united to Christ in marriage (II Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:26, 27). Those who are saved are already betrothed to Christ (Romans 7:1-6).
5. **The Great Tribulation**
 - A. This period of seven years begins shortly after the rapture. During this time, God's judgment will be meted out upon the entire world for its sinfulness through the ages. Sometimes the term only refers to the last 3 ½ years of the period since the suffering experienced is far greater during that time (Matt. 24:21).
 - B. One hundred forty-four thousand Jews will begin to proclaim the name of Christ on the earth being convinced that He is the Messiah (Rev. 7:3, 4). Great multitudes from all nations will be saved (Rev. 7:14) and are referred to as the "Tribulation Saints."
 - C. The "beast" and the "false prophet" of Revelation are active during this period, as Satan knows that his opportunity against Christ is very short. The Antichrist and the False Prophet will be furious and will try to stop the incredible amount of conversions by forcing new believers to turn away from the faith. Those who trust Christ will be denied food and medicine and executions will be frequent and numerous.
 - D. While terrible judgments are taking place on the earth and many saints are being executed, there will be a different reaction taking place in heaven. The angels and the saints in heaven will join together in praise of God.
6. **The Revelation of Christ** (Second Coming) is a term used to describe the return of Christ to the earth in power and glory (Matt. 24:29, 30). This time He returns **with His saints** to bring deliverance to Israel, which is oppressed by the Antichrist, and He will rule on the earth for a period of a thousand years.
7. **The Battle of Armageddon** takes place in Israel and will bring the tribulation period to an end. God will permit Satan to gather all nations to Palestine for this great battle (Rev. 16:16; 19:11). Part of this battle will take place at the historic battle scene of Megiddo, which is well north of Jerusalem. It will finally end in Jerusalem.

- 8. Satan is Bound** for a thousand years (Rev. 20:2). He will be in a place of absolute confinement called the "bottomless pit." Thus, his work will be halted during the millennial reign. He and his angels can have no influence on the earth during this thousand-year period of time.
- 9. Judgment of the Nations:** This takes place immediately following Christ's deliverance of Israel from the Antichrist (Matt. 25:31, 32). It will be determined who should and who should not enter the millennial period.
- The word **nations** (ethnos) can also be translated **Gentiles**. God's judgment will be on an individual basis, not a national basis.
 - Everyone will be evaluated and judged on the basis their relationship to Christ and on their attitude towards the brethren in Christ (Matthew 25:40), referring to the Jewish people.
 - The **sheep** are called the **righteous** (25:37) and will enter the millennial kingdom and also life eternal (25:46). The **goats** will be sent into everlasting punishment.
- 10. Resurrection of Old Testament and Tribulation Saints:** This is referred to as the first resurrection because it refers to believers (Rev. 20:4-6). The second resurrection corresponds to the second death of Revelation 20:6, 14. Many saints will lose their lives in the Great Tribulation (Rev. 6:9). So there is a resurrection of the church age saints at the rapture, the dead tribulation saints at the end of the Tribulation Period and the dead Millennial saints at the end of that period.
- 11. The Millennium:** A period of one thousand years beginning after the judgment of the nations (Rev. 20:1-6). Christ will reign with the resurrected saints in a world of perfect righteousness and peace. This reign will fulfill all of the predictions of the Old Testament prophets who often spoke of the Messiah coming to establish His earthly kingdom during which time He would rule from the throne of David.
- 12. Satan is loosed** (Rev. 20:3, 7). For a brief time, he will be allowed to gather his own and make one final attempt to overthrow Christ (Rev. 20:7-9).
- 13. Satan's Final Doom** (Rev. 20:10): He will be cast into hell forever.
- 14. Great White Throne Judgment** (Rev. 20:11, 12): All the unsaved of all the ages will be judged according to their works and receive their sentence of eternal punishment in hell for their sin. Those in hell will not be annihilated. They will experience torment forever and ever. God's Word states that hell is a place of everlasting fire.
- 15. A New Heaven and Earth:** The present earth and heaven will be destroyed – burned up (II Pet. 3:10-13; Rev. 21:2 - 22:5). The destruction of the universe will put an eternal end to any further rebellion of mankind.
- 16. Eternity** (John 3:36): All sin, suffering, sorrow, pain and death will be gone forever (rev. 22:1-5). ***"Even so, come, Lord Jesus"*** (Rev. 22:20).

Important: The Lord Jesus Christ will either be your Savior or your judge. Your sins will either be judged in Christ or by Christ. Don't wait to trust Christ until it is too late. Judgment is a reality and it will come soon.