

WHAT IS THE DAY OF THE LORD?

E. Methods Used in this Study

E2. Perspective: The Timeline of Events

The Day of the Lord is an idiom used throughout Biblical prophecy. In our study of Revelation we find that John the apostle uses this idiom to describe where he is (or, perhaps to better state *when* he is) as he hears the voice like a trumpet. We read in Revelation 1:10,

“I was in the Spirit *on the Lord's Day*, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet”

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Zephaniah, Zechariah, and Malachi all write explicit descriptions of the Lord's Day. All of these references from the Prophets reiterate the things to come, which we read in Revelation. The Lord's Day is a well known idiom to all students of prophecy, therefore it would have been familiar to the apostle John, as well. No other day will be like it, as it is a terrible day! We learn from Zephaniah 1:14-16,

“The great *day of the Lord is near*; It is near and hastens quickly. The noise of the day of the Lord is bitter; There the mighty men shall cry out. ¹⁵That day is a day of wrath, A day of trouble and distress, A day of devastation and desolation, A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness, ¹⁶A day of trumpet and alarm Against the fortified cities And against the high towers.”

The Day of the Lord is disclosed for us in detail, in the Book of Revelation. It is the timeframe for all that is recorded of what occurs during that day in heaven, on earth, and even under the earth.

With surprising cohesiveness, all that the prophets speak of this Day of the Lord coincides with the events presented in Revelation chapters 4 through 19. With

one exception being chapter 12, in which we find a review of the major events that have occurred up to this moment, starting from the time of chapter 3 in Genesis. For, here in Revelation, we first meet the character who was foretold from the beginning: the seed of the serpentⁱ. His appearance in Revelation chapter 13 requires us to be reminded of God's word to the serpent, spoken so long ago. It is also in chapter 12 that the woman gives birth to her seed, the Messiah. Who then sits at the Father's right handⁱⁱ until the time that he is to execute vengeanceⁱⁱⁱ upon the world. Thus, God declared the end from the beginning in Genesis 3:15,

“I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; *He shall bruise your head*, And you shall bruise His heel.”

Her seed, the Messiah Jesus Christ, was bruised at the cross. Yet, he shall return to complete all of God's word. Thus, the prophecy of the two seeds will be fulfilled in Revelation 19:19-20,

“I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. ²⁰Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. *These two were cast alive into the lake of fire* burning with brimstone.”

The seed of the woman being victorious. The head of the serpent, that is his seed, being crushed.

All the events which are revealed in Revelation regarding the Day of the Lord will happen in quick succession. From the repeated descriptor, “things which must *shortly take place*^{iv},” we know that once started and the first seal is broken in chapter 6, that the pace is quickened until the events of Revelation 20:1-2,

ⁱ GEN 3:15, I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between *your seed* and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.

ⁱⁱ REV 12:5, She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And *her Child was caught up to God and His throne*.

ⁱⁱⁱ ISA 61:1-2, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, Because the Lord has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound; ²To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, And *the day of vengeance of our God*; To comfort all who mourn.

^{iv} [REV 1:1 & REV 22:6]

“I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. ²He laid hold of *the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him* for a thousand years”

The six seals in chapter 6 are followed by a digression, which constitutes chapter 7, before the seventh seal is broken. In chapter 7 we read of the 144,000 of “all the tribes of the children of Israel” sealed on their foreheads as servants of God. The last seal is marked by silence in heaven, and ushers in seven trumpets. Six of the trumpets are sounded in succession, and then are followed by another tangent. We first read of the seven thunders who utter their voices, and then the narrative gives the account of the two witnesses before concluding the last trumpet in chapter 11. Chapters 12 through 14 seem to support the summary statement given in Revelation 10:7,

“in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.”

It would be reasonable, then, that the mystery of God will be finished during the time of the seventh trumpet. This would include end of Mystery Babylon.

Some events during this timeframe seem to occur simultaneously. However, when such simultaneous events occur, we find them in subsequent chapters. To portray this time overlap in our current vernacular, we might separate the chapters using the term, *meanwhile*. In order not to break up the flow of the narrative in chapters 13 through 16, the fall of Babylon is mentioned in Revelation 14:6-8,

“I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people ⁷saying with a loud voice, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.” ⁸And another angel followed, saying, “*Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.*”

We find the details of this event are then presented in the subsequent chapters 17 and 18. One key to understanding this timeline overlap comes at the end of the vial judgments, in Revelation 16:17-19,

“the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" ¹⁸And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. ¹⁹Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And *great Babylon was remembered before God*, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.”

Thus, we can connect the timeline from chapter 14 to the details given later in Revelation 18:1-3,

“these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. ²And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "*Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!*" ³For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.”

The events occurring simultaneously may cause some confusion, and so it is not the most important detail for us to notice. Instead, the overall significance is that these events will occur, with precise detail, just as God’s word declares.

God’s word declares that these things we study in Revelation will soon come to pass. This book of prophecy is for us, and for our time. For, as we learn in Revelation 22:10,

“he said to me, "Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for *the time is at hand.*”

The time has been close for nearly 2,000 years. Only God’s mercy has afforded us the amount of time we have before judgment. During our time together, we should strive to learn of Him, to grow in our knowledge of the Most High through His word, by His actions, and by following His Son. For, Jesus has imparted this prophecy to

us, not in vain that we should perish, but to bring us closer to Him. Just as we read in Joel 2:12-13,

“Now, therefore," says the Lord, "Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." ¹³So rend your heart, and not your garments; *Return to the Lord your God*, For He is gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm”

No one knows the time^v that the Day of the Lord shall begin. Yet, if we are diligent in our study of Revelation, trusting in the Lord with all our hearts, and keeping the words of His prophecy^{vi}, we will not be caught unaware when He returns^{vii}.

^v MARK 13:31-33, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. ³²"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³"Take heed, watch and pray; for *you do not know when the time is*.

^{vi} REV 1:3, Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and *keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near*.

^{vii} LUKE 12:35-37, Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning; ³⁶"and you yourselves *be like men who wait for their master*, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. ³⁷"Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them.