

Last Day Events

Christ as He is, as He desires to be to you, the Way, the Truth, and the Life! Accept the everlasting gospel, and be saved eternally in God's own way.

03. The Day Of The Lord

Its Character and Proximity

THERE is a prominence given in the Scriptures to the day of the Lord second to no other period. The Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament repeatedly refer to that great day, and the New Testament is by no means silent on the subject. But, as with all other important Bible subjects, there is a wide diversity of opinion in the Christian world in regard to the character, length, and scope of the great day of the Lord, as well as to its relation to man.

Where Satan cannot hide from the professed people of God the importance of a subject, he will divide their ranks concerning that subject. He will move upon men who have pet theories to support, to connect those theories with the truth of God in such a way that, to the uninstructed, the truth seems to be dependent on the false theory, and it is accepted as truth; just as men persuade themselves that evil is good, in order that they may accomplish a certain purpose which seems good.

The doctrine of the day of the Lord has suffered in this way. It has been made to do service to the temporal-millennium theory and to the age to come doctrine. The theory obtained that somehow the whole world is to be converted before Christ comes, or there is to be a new probation granted to men. They do not see it accomplished here, and, therefore, think that it must be in the day of the Lord. Thus they reason; and we would that it were true that the majority would be saved; but we cannot deny the words of our Savior that few comparatively enter the way of life, while many go in the way of destruction.

What Is Its Character?

In the consideration of this question we shall deal only with the clear and positive evidences of the Word of God. There are many scriptures which refer to the day of the Lord, or to events in that day "which are hard to be understood." These must be interpreted in harmony with the clear and positive declarations which God' has given. In these obscure passages we often find events of the day of the Lord mingled with others which occur in probation; but, because of the close connection, some ascribe them all to the day of the Lord, contrary to the express statements of other passages. The fact is lost sight of that events far apart are sometimes spoken of in the same connection. An example of this is found in Isaiah 61:2. The mission of Christ was to proclaim "the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God." He did the first at His first advent (Luke 4: 18, 19, 21); the second will be fulfilled by His people prior to His Second Advent. Revelation 14:6-12. Sometimes the prophet saw for his own day God's judgments, severe, though mixed with mercy, and his mind was carried forward to that great day of wrath when the judgment of God would be executed without mercy. We must "rightly divide" such scriptures by comparing them with the plain and unequivocal.

Is it a day of peace and safety and mercy? Is it an accepted time, a day of salvation? It would seem that this must indeed be the case if it is true that in this day the great majority, at least, of the inhabitants of earth are to be converted. But it is not what we may believe, dear reader, that will decide this question. What does the Bible say? It is there alone that we learn that there is such a period, and it is therefore evident that from the Bible alone we can learn its character. That it is not a day of peace, safety, and mercy to the inhabitants of earth, in which man may enter upon a new probation, is evident from the following considerations:

1. It is nowhere represented in the Bible that a new probation will be given to man. No direct proof has ever been produced in support of the theory. The best arguments have been unwarranted inferences, sophistries, or appeals to man's selfish nature. On the other hand, the Word of Inspiration declares that the present is the time to seek salvation. "For He said, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have succored thee; behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." 2 Corinthians 6:1. "Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." Hebrews 3: 7, 15; Psalm 95: 7.

2. The positive testimony of the Bible concerning that great day. We have space for only a small portion of what is said in regard to its character. A part of the testimony of "the gospel prophet" is as follows: "Howl you; for the day of the Lord is at hand, it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.

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Therefore shall all souls be faint, and every man's heart shall melt; and they shall be afraid; pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain: As a woman that travails; they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames. Behold, the day of the Lord comes, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir, Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of His fierce anger." Isaiah 13:6-13.

There can be no mistaking this language. It is "the, day of the Lord" that is referred to; the prophecy applies to that time when it is near at hand. It comes not as salvation, but as "destruction." It will not cause joy, but fear and faintness; for that day shall be cruel both with wrath and fierce anger to lay the land desolate, and the sinners shall be destroyed. The world will be punished for evil, and the wicked for iniquity. The whole passage indicates the character of the day of the Lord in language too plain to be misunderstood.

But it is said that this refers to the land of Israel, which shall be made "desolate;" and, further, that "the day of the Lord" does not always refer to the great day of God. While we would not contend for a moment that the prophecies of "the day of the Lord" had exclusive reference to the great day of God, that day is always included. The day of God's providential judgments upon lands and nations are only figures of the last final judgment, where the promised wrath will be poured out to the uttermost. The word translated "land" in Isaiah 13:9 is *erets*, the same that is translated "world" in Psalm 22:27; Isaiah 23:17; and Jeremiah 25:26; it is translated "earth" in Genesis 1:1, 2, 10, 11, 12, and in more than six hundred other places. That it refers to the earth in Isaiah 13:9 is also evident from verse 11. The same day is referred to in Isaiah 2:10-21, and chapter 24.

Isaiah certainly represents the day of the Lord as a day of wrath; but let us hear the testimony of another prophet:

"The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hastens greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord; the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasting and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord; and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy; for He shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land." Zephaniah 1:14-18.

The above language is much more terrible than that of Isaiah. It is so explicit; it is "the great day of the Lord." And how clearly is its character revealed by such terms as wrath, trouble, distress, wasting desolation, darkness, gloominess, and alarm! Those who have sinned shall be destroyed, and no earthly ransom or power can save them; for "the whole land [earth, *erets*] shall be devoured," and "speedy riddance" will be made of all who dwell in the land [*erets*]. The earth-dwellers are the wicked. Luke 21:35.

One more testimony in regard to the character of the day of the Lord, and that from the New Testament. "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 Peter 3: 10.

In this passage the same character is given as in the prophets. It was given by the same Spirit. In that day, says the Lord, the atmospheric heavens will pass away, be rolled together like a scroll (Revelation 6: 14), the earth shall be melted, and all that is marred by sin will be burned up. In the seventh verse of the same chapter, Peter calls it the day of judgment and perdition (utter destruction) of ungodly men.

Certainly this is sufficient to establish its character. All other testimony is in harmony with these quoted. They surely do not represent the day of the Lord as something to be desired by the inhabitants of earth. Yet it is to this that many are looking as a time of deliverance; but they will look for deliverance from earthly ills, and will meet greater ills; they will look for peace and find tumult.

In view of the scriptural testimony regarding the character of that day, and these erroneous ideas now prevalent concerning it, we can realize the force of the scripture:

"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. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and

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leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?" Amos 5: 18-20.

In "that day" there is no hope for the sinner; and he who solaces himself with refuge then, will, like the one who seeks shelter in the house and support against its wall, find a greater evil than he fled from. "Behold, NOW is the accepted time; behold, NOW is the day of salvation."

When Does The Day Of The Lord Begin?

What we have learned concerning its character will help us very much to determine its beginning. It is a day "cruel both with wrath and fierce anger" (Isaiah 13); a day when "the loftiness of man shall be bowed down," and "the Lord alone shall be exalted" (Isaiah 2); a day of "wrath," "trouble," "distress," "wasting and, desolation," "darkness and gloominess" (Zephaniah 1:15); "the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." 2 Peter 3: 7. All this is spoken of the day of the Lord and its connection with this earth; for it is to the earth that the wrath, the gloominess, the darkness, comes. The judgment is the judgment of the world, which is to be punished for its iniquity.

When does this terrible period begin? We will not discuss the opinions which declare that it has already begun, or that it will begin at the second coming of Christ. Where in the divine plan does it begin, as shown in the Word of God? The true theory will prove the falsity of all others.

1. We have in several scriptures a number of signs given which will precede and usher in the second coming of Christ. These passages are Matthew 24:29, 30; Mark 13:24-26; Luke 21:25-27; Revelation 6:13-17; Joel 2:30, 31; and Joel 3:13-16. It will be seen that the same signs are mentioned in the same order. Isaiah 13:13 and 2: 17.21 also speak of the snaring of the earth. See also Hebrews 12: 26.

2. In that day of the Lord there will be no mercy offered to mankind. It is the great day of God's wrath. Men will be blinded by distress because they have sinned; "their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung," and no ransom which they can make, no defense which they can prepare, will be able to save them. Zephaniah 1: 14-18. The only defense against that day-a refuge in the God of heaven-is not theirs. Men will- no longer flee to the Rock of Ages for defense; they realize that the time is past; and in despair the mightiest men cry to the rocks and mountains to hide them from "the face of Him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Revelation 6: 15-17.

3. A warning message is given to the inhabitants of earth, when that day is near at hand, that they may turn from their sins, seek God, and live. "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He reveals His secret unto His servants the prophets." Amos 3:7. This has ever been God's plan. He warned the antediluvian world, the Sodomites, the Jewish nation. He will warn the world through His prophets of that most terrible visitation of wrath-the day of God. Daniel 12:1.

One scripture which contains this warning is Joel 2:1, which reads: "Blow you the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain; let all the inhabitants of the land [erets, earth] tremble; for the day of the Lord comes, for it is nigh at hand." Injunctions to seek God are given. People are told to rend their hearts, and not their garments; the ministers of the Lord are told to pray and weep for their flocks. Certainly, no such language as this would be used if there was more abundant mercy to be found in that great day.

4. The message will be based on signs. In Joel 2:30, 31 the signs which will precede that day are mentioned; namely, signs in the heavens, and especially the darkening of the sun and moon. The day of the Lord does not begin with these signs, for mercy is offered after these signs occur. The next verse says, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered." These signs are an evidence of the mercy of the Lord. They are given 'to verify God's holy Word, and as a warning to men to flee from the wrath to come.

The darkening of the sun and moon, and the falling of the stars mentioned in the same connection in other passages, are in the past. The former occurred May 19, 1780, and the latter November 13, 1833. The darkening of the former was not the result of an eclipse; its "true cause," as remarked in Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, "is unknown." The meteoric shower of November 13, 1833, was the most remarkable ever known, and met in every respect the specifications of the prophecy. They fell as a fig-tree casts her untimely figs, coming from a common centre, and flying, as if shaken off a tree (see Revelation 6:13); and it would seem to an observer that the very stars had left their orbit and withdrawn their shining. Joel 3:15.

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5. The next event in order is the shaking of the powers of the heavens. Matthew 24:29. That which causes this shaking is the voice of Jehovah. Joel 3:16; Hebrews 12:26. But this shaking does not precede the beginning of the day of the Lord; it occurs in that day. See Isaiah 2:17-19. Then, as the darkening of the sun and moon and falling of the stars are in the past when the day of God's wrath begins, and as the shaking of the heavens and earth occurs in that day, we are forced to the conclusion that its beginning lies between the falling of the stars and the shaking of the powers of heaven. But as the falling of the stars is in the past, the next event in order, as marked by these prophecies, is the great day of God's wrath.

6. Judicial wrath, or punishment, implies investigation of the lives of those upon whom this wrath falls. It is for this reason that, in the warning message given the people of earth, the Lord reveals that His judgment is come. This message is found in Revelation 14: 6-11. The first part includes all practical truth to which men are enjoined to turn; "for the hour of His (God's) judgment is come." That this is not the executive judgment is evident from the following messages, which show that mercy is still offered after the first angel proclaims the judgment come.

This judgment was future in Paul's day. Acts 17:31; 24:25. It "is come" when the threefold message of Revelation 14 is due to the world, just before God's wrath unmixed with mercy is poured out, before Christ comes. Verses 10, 14. This judgment is to ascertain who among the inhabitants of earth-dead or alive are worthy of a resurrection to eternal life, or translation, at the coming of Christ. Those who are "accounted worthy" among the dead will then be raised (Luke 20: 35), while those who are accounted worthy among the living will be changed in a moment, at the sound of the last trump. 1 Corinthians 15: 51, 52. The fact that the dead are raised incorruptible is proof that their cases have been decided before. This judgment goes on in the courts of heaven, while the last message, based on the prophetic Word of God, is being heralded to the world to prepare men for the decisions of that dreaded tribunal.

After judicial investigation comes the sentence of the judge. And so it is in the heavenly court. The close of the investigative judgment marks the close of probation, just before Christ comes. It is thus noted: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly [to execute judgment]; and My reward is with Me to give to every man according as his work shall be." Revelation 22: 11, 12. This decree, therefore, closes probation. We will refer to it again.

7. The threefold message of Revelation 14, as before noticed, warns us against the unmixed wrath of God; that is, -wrath unmixed with mercy. The cup now in the hand of the Lord is mixed with mercy, full of that mixture-mercy is abundant; but the wrath of Revelation 14: 11 will be the dregs of the cup in Psalm 75: 8. Probation will then be closed; the decree will have gone forth. This wrath of Revelation 14:11, is manifested in the seven last plagues; "for in them is filled up the wrath of God." Revelation 15:1. This pouring out of the plagues must therefore usher in the great day of God's wrath, a day in which there is no light and mercy, but all is darkness and distress. Amos 5: 18; Zephaniah 1:15.

The following facts of Scripture confirm the above conclusion. We have seen that the day of the Lord begins after the falling of the stars, and before the shaking of the heavens and the earth; but this shaking occurs under the seventh plague. This plague is therefore in the day of the Lord. Under the sixth and seventh plagues is the great battle of Armageddon fought. Revelation 16:14-16. But this battle also comes in the day of the Lord (Ezekiel 13:5); therefore the sixth plague is in the day of the Lord; and what is true of one of these plagues in this respect is doubtless true of all.

8. One more evidence that the great day of God's wrath begins at the close of probation. In Zephaniah 1: 14-18 is the terrible announcement of the nearness of the day of the Lord, and a description of its character. The following verses (chapter 2: 1-3) contain an appeal to the people of God to be ready for that time: "Gather yourselves together, yes, gather together, O nation not desired; before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, before the day of the Lord's anger come upon you. Seek you the Lord all you meek of the earth, which have wrought His judgments; seek righteousness, seek meekness; it may be you shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger."

Notice the expression as regards the time indicated in the preposition "before." "Before the decree bring forth; that is, the decree which marks the close of probation. Revelation 22: 11, 12. If this be not so, then there is no force in the appeal; for they could seek God after the going forth of the decree. That decree shuts out all opportunity of effectually seeking God. "Before the day pass as, the chaff; that is, the day of salvation." "Now is the accepted time;" "now is the day of salvation." 2 Corinthians 6:2. Then will be the day of wrath. He who regarded neither would treat God's time of mercy as worthless as chaff till it was too late.

Boothroyd translates: "Before the decree be executed, and you are as the chaff that passes." Those

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who regard not the warning would be found among the unjust who would remain unjust, and in the day of wrath be like the chaff-burned with unquenchable fire. Matthew 3:12.

Another evidence right in this line is found in the second chapter of Daniel, where the kingdoms of earth are symbolized by the gold, silver, brass, iron, and clay of the great image. These are smitten by the stone, representing Christ and His kingdom, and become as chaff of the summer threshing floor, which the wind carries away that no place is found for them. Verse 35.

“Before the day of the Lord’s [fierce] anger come upon you.” God’s fierce anger is unmixed wrath. When, therefore, the day of probation and salvation closes, the day of executive judgment and perdition of ungodly men, the day of God’s wrath, the great day of the Lord, begins. The day of wrath begins when the day of salvation ends. We do not know how this could be plainer.

We have learned, then, thus far in our investigations, from the clear testimony of Scripture, (1) that the day of the Lord is a day of executive judgment, when God’s just wrath will be poured out upon a wicked world; (2) that that day begins when the day of probation closes, when the plagues begin to be poured out, when the decree goes forth which fixes irrevocably the destinies of all men, before Christ comes.

It will not be heralded by shout and trumpet; it will come as a thief in the night. 2 Peter 3: 10. The careless, wicked world will laugh and curse on till overtaken by the plagues of wrath. The righteous, with loins girded and lights burning, will be sealed for eternity. The following facts concerning the day of the Lord have thus far been proved:

1. That it is the great day of God’s wrath upon this earth; that in it there will be no mercy for sinful man; that, instead of affording hope for the sinner, it affords no hope whatever.

2. That the day of the Lord will begin with the close of probation, a short time before the coming of Christ: The decree of Heaven which marks its beginning is: “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me to give every man according as his work shall be.” Revelation 22:11, 12.

3. A warning message will precede this fearful period, entreating men to flee from the wrath to come, and find refuge in the truth of God.

Fellow-sinner, cold-hearted Christian, God has given these messages for you. You may hide from His wrath beneath the shelter of His wings. Psalm 91. Heed the “sure word of prophecy.” “Turn you from your evil ways; for why will you die?” Now IS THE ACCEPTED TIME.

“Turn you, turn you from your evil ways; for why will you die?” The Creator of the universe invites you. “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” All things holy, and good, and enduring say, Come. The city of God invites us; the earth, when “there shall be no more curse,” unites in the call. Through Christ, all is yours. The day of wrath draws on apace.

04. The Hour of His Judgment Is Come

God’s Dwelling Place

GOD desires all men to be saved. His plans for our welfare, are sufficiently comprehensive to include the worst of sinners and the most degraded. Everyone who complies with the conditions of salvation will ultimately participate in the consummation of God’s promises.

That His plans for the redemption of man shall come within the limits of human intelligence, Jehovah has caused them to be written large in types and made plain in figures. So easy to understand are they that wayfaring men, though simple; need not err concerning them.

When the children of Israel were delivered from bondage they had been for centuries under the influence of the sensuous religion of Egypt, a religion that appealed to the sight and touch more than to the heart and mind. In the wilderness their conceptions of Jehovah and His requirements entirely failed. He designed to dwell in their hearts; they were to be God’s temple. For this purpose He had called them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. If they had believed they would have required no material sanctuary, in their midst. God would have dwelt with them as He did with Abraham. But because they refused to understand, were too high-minded, too self-sufficient, to give place to God that He might dwell in them, controlling every, thought and act (for God dwells with the lowly)-because they refused to let Him