

## 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.

<b>The Prophet</b>	<b>The Years of Public Ministry</b>
• 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 <sup>th</sup> 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 land 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 defied 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. 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 bring a plague to the land (Deuteronomy 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 5:20 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 Chronicles 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 Zechariah 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.
- 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 did happen in a literal manner. The “*day of the Lord*” came and came again and again.