

Session 2 The Day of the Lord

I. THE DAY-OF-THE-LORD THEME OF THE BOOK OF JOEL

¹⁵*For the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as destruction from the Almighty. (Joel 1:15)*

¹*Blow the trumpet in Zion...for the day of the LORD is coming, for it is at hand. (Joel 2:1)*

¹¹*For the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; who can endure it? (Joel 2:11)*

³¹*The coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. (Joel 2:31)*

¹⁴*For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. (Joel 3:14)*

- A. The primary theme of the book of Joel is the “*day of the Lord*,” which is mentioned four times (Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14).
- B. The Day of the Lord is a significant timing indicator in understanding the structure of the book of Revelation and the timeline of end-time activity.

II. DEFINITION OF THE DAY OF THE LORD

- A. One of the prominent themes in the Old and New Testament prophets is the Day of the Lord. It is also referred to as “*that day*” or “*the great day*.” The phrase “Day of the Lord” or phrases that speak of it, such as “the Day” or “the great Day,” are found in Scripture nearly 100 times. These phrases are in the Old Testament approximately 80 times.
- B. It is “His Day” because He displays His sovereign leadership for all to see. In showing His power and wisdom in an unusual way, it is *His day*, and thus, “The Day of the Lord.” God’s normal mode of leadership over the earth is to patiently restrain His greater judgments against sin (2 Pet. 3:9; Eccl. 8:11). Rarely has God altered His usual mode of operation by breaking into the natural realm to confront rebellion openly on a large scale. These open demonstrations of His zeal are seen in both revival and the release of the judgments of God.
- C. The Day of the Lord is a *very unique* period of time in history when God’s blessing and judgments are openly manifest in an exceptional way. It speaks of a special time when God’s blessings or judgments are actively poured out in a heightened way. He displays His power over that which persists in opposing Him. He manifests His zeal in calling nations to account for rebellion against Him, and He visits His people with unusual Holy Spirit power and blessing.
- D. This day indicates a unique time frame *when God acts with unusual manifestations of power for His people and against His enemies*. This is a time when God manifests Himself as the Warrior-King going to war against sin, as He decisively intervenes against His enemy. The Warrior-King openly battles against oppressors of His people as He delivers and vindicates them.

- E. For the primary passages in the Old and New Testaments, see Isa. 2:10-22; 4:1-6; 11:1-15; 13:6-9; Ezek. 13:5; 30:3; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14; Amos 5:18-20; Obad. 15; Zeph. 1:7, 12, 14-18, 20; Zech. 14:1-4; Mal. 4:5; 1 Thes. 5:2-3; 2 Thes. 2:2-3; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 6:17.

III. THE TWOFOLD NATURE OF “GOD’S DAY”: GREAT AND TERRIBLE

¹*For the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; who can endure it? (Joel 2:11)*

⁵*“I will send you Elijah...before... the great and dreadful day of the LORD.” (Mal. 4:5)*

- A. The twofold nature of the day of the Lord is that it is both great in power and blessing for the redeemed and terrible in judgment for those who persist in rebellion. Isaiah refers to this time as the acceptable year or the year of favor (NIV) and the day of vengeance (Isa. 61:2). It is a “year” of favor, speaking of an extended period of time and a “day” of vengeance or a very short time.

²*“To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God.” (Isa. 61:2)*

- B. ***Great Day***: To the redeemed it will be the time of the greatest manifestation of the power of God ever seen in history. It will include supernatural provision, direction (Ps. 91; Jer. 31:9), and protection (Goshen principle of Ex. 8:22-23; 9:4, 6, 26). The miracles seen in the book of Acts and the book of Exodus will be combined and multiplied on a global scale. The “great” aspect of that Day will include the outpouring of the Spirit with extraordinary miracles (Joel 2:28-32).
- C. ***Very Terrible Day***: To the rebellious it will be the most severe time of God’s judgments ever seen in history (Rev. 6-20). The “terrible” dimension of the Day of the Lord speaks of judgments against the Antichrist’s empire in the seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments (Rev. 6; 8-9; 16-19).
- D. Through Scripture, God appealed often to two Old Testament events to illustrate the two aspects of the activities of the Day of the Lord. The story of ***Moses in Exodus*** is a picture of the “great” aspect with God’s miraculous deliverance for those who call on Him. The ***Babylonian military invasion in 586 BC*** portrays the “terrible” aspects of judgment against persistent rebellion. These two examples teach the primary principles related to the end-time judgment and blessing.
1. ***Positive***: The book of Exodus gives insight into the miracles that will be released when God delivers end-time Israel as they repent.
 2. ***Negative***: The Babylonian invasion gives us insight into the judgment on end-time Israel as they persist in rebellion and refuse to receive God’s mercy.
 3. Repeatedly, Scripture speaks of these events, as if to say, “Let the deliverance that God released through Moses show you His delivering power, and let the Babylonian invasion make known His zeal to confront persistent rebellion.” By understanding these, we better understand God’s deliverance and judgment related to the final Day of the Lord.

IV. EXPRESSIONS OF THE DAY OF THE LORD IN HISTORY: GLOBAL AND LOCAL SCALE

- A. **Global and ultimate Day:** It occurs only once and is related to Jesus' return (Joel 2:18-3:21).
- B. **Local and lesser day:** It occurs various times throughout history (Joel 1:1-2:11).
- C. Some Old Testament times of judgment are called the "day of the Lord." These days point to a future Day at the end of the age when similar judgments will be released with greater intensity.
- D. The positive aspects of the final Day of the Lord will be seen in the great end-time revival and Jesus' millennial kingdom.
- E. The Old Testament prophets teach us that some of the "day of the Lord" periods in Israel's history picture the final and ultimate Day of the Lord, which involves worldwide revival and judgments at the end of the age. "Lesser days," like the locust plague, followed by the Babylonian invasion (Joel 1-2), are prophetic foreshadows of the future Day at the end of the age (Joel 2:31).
- F. Israel's end-time crisis at the hand of the Antichrist will exceed the previous military conflicts in their history. This military invasion will far surpass the Babylonian devastation of Joel 2:1-9.
¹Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, and your spoil will be divided in your midst. ²For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken... (Zech. 14:1-2)
- G. In God's divine strategy, a global conflict will mount alongside a tremendous outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The worst days and the best days for planet earth are coming in the future.

V. THREE "DAYS OF THE LORD" IN THE BOOK OF JOEL

- A. We see three "days of the Lord" in the book of Joel. First, in Joel 1, we see the agricultural crisis (Joel 1:15). Second, in Joel 2, we see the Babylonian military invasion of Israel (Joel 2:1, 11). Third, in Joel 3, we see God's blessing on Israel and judgment on the Antichrist's empire (Joel 2:31; 3:14).
- B. There is a progression of judgment in the book of Joel involving three different time frames referred to as the Day of the Lord. These three "days" were each associated with a catastrophe.
 - 1. The first day of the Lord involved an **agricultural crisis** caused by a locust plague (Joel 1:4-12), accompanied by a drought (Joel 1:16-20) and raging fires (Joel 1:19-20).
 - 2. The second day of the Lord was a **military crisis**. The Babylonian army invaded Israel (Joel 1:1-2:9).
 - 3. The third day of the Lord pointed to God's activity at the **end of the age** (Joel 2:18-3:21). This Day of the Lord crisis is seen in the book of Revelation (Rev. 6:17).
 - 4. All three day-of-the-Lord descriptions must be studied together to get a complete picture.

- C. The crisis in Joel’s day became progressively worse. The agricultural crisis (Joel 1:1-19) was followed by a military crisis (Joel 2:1-9). This agricultural devastation brought Israel to the brink of starvation as four waves of locusts destroyed Israel’s food. As the people and animals died, disease broke out. The entire population was threatened. The locust plague crisis probably lasted three to five years (Joel 1:15; 2:25a).
1. As the negative impact of the agricultural locust plague was passing, the word of the Lord came again to Joel. This time God spoke about a coming Babylonian military invasion. This was far more severe than the agricultural conflict. The locust plague was still fresh in everyone’s mind because the negative effects were still felt in the land.
 2. It was at this time that Joel called the people to a solemn assembly of prayer with fasting (Joel 1:14). Why did it come in three stages? God wanted to give Israel time to repent before the next invasion came. Why? Because repentance could minimize some of the lingering fallout from the agricultural crisis, as well as stop the coming military invasion.
 3. Israel did not repent. Joel may have prophesied about this for ten to twenty years before it began. God’s judgments sometimes gradually intensify, so as to give those who persist in rebellion the opportunity to repent before the next wave of judgment comes.
- D. In Joel 1, the prophet gave an account of the three dimensions of natural disaster that had come upon Israel: the locust invasion (Joel 1:4), drought (Joel 1:17-20), and raging fires that followed the drought (Joel 1:19-20). All of Israel’s life resources were being threatened by this crisis.
1. They assumed their current disaster would soon pass. Yet Joel cries out, in essence, “No! It is going to get much worse!”
 2. God sent Joel to these confused people to give them understanding as to why the crisis was increasing, from the absence of wine and oil to ruined grain, to the land being withered, and to the despondency of the people. He said that the calamities would increase *until* God’s desired effect occurred—seeking God with all their heart (Joel 2:12).
- E. The second day of the Lord that Joel prophesied was the Babylonian invasion (Joel 2:1-9). The Babylonians deported many of the Jewish population to Babylon to be put into work camps.
1. The locust crisis lasted a few years, yet the Babylonian crisis lasted 70 years (Jer. 25:9-14; 29:10).
 2. The Babylonian military invasion came in three different waves or attacks (606, 597, and 586 BC) over 20 years. That “day” was a *20-year* military crisis in which God judged Israel’s persistent rebellion.

VI. WE STUDY THE LESSER DAYS OF THE LORD TO UNDERSTAND THE GREAT DAY

- A. Each of these three distinct days reaches a greater intensity of judgment and/or blessing, and portrays different expressions of the final Day of the Lord. All three must be studied together to get the complete picture.
- B. The various “local and lesser days of the Lord” teach us of the one “global and ultimate Day.”
- C. The judgments in the “lesser days” teach us about God’s mercy. These lesser days “document” God’s zeal in history against oppression and rebellion and His willingness to show mercy. The history of revivals is a record of God breaking in when His people repent with prayer and fasting.
- D. As we study the lesser days of the Lord in history, we gain insight into the final Day of the Lord. He has not left us unaware of His ways. He does not leave us guessing what response He wants in order to grant favor. History tells the story. What He has done in the past, He will do again.
- E. During times of judgment, many are filled with fear and confusion, asking: “What? Who? When? And, where? Where is God? What are we supposed to do? What is going on?” We do not need to be confused, because we have a record in Scripture of what God wants in times of judgment.
- F. God never changes. Therefore, His way of relating with His people is clear in Scripture.

VII. WORLD WAR II IS A SIGNIFICANT LESSER DAY OF THE LORD

- A. Israel has experienced several great crises of divine discipline in history, constituting a day-of-the-Lord judgment. In 70 AD, the Roman army brutally invaded Israel and destroyed Jerusalem.
- B. The trauma of World War II gives insight into some of the horrors of the final Day of the Lord.
- C. Nazi Germany’s invasion of various European nations gives insight into the Antichrist’s military invasions. In January 1933, Adolf Hitler came to power.
 - 1. Most Germans were not alarmed as to the evil that Hitler was capable of. Six years after he came to power, he started World War II by invading Poland (Sept. 1, 1939). At that time, no one imagined that within another six years **50 million human beings would die**.
 - 2. What happened would have been unthinkable only a few short years before World War II started. It was inconceivable that Germany, one of the most cultured nations, would set into motion a military crisis that resulted in an unprecedented death toll.
- D. What suddenly happened in World War II serves as a warning of how quickly something of such magnitude can unfold. The horrors that drastically affected much of Europe and Asia in the 1940s give us insight into the crisis that will touch the entire earth before Jesus’ second coming.
- E. The Holocaust also proves that anti-Semitism can suddenly escalate and spread across nations.

- F. The Church of our day is as disconnected with the reality that a great shaking is coming as the people of Europe were just before the horrors of Nazi Germany began.

VIII. THE TWO-DIMENSIONAL DAY OF THE LORD: NARROW AND BROAD

- A. The end-of-the-age Day of the Lord is both a one-time event when Jesus enters Jerusalem to be crowned King, as well as a series of events starting with the Great Tribulation and extending for the 1,000 years of the millennial kingdom.
- B. ***Narrow Day of the Lord***: Refers to the 24-hour day when Jesus returns to Jerusalem.
- C. ***Broad Day of the Lord***: Refers to the period when God’s blessings and judgments are released across the earth in an exceptional way. The broad Day of the Lord continues for about 1,000 years, beginning with the Great Tribulation and continuing until the end of the Millennium.
1. It begins in the middle of Daniel’s 70th week at the first seal and includes the blessing and judgment events of the Great Tribulation. It includes the second coming and the judgment of the Gentile nations (Mt. 25:31-46), and continues through the millennial reign of Jesus for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1-6).
 2. It also includes God’s judgment on the final revolt of the nations at the end of the Millennium (Rev. 20:7-9) and the cleansing of the present heavens and earth with fervent heat (Isa. 65:17-19; 66:22; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1).
- D. The analogy of a natural day is helpful, as it begins in the night, followed by hours of darkness before the morning light finally dawns. So the Day of the Lord has 3½ years of darkness before the “millennial light of day” breaks forth at the second coming.

IX. THE SECOND COMING: WINDS BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER A GREAT HURRICANE

- A. Daniel saw the activity of God shifting things in the nations like winds stirring on the sea.
²Daniel spoke, saying, “I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. ³And four great beasts came up from the sea.” (Dan. 7:2-3)
- B. Many events surrounding Jesus’ second coming—before, during, and after—are involved in the Day of the Lord. Think of a great hurricane out at sea that is approaching the coastlands. Imagine that it has 200 mph winds surrounding the center of the storm. The winds will increase and affect the coastland long before the fullness of the eye of the storm reaches land. Think of the center of the storm as the second coming of Jesus.
- C. The winds of judgment and blessing will increase greatly before Jesus’ return, just as the winds of a hurricane precede the center of the storm that is still out at sea.
- D. There will be a progressive intensity of events, both good and bad. As the winds are on both sides of the center of the storm, so God’s winds of blessing and judgment will be on both sides of Jesus’ coming. The winds will be discernable before and after Jesus returns.

- E. I believe we are at the beginning of the beginning. We still have time to seek God and to go deep in revelation. In my opinion, ***we are in the early days of the generation in which Jesus will return.*** I believe that there are people alive today who will see the return of Jesus. It may be the twenty-year-olds or the two-year-olds who see it; I do not know with certainty. No one knows this with absolute certainty. This is by God's design because He wants us to move forward by faith as we search the Word and live in deep connection and relationship with Him through the Spirit.
- F. The winds preceding the Lord's appearing will cause a great shaking of all things.
²⁶***"Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven." (Heb. 12:26)***
- G. There will be a great disruption in the nations just before and immediately after Jesus' appearing. Some nations will be eliminated as Jesus, the King of kings, sets the nations in order. Many geographic changes will occur before and after He returns. The key positive and negative events surrounding Jesus' coming—before, during, and after—are all a part of the Day of the Lord.

X. DAY OF THE LORD: PARTIAL, SUBSTANTIAL, AND ULTIMATE

- A. ***Partial:*** Seen in various times in history, like in Joel's generation.
- B. ***Substantial:*** Seen in the Great Tribulation, which initiates the final Day-of-the-Lord judgments.
- C. ***Ultimate:*** Seen in the great white throne judgments, which end the final Day of the Lord.

XI. THE FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLE: "LIKE KIND, BUT LESSER DEGREE"

- A. Joel described the blessing and judgment of the Day of the Lord as it relates to Israel. It is important to understand this because of the principle that I call ***"like kind, but lesser degree."***
1. The glory and judgment that God will release on the nation of Israel in the Great Tribulation and the millennial kingdom will be given in "like kind, but to a lesser degree" to the Church and the Antichrist's empire in this age.
 2. Israel will receive the most severe judgment for their rebellion and the greatest degree of blessing in their repentance.
 3. The same manifestations of God's power in blessing that will be manifest in Israel in the millennial kingdom will be seen in the Church in this age, ***but to a lesser degree.***
 4. This principle applies to the judgments of God that Israel will endure throughout the Great Tribulation. These judgments will also come on the Gentile nations that persist in rebelling against God, ***but to a lesser degree.***
- B. The remnant of Israel will have a spirit of glory resting upon them that will surpass the rest of God's people in the Church, especially after Jesus' second coming. Israel's judgment will be more severe, but their glory will be greater. For example, Jesus will set up His throne in Jerusalem and rule all the nations from Israel (Isa. 2:2-4; Zech. 6:12-13).

- C. When the Old Testament prophets prophesied the Day of the Lord, their focus was nearly always on Israel. Occasionally, we find a few references in the Bible regarding the Day of the Lord for the Gentile nations (Isa. 13; 24-27).
- D. We study how the blessing and judgment of the Day of the Lord will touch Israel. We gain insight into the blessing and judgment that Gentile believers and unbelievers will experience. It will be in like kind, but to a lesser degree.
- E. The crisis of the Day of the Lord in Joel is centered on Israel. However, we apply these truths to other nations, knowing that a parallel crisis that involves military invasions and agricultural crisis (Rev. 6; 8-9; 16) will come to all nations that are in agreement with the kingdom of darkness.
- F. Some theologians have what I call “*selective theology*” in relation to Israel. They apply the scriptural promises of blessing given to Israel to the Church, yet leave the judgment prophecies to be fulfilled only by Israel and not the Church.
- G. We study Joel, knowing that what will happen to Israel, good and bad, will happen in part to the nations of the earth as well.

Session 3 The Great and Very Terrible Day

XII. REVIEW OF THE TWOFOLD NATURE OF “GOD’S DAY”: GREAT AND TERRIBLE

¹¹For the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; who can endure it? (Joel 2:11)

⁵“I will send you Elijah...before...the great and dreadful day of the LORD.” (Mal. 4:5)

- A. The twofold nature of the Day of the Lord is that it is both great in power for the redeemed and terrible in judgment for those who rebel. These are two dimensions of God’s leadership in the Day of the Lord as He manifests His *greatness of blessing* and the *terribleness of judgment*.
- B. ***Great Day***: To the redeemed, it will be the time of the greatest manifestation of the power of God ever seen in history. It will include supernatural provision, direction (Ps. 91; Jer. 31:9), and protection (Goshen principle of Ex. 8:22-23; 9:4, 6, 26). The miracles seen in the book of Acts and the book of Exodus will be combined and multiplied on a global scale. The “great” aspect of that Day will include the outpouring of the Spirit with extraordinary miracles (Joel 2:28-32).
- C. ***Very Terrible Day***: To the rebellious, it will be the most severe time of God’s judgments ever seen in history (Rev. 6-20). The “terrible” dimension of the Day of the Lord speaks of judgments against the Antichrist’s empire in the seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments (Rev. 6; 8-9; 16-19).

XIII. WHO CAN ENDURE THE DAY OF THE LORD? ONLY THOSE WITH HIS FAVOR

¹¹The LORD gives voice before His army, for His camp is very great; for strong is the One who executes His word. For the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; who can endure it? (Joel 2:11)

- A. Joel asks, “Who can endure the Day of the Lord?” The only kind of people who will endure God’s judgments are those who live in God’s favor by the gift of righteousness in Christ, along with a life of wholehearted obedience to Him. The free gift of righteousness that we have received from God is our foundation that leads us to a life of wholehearted obedience to God.
- B. The Day of the Lord is when God openly shows Himself mighty and strong in carrying out His promises of blessing and warnings of judgment.
- C. Without the spirit of revelation, the human heart is offended at both dimensions of the great and terrible Day—the move of the Spirit and the release of God’s judgment.
- D. A pastor asked me, “Do you think something dramatic is about to happen?” I answered, “I do not limit our future based on the powerlessness and lethargy of our past. Our history in spiritual barrenness must not forecast how we see our future.” We base our beliefs on the Word of God.
- E. The Day of the Lord will be the most dynamic hour in natural history. What God has deemed important, we must also. This Day is certain. It will come to pass.

XIV. THE DAY OF THE LORD IS GREAT

- A. There is only one global, great Day of the Lord, and it happens in relation to the second coming of Jesus. The Church across the earth will experience unusual manifestations of God's power with His zeal for righteousness. It will be the greatest demonstration of revival power in history.
- B. In Psalm 91, David describes the fearlessness that the redeemed will have at that time. They will remain unshaken when so much around them will be shaking.

XV. SUPERNATURAL PROVISION (FOOD AND WATER)

¹⁵*"As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt, I will show them wonders."* (Mic. 7:15)

- A. This will be a great Day for God's people in terms of receiving supernatural provision. God will manifest His provision like He did in the exodus from Egypt. God caused food to fall from the sky and brought water from a rock in the desert. Jehovah Jireh, the great provider, was on magnificent display as He exhibited His kindness time and time again. The exodus story will be *our* story, because it is going to happen again!
- B. We will be filled with amazement at the different ways the Lord provides food and water. Those refusing the mark of the Beast will be unable to purchase food (Rev. 13:17), but they will be led by the same Jesus who fed five thousand with the fish and the loaves. He fed Elijah by the ravens. He excels at *multiplying food*; He will do it again in the end times.

XVI. SUPERNATURAL PROTECTION: GOSHEN PRINCIPLE (POCKETS OF MERCY)

²²*"I will set apart the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there, in order that you may know that I am the LORD in the midst of the land. ²³I will make a difference between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall be."* (Ex. 8:22-23)

²⁶*Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, there was no hail.* (Ex. 9:26)

- A. Another characteristic of the greatness of the Day of the Lord is God's supernatural protection. It is what I call the *Goshen principle* (Ex. 8:22-23; 9:4-6, 26; 10:23; 11:7).
 - 1. In the time of the plagues of Egypt, God did not allow His judgments to touch the place where His people lived, a place called Goshen (Ex. 8:22). God protected His people from the plagues He released in Egypt. The Lord said to Pharaoh, "I will make a difference between My people and your people" (Ex. 8:23).
 - 2. Though the plagues were poured out in Egypt and all around the Israelites, nobody in Goshen was sick or affected, not even their livestock. In Goshen, none of the hail or fire fell, and none of the flies swarmed (Ex. 9:4, 6, 26).

- B. *Pockets of mercy* is a term I use to refer to geographic areas where God’s people will be hidden or protected from God’s judgment in the end times.
³*Seek the LORD, all you meek of the earth. Seek righteousness, seek humility. It may be that you will be hidden [pockets of mercy] in the day of the LORD’s anger. (Zeph. 2:3)*
- C. The same idea of the Goshen principle is seen in Scripture when the mark or seal of God is put on the saints to protect them from the judgment of God.
⁴*They [demons] were commanded not to harm the grass but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. (Rev. 9:4)*
²*He [angel] cried to the four angels...³saying, “Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.” (Rev. 7:2-3)*
⁴*The LORD said to him [angel], “Go...through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry [intercession] over all the abominations that are done within it.”³To the others [angels] He said, “Go through the city and kill...⁶Utterly slay old and young...but do not come near anyone on whom is the mark.” (Ezek. 9:4-6)*
- D. This Goshen principle will be seen in the end times. There will be strategic regions across the earth with special divine protection, provision, and guidance. In these geographic locations, the judgments of God will be held back from the people of God just like in Goshen.

XVII. SUPERNATURAL GUIDANCE (PROPHETIC ANOINTING)

- ⁹*“They shall come with weeping, and with supplications I will lead them. I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters, in a straight way in which they shall not stumble.” (Jer. 31:9)*
- ²⁸*“I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.” (Joel 2:28)*
- ²¹*Your ears shall hear a [prophetic] word behind you, saying, “This is the way, walk in it,” whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left. (Isa. 30:21)*
- A. Another expression of the greatness of the Day of the Lord will be in receiving supernatural direction. The Lord will direct His people that they may find safety, protection, and provision.
- B. Jeremiah prophesied that there would be a time when Israel would escape and flee as refugees and that God would lead them by supplications in that day (Jer. 31:9).
- C. God will direct His people to the places of food, water, and refuge.
- D. There will be supernatural guidance to find food, to reconnect in relationships, and to be at the right place at the right time to escape a plague.

XVIII. TERRIBLE DAY: GOD WILL RAISE UP AN EVIL LEADER TO JUDGE SIN

- A. During the Day of the Lord judgments, the Antichrist will invade and oppress nations.
- B. At the foundation of this evil, global empire is the **great paradox that it is God Himself who will raise it up**, though, certainly, Satan will have his role in it and the sin of man will play into it. Jesus will open the first seal to release the Antichrist to conquer rebellious nations (Rev. 6:1-2).
- C. God is the one raising up an evil leader to test the inhabitants of the earth who choose evil.
³***“The hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those...on earth.” (Rev. 3:10)***
- D. It was the Father, not the devil, who gave men authority over Jesus at His first coming.
¹¹***Jesus answered, “You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.” (Jn. 19:11)***
- E. God raised up evil Pharaoh in Moses’ day. He was the most powerful man in the world.
¹⁷***The Scripture says to Pharaoh, “I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.” (Rom. 9:17)***
¹⁶***Indeed...I have raised you up [Pharaoh] that I may show My power in you. (Ex. 9:16)***
- F. God raised up an evil Assyrian leader named Sennacherib to judge Israel in 721 BC.
⁵***“Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger...the staff in whose hand is My indignation.” (Isa. 10:5)***
- G. God called Nebuchadnezzar, His servant, to judge Israel in 586 BC.
⁹***“...Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will [come] against this land...and will utterly destroy...¹²Then...when seventy years are completed...I will punish the king of Babylon and the Babylonians, for their iniquity,” says the LORD. (Jer. 25:9, 12)***
⁶***“I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar...My servant...” (Jer. 27:6)***
⁴³***Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: “Behold, I will send Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will set his throne above these stones...” (Jer. 43:10)***
⁵***“Look among the nations and watch—be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days which you would not believe, though it were told you. ⁶For indeed I am raising up the Chaldeans [Babylon], a bitter and hasty nation...⁷they are terrible and dreadful.” (Hab. 1:5-7)***
⁷***“I [the Lord] will prepare destroyers against you [Babylon against Jerusalem].” (Jer. 22:7)***

H. God raised up the Persians to judge the Babylonians.

³***“I have commanded My sanctified ones [Persian army]; I have also called My mighty ones [Persian army] for My anger...⁴ A tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together! The LORD of hosts musters the army for battle. ⁵They come from a far country [Persia]...the LORD and His weapons [Persian army] of indignation, to destroy.” (Isa. 13:3-5)***

¹¹***God is a just judge...¹²He will sharpen His sword; He bends His bow and makes it ready.***

¹³***He also prepares for Himself instruments of death... (Ps. 7:11-13)***

I. God sets into place the leaders of the nations to serve His purposes.

¹⁷***“This decision is by the decree of the watchers, and the sentence by the word of the holy ones, in order that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men.” (Dan. 4:17)***

²¹***“God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses.” (Dan. 5:21)***

¹***Be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God...⁴For he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. (Rom. 13:1, 4)***

J. Specific to our study is the testimony of Joel, who prophesied ***that the evil Babylonian army would be sent by God***. Joel calls Babylon “God’s army” (Joel 2:11). In Joel’s day, God raised up Nebuchadnezzar, an evil man who blasphemed God. At the end of the age, God will raise up the Antichrist to judge the nations that choose wickedness.

K. God will raise up the Antichrist to great authority for 3½ years to bring the entire earth to a place of decision for righteousness or unrighteousness (Dan. 7-12; 2 Thes. 2; Rev. 13). God will grant authority for sinful events to be walked out (Rev. 6:2, 4, 8; 9:1, 3, 5; 11:2; 13:5, 7, 14-15).

¹***The Lamb [Jesus] opened one of the seals...²...a white horse. He [Antichrist] who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him...he went out conquering and to conquer. (Rev. 6:1-2)***

⁵***He [Antichrist] was given...authority [by God] to continue for forty-two months. ⁷It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. Authority was given him [by God] over every tribe, tongue, and nation. (Rev. 13:5, 7)***

²⁵***“He [Antichrist] shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High...Then the saints shall be given into his hand [3½ years].” (Dan. 7:25)***

¹⁶***“For indeed I will raise up a shepherd [Antichrist] in the land [Israel] who will not care for those who are cut off...nor heal those that are broken...but he will eat the flesh of the fat and tear their hooves in pieces. ¹⁷Woe to the worthless shepherd!” (Zech. 11:16-17)***

- L. There is a distinction between God’s judgment and discipline. God releases His wrath to punish rebellion; His discipline is meant to free His people who refuse to repent of their compromise.
¹²Whom the LORD loves He corrects, as a father the son in whom he delights. (Prov. 3:12)
- M. Satan possesses tremendous hostility, desiring to destroy the righteous.
- N. God’s judgment and Satan’s rage will be happening simultaneously across the earth. We cannot know the mixed responses that will occur in the hearts of so many. Therefore, we should not have overly simplistic answers as to the reasons and causes of all the end-time crisis events. The general principle is that the rebellious experience God’s wrath, compromising believers undergo God’s discipline, and the righteous endure Satan’s rage.
- O. In times of crisis, God judges sin, disciplines the Church, and prepares the harvest.

XIX. THE VERY TERRIBLE DAY OF THE LORD

⁴They worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?” ⁵And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months... ⁷It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. ⁸All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Rev. 13:4-8)

- A. A divinely appointed evil empire that oppresses is one aspect of the terrible Day of the Lord.
 - 1. God will raise up a temporary evil leader, the Antichrist, to shake wicked nations. This empire will not succeed in dominating *all* the nations. However, the Bible repeatedly uses terms like “the whole earth” to describe its influence (Dan. 7:23; Rev. 13:8). Thus, it will have a presence and impact in all the nations without dominating all of them.
 - 2. There are 262 nations (including territories, etc.) on the earth. This evil empire may unify up to 100-200 nations, being the largest coalition of nations in history! Many nations will resist him and some will prevent him from totally dominating their land.
- B. God’s judgment will be released through the seven seals, trumpets, and bowls of wrath (Rev. 6:16) as an aspect of the final Day of the Lord against the kingdom of darkness. These will include earthquakes, storms, hurricanes, tornadoes, and drought.
- C. The sowing and reaping process of sin will cause troubles on the earth. God will allow seeds of wickedness to fully ripen on the earth; sin will reach its highest dimensions at the end of the age. Sin has never been fully ripe globally. However, God will give the human race the opportunity to reach its fullest potential of sinfulness as it reaches heights of perversion, unequalled in history.
- D. The four primary categories of sin in the end times will be murder, immorality, sorcery, and theft (Rev. 9:21).

1. Today the soil of America is defiled with the blood of 50 million babies, who have been aborted over the last 30 years. Yet, the “*murder-movement*” has only just begun; millions will be possessed by demons of murder in the days to come.
 2. Internet *perversion* will reach new levels of darkness in the days to come. Satan will use all the resources of technology to bring sexual perversion to the most wickedly corrupt levels. There will be millions and millions of people possessed by demons of lust.
 3. The *occult* will fill the earth, resulting in millions of demonized people.
 4. *Theft* will increase to dramatic proportions. Most wars are about theft. There are many different manifestations of theft that man calls “protecting our political interest.”
- E. In the natural process of reaping and sowing, all of these categories of sin will crescendo. It will be a very terrible day in that hour.

XX. RESULTS OF THE DAY OF THE LORD JUDGMENTS

¹⁵*The four angels...were released to kill a third of mankind. (Rev. 9:15)*

- A. One result of the Day of the Lord judgments is that one-third of the earth’s population will die unnatural deaths. Their deaths will be related to God’s judgment.
- B. People who study demographics say that by about 2025, there will be 8 billion people on earth. A third of 8 billion people dying would be about 2-3 billion deaths. We cannot relate to such a number. This would be about 50 times the death toll of World War II of 50 million deaths.

XXI. GOD’S GOODNESS IN THE MIDST OF JUDGMENT

²⁸*We know that all things work together for good to those who love God... (Rom. 8:28)*

- A. All these things will work together for the good of the redeemed and the future of the earth. **God will use the least severe means to bring the greatest numbers to Himself at the deepest levels of love** for Jesus, without violating their free will. Anything of less severity would not get the job done. Reflecting back on the Great Tribulation judgments, the saints in heaven will sing, “Great and marvelous are Your works and just and true are Your ways!” (Rev. 15:3-4).
- B. After Joseph was reunited with his brothers who sold him into slavery, he understood that what his brothers meant for evil, God meant for good, thereby saving many (Gen. 50).
²⁰*“You meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.” (Gen. 50:20)*
- C. Joseph endured two prison sentences in Egypt. God worked for good through what others meant for evil, that many would be saved. In the same way, the works of the Antichrist’s evil empire will be meant for evil but God will overrule their evil intentions, resulting in salvation for many.

XXII. THE CHURCH WILL NOT WANT TO MISS THIS GLORIOUS HOUR OF HISTORY

- A. The Church will be present and victorious through the events described in the book of Revelation. This will be the Church's most glorious hour in all history!
- B. The glorious outcome will be great numbers coming to the saving knowledge of Jesus. I believe that over a billion souls will be saved. This Day will be characterized by the greatest number of souls ever reached in salvation and distinguished by the deepest levels of mature love.