

The "Day of the Lord" According to Paul
1 Thess. 5:1-9

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In 1 Thess. 4, Paul dealt with the relationship of the resurrection to the rapture. The dead in Christ will rise first, then the living will be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Paul continued in chapter 5 by addressing the question of when they might expect the rapture and resurrection to come.

1 Thessalonians 5

1 *But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.*
 2 *For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.*
 (KJV)

Notice Paul was placing the rapture in the "Day of the Lord." This is an extremely important point. Here Paul shifted from describing the events surrounding the rapture to speaking about when the rapture might come. And he referred them again to something they already knew, "yourselves know perfectly..." The "Day of the Lord" was coming as a "thief in the night."

Paul used a phrase that was familiar to these Christians. The "Day of the Lord" is found several times in the Old Testament, always in the context of Christ's coming to destroy the enemies of Israel, [see: Isa. 13:6-13, Joel 3:9-17, Zech. 14]. This is exactly what Revelation 19 records as the "battle of Armageddon."

The nature of the "Day of the Lord" is crucial to understanding this passage. It is also critical to any foundational understanding of eschatology in general. Pre-tribulationists claim the "Day of the Lord" includes the alleged pre-trib rapture and the entire tribulation. This allows them to reconcile 1 Thessalonians 5 with pre-tribulationism, since Paul instructed believers to be watching for the "Day of the Lord," [1 Thess. 5:1-6]. If the "Day of the Lord" comes after the tribulation, as every Old Testament occurrence seems to indicate, then Christians must still be here at the end of the tribulation in order to watch for that day.

Much has been written by pre-tribulationists trying to stretch the Day of the Lord forward to include the entire tribulation and pre-trib rapture. Comparisons of similar themes, such as wrath, judgment, etc. have been offered as evidence. Yet, no one has provided any biblical requirement supporting making them synonymous. None of the Old Testament passages support this conclusion. It comes only from a preconceived assumption of a pre-trib rapture superimposed on the Thessalonian passage. Their theory is a product of reverse engineering of the Scriptures in order to get the desired outcome rather than applying sound rules of interpretation. The fact is, there are definite biblical passages that forbid the "Day of the Lord" from overlapping the tribulation. The two are mutually exclusive.

First, throughout the Old Testament, a catastrophic sign is associated with the coming of the "Day of the Lord." The darkening of the sun and moon will herald that day. [See: Isaiah 13:9,10, Isaiah 24:19-23, Joel 3:13-15]. Here is one example.

Joel 2

31 *The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.*
 (KJV)

Matthew 24

29 *Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, ...*
 (KJV)

These verses establish a clear sequence of events. They place the cosmic signs, the darkening of the sun and moon, **between** the end of the tribulation and the beginning of the "Day of the Lord."



This absolutely forbids any overlapping of the tribulation into the "Day of the Lord." They are distinct events. No other interpretation is possible without doing violence to these passages.

Secondly, the very first time the "Day of the Lord" is mentioned in the Bible, the text clearly forbids associating it with the tribulation. Isaiah two describes the "Day of the Lord" with the following words:

Isaiah 2

10 *Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty.*
 11 *The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted*
in that day.

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:...

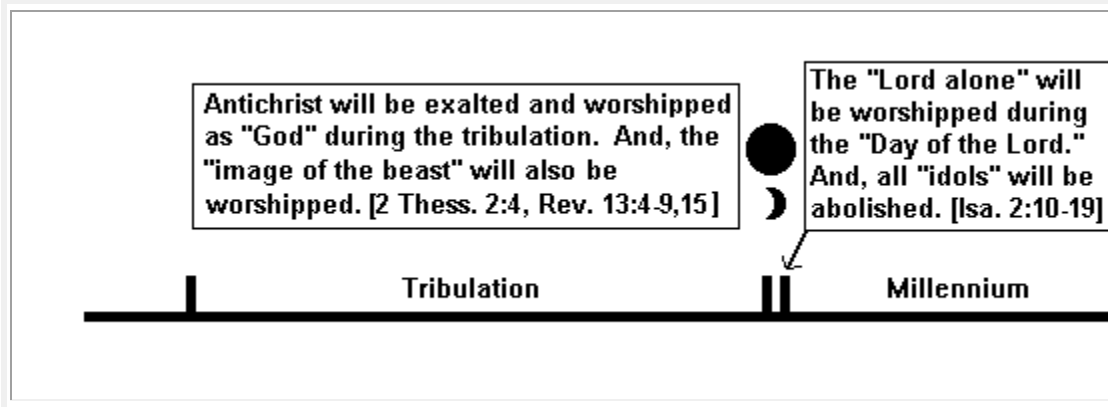
17 And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.

18 And the idols he shall utterly abolish.

19 And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

(KJV)

Twice these verses indicate that **the Lord alone** will be exalted in the "Day of the Lord." This is an exclusive statement. **No one else can be exalted or worshipped during the "Day of the Lord."** Yet, during the tribulation, the Antichrist will be worshipped as God. [See: Rev. 13:3-8,14 & 2 Thess. 2:3,4] And, his image will be worshipped as well. Isaiah's statements about the Lord alone being exalted, and the idols being abolished during the "Day of the Lord," forbid any overlapping with the tribulation and reign of Antichrist.



The celestial sign, and the statements in Isaiah two, absolutely forbid stretching the "Day of the Lord" forward to include the tribulation, as pre-tribbers attempt to do. Furthermore, Paul made another clear statement which eliminates the possibility of the "Day of the Lord" including the entire tribulation and supposed pre-trib rapture.

II *Thess* 2:1-3

1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that **the day of Christ** is at hand.

3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for **that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed,** the son of perdition;

(KJV)

Most translations read "Day of the Lord" in verse 2. There is a variation in the Greek manuscripts here. Some ancient manuscripts read "day of Christ" and others read "day of the Lord." I don't want to get into a debate on which is correct. It really doesn't matter. If "Day of the Lord" is correct, the text indicates that the "Day of the Lord" comes after the tribulation, because events that occur during the tribulation, [the falling away and revelation of Antichrist], are said to come **before** the "Day of the Lord." If the "Day of Christ" is the correct reading, then this verse alone settles the pre-trib / post-trib debate, since the phrase "Day of Christ" is only used by Paul elsewhere to refer to the rapture of the Church. In this case, Paul is saying that the rapture cannot come until after the falling away and the Antichrist.

The meaning of the phrase "Day of the Lord" holds the key to the interpretation of Paul's instructions to believers in 1 Thessalonians. The meaning of 1 Thessalonians 4:13 - 5:9 is entirely dependent on the meaning of this phrase. There is no question the rapture and the coming of the "Day of the Lord" are firmly connected by Paul in this passage. He uses the term "Day of the Lord" as a synonym for the rapture. **Notice Paul instructed Christians to be watching for the coming of the "Day of the Lord."** And, as we have just demonstrated, the "Day of the Lord" is after the tribulation. **Therefore, Christians must pass through the tribulation in order to watch for the "Day of the Lord."** The rapture that Paul referred to is after the tribulation.

I *Thess* 5:2-6

2 For yourselves know perfectly that the **day of the Lord** so cometh as a thief in the night.

3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

4 **But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.**

5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

(KJV)

Since he instructed Christians to watch for the "Day of the Lord," and, as we have seen, that day comes after the tribulation, Paul was simply confirming Jesus' teaching in the Olivet Discourse. There is nothing here to suggest new revelation of a secret pre-trib rapture. In fact the opposite is true. Paul said in verse 2 that they already knew this perfectly. He was simply refreshing

their memory. Yes, in chapter 4 Paul gave them some new revelation. He placed the timing of the resurrection just before the catching up of the living. This exact sequence was previously unknown to them. But, in chapter 5, his comment about their being already familiar with the coming of the Day of the Lord, indicates he was now pointing them back to something already revealed in Scripture.

How did the Thessalonian believers know perfectly that the Day of the Lord was coming as a "thief in the night?" Because they were familiar with Jesus' teaching in the Olivet Discourse! The idea of Christ's coming as a "thief in the night" was originated by Jesus Himself when describing His coming. After describing His coming in glory "immediately after the tribulation," Jesus said to His disciples:

Matt 24:42-44
 42 "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.
 43 "But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour **the thief** would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.
 44 "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.
 (NKJV)

Obviously, Paul was referring to Jesus' teaching! His reminding them of Jesus' "thief" illustration leads to the conclusion that he was confirming the chronology Christ gave. The following table shows that Paul was using Jesus' teaching in the Olivet Discourse as the basis of his instructions to the Thessalonian believers. He was simply repeating Jesus' instructions to the disciples. In effect, he was applying the teaching of Jesus to them, connecting their "watching" for the rapture with Jesus' instructions to be watching for His coming "immediately after the tribulation."

Paul Referred to Jesus' Teaching	Jesus	Paul
Coming of the Lord from heaven	Matt 24:30 "... they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."	1 Thess. 4:16 "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven..."
Angel(s)	Matt. 24:31 "...He shall send forth His angels..."	1 Thess. 4:16 "with the voice of the archangel..."
Trumpet blast	Matt. 24:31 "...with the sound of a trumpet..."	1 Thess. 4:16 "...with the trumpet of God"
Catching up of the living	Matt. 24:31 "...they shall gather together His elect..."	1 Thess. 4:17 "...shall be caught up together..."
Thief in the night	Matt. 24:43 "...if the goodman ...had know in what watch the thief would come..."	1 Thess. 5:1,2 "...so cometh as a thief in the night."
Warning against "sleeping"	Mark 13:36 "lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping."	1 Thess. 5:6 "...let us not sleep as do others"
Warning against "drunkenness"	Luke 21:34 "take heed ... lest your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness"	1 Thess. 5:6-8 "be sober...they that are drunken are drunken in the night. ...be sober"
"Watching" for Christ's coming	Mark 13:35-37 "Watch ye therefore ... What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch."	1 Thess. 5:6 "let us watch..."

There is no question that Paul referred his readers to the Olivet Discourse, which only teaches a post-trib coming of Christ, to answer their questions about the rapture. This is substantial evidence that Paul taught a post-trib rapture. His use of the phrase "Day of the Lord," which other Scriptures place after the tribulation, to describe the rapture, makes it impossible to reconcile this passage with pre-tribulationism, in my opinion. Once again, we have every reason to connect Paul's teaching on the rapture to Jesus' teaching on the second coming. Nothing here excludes this linkage. And as the table above illustrates, there is much evidence of this connection. Therefore, the natural inference is Paul was simply building on Jesus' teaching, and was encouraging the Thessalonian believers to be watching for Jesus' coming after the tribulation!

[Click here](#) for 9 reasons why the Day of the Lord cannot include the tribulation.

The Day of the Lord

Cannot Include the Tribulation

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Following are nine biblical reasons why the Day of the Lord cannot include the tribulation, as pre-tribbers claim, but must follow it.

1. Joel 2:31/Acts 2:20 and Matthew 24:29/Mark 13:24 place the same cosmic signs between the **end** of the tribulation and the **beginning** of the *Day of the Lord*. The two cannot overlap, otherwise these verses could not be true.

2. In Isaiah two, the very first time the *Day of the Lord* is mentioned in the Bible, Isaiah wrote that **the Lord alone will be exalted in that day**. This is an exclusive statement. Since, during the last half of the tribulation, the Antichrist will be worshipped as God, the two cannot overlap [cf. Isaiah 2:11,12,17 & Rev. 13:12]. The Antichrist cannot be worshipped in the Day of the Lord, since Isaiah says the Lord ALONE will be exalted. Also, all idols will be abolished during the *Day of the Lord*. Yet, during the tribulation, the image of the Beast, and other idols will be worshipped. [cf. Isaiah 2:18 & Rev. 9:20,21 & Rev. 13:15].

3. Zechariah 14:7 indicates that the *Day of the Lord* is a 24 hour day. The Hebrew text says: "*that day shall be one.*" [See also: Isa. 10:17]

4. Three times the phrase "*the Day of the LORD cometh*" is used in the Old Testament. [Isaiah 13:9, Joel 2:1, Zech. 14:1]. In each case the text immediately begins to describe the battle of Armageddon. The word "**cometh**" is the Hebrew word "bow" [Strong's #935], a verb meaning to come or arrive. It implies the beginning of the Day of the Lord. In all three cases, the **arrival** of the *Day of the Lord* brings the battle of Armageddon. In the New Testament, twice it is said the Day of the Lord "**cometh**" as a thief in the night (1 Thess. 5:1,2 & 2 Peter 3:10). In both cases the immediate destruction of the wicked occurs. Paul says "sudden destruction" overtakes the wicked, and Peter says the land will be devoured by fire along with the scoffers.

5. Joel 3:9-17 describes the gathering of the armies of the nations around Jerusalem for the battle of Armageddon, the cosmic signs, and the coming of the Lord. **After** the armies are gathered, but **before** the cosmic signs, Joel wrote that the *Day of the Lord* is "**near.**" The Hebrew word means "*at hand,*" "*imminent,*" or "*next in sequence*" [Strong's #7138]. The *Day of the Lord* must begin **after** the armies of the nations are gathered for the battle, which occurs at the end of the tribulation, according to Rev. 16:13-16.

6. According to Revelation 16, The armies of the nations are gathered at the end of the tribulation for "*the battle of the great day of God Almighty*. Therefore, the "*Day of God*" is clearly after the tribulation when the battle occurs. Peter shows us that the terms "Day of God" and "Day of the Lord" are synonymous, by using them interchangeably when repeating himself [2 Peter 3:10,12]. (This is the only other occurrence of the phrase "*Day of God*" in the Bible.)

7. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 NASB/NIV says the "*Day of the Lord*" will not come until **after** the "*falling away,*" and the revelation of the "*man of sin.*" Verse 4 indicates how he will be revealed, by defiling the Temple at the mid-point of the tribulation, [see: Matt. 24:15]. Therefore, the *Day of the Lord* cannot begin before the mid-point of the tribulation.

8. According to Mal. 4:5, Elijah the prophet will come **before** the *Day of the Lord* comes. Most agree that Elijah is one of the two witnesses in Revelation. Therefore, the *Day of the Lord* cannot begin until after the two witnesses come.

9 There are many synonyms for the "Day of the Lord" in the New Testament. We know that on the Day of the Lord, the "Lord" who comes in power "with all His saints" in Zech. 14:1-6 is Jesus Christ [cf. Zech. 14:1-6, Acts 1:9-12, 1 Thess. 3:13]. We also know that there are various combinations of Jesus' name in the New Testament, including; Jesus, Christ, Jesus Christ, Christ Jesus, Lord Jesus, Lord Jesus Christ, and Lord. Since the simplest explanation is almost always correct, it is very likely that all of the following phrases are speaking of the same day. *Day of Christ* [Phil. 1:10], *Day of Jesus Christ* [Phil. 1:6], *Day of the Lord Jesus Christ* [1 Cor. 1:8], *Day of the Lord Jesus* [1 Cor. 5:5], *Day of the Lord* [1 Thess. 5:2], *Day of God* [2 Pet. 3:12], *Day of God Almighty* [Rev. 16:14]. [See also references to "*the Great Day:*" Zeph. 1:14, Jude 1:6, Rev. 6:17, Rev. 16:14.]

Second Peter Three

&	the	Day	of	the	Lord
By	Tim	Warner	-	Nov.	2001

(Scripture citations are from the NKJV unless otherwise noted)

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2 Peter 3 is a passage that has caused a lot of confusion among pre-millennialists. Peter seems to speak of the burning of this present earth, and a "new heaven and new earth," at the time of Christ's second coming. He speaks of the "Day of the Lord" coming "as a thief," **in which** the dissolution of the present earth and heaven will take place. He speaks of a "new heaven and new earth" in which righteousness dwells. This seems to follow immediately on the second coming in Peter's eschatology. Yet, Revelation speaks of a "new heaven and new earth" at the end of the Millennium, placing a 1,000 year interval between the second coming and the "new heaven and new earth."

The typical solution is to claim that the "Day of the Lord" is the entire Millennium. The burning could be said to occur IN the "Day of the Lord" (albeit at its extreme end). But, as we shall see, such a view destroys Peter's whole point, that the Day of the Lord and burning of the earth is threatening the scoffers who say, "where is the promise of His coming?"

When we look at a particular New Testament prophecy, it is important to distinguish whether it is NEW revelation, or whether the author was simply reiterating previous prophecy. Sometimes Paul spoke of NEW revelation, with comments like, "*behold, I show you a mystery,*" etc.. However, Peter was not giving NEW revelation in 2 Peter 3. He certainly gave no hint he was sharing something new. He wrote as though his readers were already familiar with these details. He explicitly said that his purpose for writing these things was to REMIND them of what they already knew **especially the words of the Old Testament prophets** (cf. 2

Pet. 1:12,13 & 2 Pet. 3:1,2), as well as the command of Christ through the Apostles. Likewise, Peter's comment, "*seeing that ye look for such things*" (vs. 14) strongly implies that his readers were already looking for a "new heaven and new earth" prior to Peter's writing this epistle. Therefore it would be wise to find similar previous prophecy with which to compare Peter's words, rather than assuming he was speaking of something that was not revealed until three decades later when John wrote Revelation.

I. Verses 1&2 INTRODUCTION

2

Pet

3:1-18

1 Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder),
2 that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior,

Peter's main point for writing this second epistle was to remind believers of what they already knew:

1. The words spoken by the Old Testament Prophets
2. The commandment given by Jesus to and through the Apostles.

The "*words spoken by the prophets*" is in reference to the "Day of the Lord" that Peter explains in verses 10-12. The coming of the Kingdom of God is a central theme in his Epistle. 2 Peter 1:4-11 is exhortation on how to obtain an "abundant entrance" into this Kingdom. In Peter's second sermon in Acts, he spoke particularly of the return of Christ to set up His Millennial Kingdom as having been prophesied by "*all the holy prophets since the world began.*"

Acts

3:21

21 "*whom heaven must receive until **the times of restoration of all things**, which God has spoken by the mouth of **all His holy prophets** since the world began.*"

The theme of "*all the holy prophets*" was the "Day of the Lord," when the earth would be restored to its pristine condition, and Christ would begin to rule over all the earth.

Next Peter said he wanted to remind them of "the commandment" given by Jesus to the Apostles. Of course, Jesus gave many commandments to and through the Apostles. But, notice two things. First, the "commandment" is singular with the definite article, indicating one particular commandment that his readers would immediately identify. Secondly, the disciples were not called "Apostles" until they were sent out to preach. The word "apostle" means one who is sent on a mission (an ambassador). It implies a message and a mission. Peter seems to be zeroing in on THE commandment, the "commission" of Jesus to the disciples, which itself made them "Apostles." That is, the Great Commission. The disciples became "Apostles" when Jesus sent them out on a mission to preach the Gospel.

Some might ask, "What does the Great Commission have to do with the Day of the Lord?" The answer is: Jesus tied the two together in the Olivet Discourse. After the disciples asked Jesus the signs of His coming and the "end of the age," Jesus said the following.

Matt

24:14

14 "*And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, **and then the end will come.***"

He also mentioned the "end of the age" in the Great Commission itself.

Matt

28:19-20

19 "*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,*

20 "*teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to **the end of the age.***"
Amen.

The one and only thing that withholds the second coming of Jesus Christ is the completion of the Great Commission. The job MUST be finished before Jesus will return. Jesus' coming is NOT imminent until after the Great Commission is complete. The "Day of the Lord," or as Peter puts it in Acts 3:21, "the times of restoration of all things," cannot occur UNTIL we as believers finish carrying the Gospel to all nations. The book of Revelation indicates that there will be believers from **every tribe, nation, and people**. Therefore, the Gospel must not only go to each country, but to the various tribes in remote places.

After the resurrection, the disciples wanted to know if the Day of the Lord was imminent. They asked Jesus if He was now going to restore the Kingdom to Israel. Notice Jesus' reply.

Acts

1:6-8

6 *Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"*

7 *And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.*

8 *"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and **you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.**"*

Jesus was referring them back to His Olivet Discourse and the Great Commission. Again He was implying that the end of the age would not come UNTIL they had preached the Gospel to all nations.

In the introduction to this chapter, Peter has reminded us that:

1. The "Day of the Lord" is coming (**our future hope**)
2. We must complete the Great Commission before it will come (**the reason for the apparent delay**)

The rest of the chapter expands on these two points.

II. Verses 3-7 THE APPARENT DELAY

3 *knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts,*
4 *and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the*

beginning of creation."
 5 For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water,
 6 by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water.
 7 But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

In these verses, Peter began to deal with the apparent delay in Christ's return. In the last days scoffers will arise who deny the second coming. This passage is remarkable because it seems to anticipate that the second coming was still some considerable distance away. Here he speaks of the "last days" as being in the future, or at least the scoffers were considered future. In his earlier use of the term "last days" on the Day of Pentecost, Peter was quoting Joel's prophecy of the coming of the "Day of the Lord." Peter used the term "last days" to refer to the interval of time in which we live, when God's Spirit is being poured out on all flesh. This time would end (according to Peter and Joel) with the coming of the "Day of the Lord."

Acts 2:16-21
 16 "But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:
 17 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams.
 18 And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy.
 19 I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: blood and fire and vapor of smoke.
 20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, **before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.**
 21 And it shall come to pass that **whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'**

Peter seems to interpret Joel as saying that the "last days" include the entire period of time from Pentecost until the "Day of the Lord." And the "Day of the Lord" comes AFTER the cosmic signs (which are after the tribulation - cf. Matt. 24:29-31). Note the connection to the salvation of the lost in this interim, as in 2 Pet. 3. However, in 2 Peter 3, Peter seems to have used "last days" in a more narrow way, referring to the very last of the "last days" just prior to the coming of the Lord.

In verses 4-7, Peter explained the reasoning of the scoffers. All things appear to be continuing without judgment by the creator since the beginning. Therefore, no judgment is coming. But, Peter pointed out the fallacy in this kind of thinking. The "old world" perished by God's judgment of sin. The long interim between creation and the flood was only made possible by God's longsuffering nature, and His compassion, in withholding His judgment. God is gracious and merciful, and allows ample time to repent, not to mention the continuous preaching of Noah over a 100 year period. But, His judgment is swift, sure, and total.

Pay particular attention to Peter's graphic language regarding the destruction of the earth in the flood. He was speaking in hyperbole here, not literal language. "The world that then existed perished," said Peter. And he referred to the present age as a different "earth" and "heaven" (vs. 7). Peter was implying that from Noah's perspective, after the flood there was a "new heaven and new earth." Was the whole earth and heaven destroyed by the flood? No. Only the breathing creatures were destroyed. Yet, Peter's words clearly imply total destruction of the old world, and a new heaven and new earth after the flood. Verse 7 then projects this same model of judgment to a future day. "But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." The new heaven and new earth after Noah is similarly being preserved for a future day of judgment, a day that will overtake these scoffers. It is a day of fire and the vengeance of Almighty God, and will again be followed by a "new heaven and new earth."

Verse 7 is crucial to understanding verses 10-12 which speak of the destruction of the earth by fire. While some pre-millennialists place this at the end of the Millennium, such an interpretation destroys Peter's whole point, that this day of fire and judgment will indeed overtake the scoffers who deny the second coming of Christ. The burning of the earth on the "Day of the Lord" in verses 10-12 is the very day Peter claims will overtake these scoffers by surprise. Therefore, the purging by fire is at the end of this age, not at the end of the Millennium. It occurs at the second coming.

III. Verses 8 & 9 THE REASON FOR THE DELAY

8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Here Peter elaborated on the reason for the delay. First, he reminded them that time is not an issue with God. When the Bible told first century Christians that Jesus is coming soon, and instructed them to be watching for His coming, it is not a contradiction even though two millennia have passed. With God, two thousand years are but a couple of days. Peter seems here to anticipate the very long interval of time that has transpired without Christ's return. This chapter is the answer to the preterists who insist that such terminology as "behold I come quickly" etc. requires that Jesus already came in some non-literal way in the first century.

Verse 9 explains further the connection to the Great Commission. Notice the reason Christ seems to be slow in returning is His "longsuffering." But, longsuffering to whom? While the Lord is not willing that any perish, His "longsuffering" is directed toward US, not to the lost. Is Peter saying that believers might be lost? No! He is saying that God is patient with US to complete the Great Commission, to preach the Gospel to all the nations so that many from every tribe and nation whom God loves will not perish! Peter places the responsibility squarely (albeit gently) on the shoulders of Christians. Corporately, we are the ones who delay or hasten the coming of Christ, the Day of the Lord, and the destruction of the wicked.

IV. Verses 10-14 THE DAY OF THE LORD

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.
 11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,
 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?
 13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.
 14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;

Here, Peter finally arrived at the climax of His Epistle. Remember, his terminology regarding the flood was total destruction of the earth, followed by a new heaven and new earth. Here he used precisely the same type of hyperbole to describe the day of destruction of the scoffers by fire. While the KJV/NKJV says the earth will be "burned up," the NIV says it will be "laid bare." In either case, Peter was not saying that the earth will be totally destroyed any more than it was totally destroyed by the flood. Rather, he was borrowing some Old Testament terminology where purging fire and destruction accompanies the second coming of Christ and the Day of the Lord.

Again, remember what Peter said in verses 1,2 that he was REMINDING them of what they already knew from the Old Testament prophets. That they were already familiar with this is also evident in his comments that his readers were presently **looking for** a "new heaven and new earth" in vss 13,14. This strongly implies Peter was relying heavily on Old Testament prophecy, and was NOT giving new revelation previously unknown to his readers. He was encouraging them toward certain spiritual goals based on their present knowledge and anticipation of these things. Therefore, to properly understand his words, we need to carefully consider the Old Testament passage Peter had in mind, and no doubt his readers also immediately identified.

There are quite a few Old Testament passages that refer to the coming "Day of the Lord." These passages speak of the earth continuing after Christ's coming, albeit altered geographically. [Joel 3:9-17, Zech 14]. However, there is one passage that uses the exact terminology Peter used, referring to a "new heaven and new earth."

Isa

65:11-66:24

11 "But you are those who forsake the LORD, who forget My holy mountain, who prepare a table for Gad, and who furnish a drink offering for Meni.
 12 Therefore I will number you for the sword, and you shall all bow down to the slaughter; because, when I called, you did not answer; when I spoke, you did not hear, but did evil before My eyes, and chose that in which I do not delight."
 13 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, My servants shall eat, but you shall be hungry; behold, My servants shall drink, but you shall be thirsty; behold, My servants shall rejoice, but you shall be ashamed;
 14 Behold, My servants shall sing for joy of heart, but you shall cry for sorrow of heart, and wail for grief of spirit.
 15 You shall leave your name as a curse to My chosen; for the Lord GOD will slay you, and call His servants by another name;
 16 So that he who blesses himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he who swears in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hidden from My eyes.
 17 "For behold, I create **NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH**; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.
 18 But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, and her people a joy.
 19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people; the voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying.
 20 "No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; for the child shall die one hundred years old, but the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed.
 21 They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
 22 They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, and My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.
 23 They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth children for trouble; for they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them.
 24 "It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear.
 25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain," says the LORD.

CHAPTER

66

1 Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest?
 2 For all those things My hand has made, and all those things exist," says the LORD. "But on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word.
 3 "He who kills a bull is as if he slays a man; he who sacrifices a lamb, as if he breaks a dog's neck; he who offers a grain offering, as if he offers swine's blood; he who burns incense, as if he blesses an idol. Just as they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations,
 4 So will I choose their delusions, and bring their fears on them; because, when I called, no one answered, when I spoke they did not hear; but they did evil before My eyes, and chose that in which I do not delight."
 5 Hear the word of the LORD, you who tremble at His word: "Your brethren who hated you, who cast you out for My name's sake, said, 'Let the LORD be glorified, that we may see your joy.' But they shall be ashamed."
 6 The sound of noise from the city! A voice from the temple! The voice of the LORD, who fully repays His enemies!
 7 "Before she was in labor, she gave birth; before her pain came, she delivered a male child.

8 Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? **shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion was in labor, she gave birth to her children.**
9 **Shall I bring to the time of birth, and not cause delivery?" says the LORD. "Shall I who cause delivery shut up the womb?"**
says your God.
10 "Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all you who love her; rejoice for joy with her, all you who mourn for her;
11 That you may feed and be satisfied with the consolation of her bosom, that you may drink deeply and be delighted with the abundance of her glory."
12 For thus says the LORD: "Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream. Then you shall feed; on her sides shall you be carried, and be dandled on her knees.
13 As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; and you shall be comforted in Jerusalem."
14 When you see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like grass; the hand of the LORD shall be known to His servants, and His indignation to His enemies.
15 **For behold, the LORD will come with fire and with His chariots, like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire.**
16 **For by fire and by His sword the LORD will judge all flesh; and the slain of the LORD shall be many.**
17 "Those who sanctify themselves and purify themselves, to go to the gardens after an idol in the midst, eating swine's flesh and the abomination and the mouse, shall be consumed together," says the LORD.
18 "For I know their works and their thoughts. It shall be that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see My glory.
19 "I will set a sign among them; and those among them who escape I will send to the nations: to Tarshish and Pul and Lud, who draw the bow, and Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands afar off who have not heard My fame nor seen My glory. And they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles.
20 "Then they shall bring all your brethren for an offering to the LORD out of all nations, on horses and in chariots and in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem," says the LORD, "as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD.
21 "And I will also take some of them for priests and Levites," says the LORD.
22 "For as **THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH** which I will make shall remain before Me," says the LORD, "So shall your descendants and your name remain.
23 And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the LORD.
24 "And they shall go forth and look upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh."

It is evident from this passage that Isaiah sees an earthly kingdom after Messiah returns to judge WITH FIRE. Isaiah calls this earthly kingdom, after the earth is purged by the fire of the Lord, the "new heaven and new earth." Clearly, the PRESENT city of Jerusalem will remain. There are other definite allusions to this prophecy in the New Testament. Particularly, 66:7-13 was referenced by Jesus in the Olivet Discourse, when He spoke of "the beginning of birth pains" and "great tribulation (travail)."

We know that the present planet Earth will never be destroyed. David said the foundations of the earth will last forever (Psalm 104:5). Isaiah's and Peter's point was that man's works will be purged from the surface of the earth (vs. 10).

Based on all these considerations, it is my opinion that Peter was referring to the beginning of the Millennium (and Isaiah 65 & 66 in particular) when he spoke of the "new heaven and new earth." The elements melting is a hyperbolic description of the "Day of the Lord" mentioned by the prophets. This world system will come to an end and be replaced by the Kingdom of God on this planet that has been purged by the fire of God.

It is also quite likely that Joel 2 describes the actual process of this burning on the Day of the Lord. It is not a complete destruction of the entire planet.

Joel

2:1-11

1 Blow 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 is coming,** for it is at hand:
2 A day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, like the morning clouds spread over the mountains. A people come, great and strong, the like of whom has never been; nor will there ever be any such after them, even for many successive generations.
3 **A fire devours before them, and behind them a flame burns; the land is like the Garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; surely nothing shall escape them.**
4 Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; and like swift steeds, so they run.
5 With a noise like chariots over mountaintops they leap, **like the noise of a flaming fire that devours the stubble,** like a strong people set in battle array.
6 Before them the people writhe in pain; all faces are drained of color.
7 They run like mighty men, they climb the wall like men of war; every one marches in formation, and they do not break ranks. 8 They do not push one another; every one marches in his own column. Though they lunge between the weapons, they are not cut down.
9 They run to and fro in the city, they run on the wall; they climb into the houses, they enter at the windows like a thief. 10 The

earth quakes before them, the heavens tremble; the sun and moon grow dark, and the stars diminish their brightness. 11 The 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?

Here we have the angelic army of the Lord playing an active part in the purging of the earth by fire on the Day of the Lord. Zechariah 14 describes the fate of the wicked on this day, saying that their flesh will consume away while they are still standing on their feet!

One more Old Testament passage deserves note, which shows people still present on this earth after the burning on the "Day of the Lord."

Mal

4:1-3

1 "For behold, the day is coming, **burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up,**" says the LORD of hosts, "That will leave them neither root nor branch. 2 But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves. 3 You shall trample the wicked, for **they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this,**" says the LORD of hosts.

Do not overlook Peter's comment in verse 12 that we as Christians are "*hastening the coming of the Day of God.*" How? By being busy with the Great Commission, of course!

Within this section, Peter reminds us of the purifying effect of eschatology on the life of the believer. It is through "*looking for these things*" that we are motivated to conduct ourselves in a holy and pure way, while we anticipate the coming of Christ for us. Peter's comment about being found "*without spot and blameless*" is in reference to the bride's preparation to meet her groom (cf. 2 Cor. 11:2, Rev. 19:7). Notice that our "being found" in this condition implies that we will be present on earth when the "Day of the Lord" comes. (Note: the "Day of the Lord" and the "Day of God" are used interchangeably. See Rev. 16:14 for the only other use of the term "Day of God" in Scripture.)

V. Verses 15-18 CONCLUSION

15 and account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation-- as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, 16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures. 17 You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

Note the connection between the "long-suffering" of the Lord and the "salvation" of the lost, again pointing us toward the Great Commission.

Peter's reference to Paul and His epistles is particularly helpful here. This passage shows that Peter endorsed Paul's teaching, and has substantial ramifications regarding dispensationalism. It also implies that Peter was actually writing to Gentiles, since Paul's Epistles were written to Gentiles and Peter was addressing the same people. Notice also that Peter said Paul wrote of "these things" in all of His Epistles. In verses 11 & 14, Peter spoke of "these things" in the context of the coming "Day of the Lord" (in which Christ will return to earth). So, "these things" in verse 16 must still be referring to the coming day of Christ's return, in fire and judgment on the wicked, and to rescue believers. I must point out here, for those who believe this passage refers to the events accompanying the end of the Millennium, that Paul never mentioned "those things" in ANY of His Epistles! But, Paul definitely spoke of Christ's coming at the end of this age in ALL of His Epistles. There can be no doubt then that Peter's rather hyperbolic description of the Day of the Lord is indeed the day of Christ's return at the end of this age. Here is one of Paul's references to this day of fire and judgment. Like Peter, he also indicates our deliverance on the very same day the wicked are destroyed by fire! In both passages we have the rescuing of Christians at the same coming of Christ which destroys the wicked by fire.

II

Thess

1:5-10

5 which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer; 6 since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, 7 and to give you who are troubled rest with us **when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, 8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

9 These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 10 when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.

Paul also used precisely the same terminology regarding the "Day of the Lord." Both Peter and Paul were borrowing from Jesus' Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24:42,43). Peter said "*The Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night*" (vs. 10). Paul said exactly the same thing in reference to the second coming.

1Thes

5:2-6

2 For you yourselves know perfectly that **the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.** 3 For when they say, "*Peace and safety!*" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And

they shall not escape.
 4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.
 5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.
 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.

Basically, Paul wrote the Day of the Lord will overtake the wicked "as a thief in the night." But, it will NOT overtake believers "as a thief" who are watching! Those who heed the warnings will be ready to meet the Lord in the air at His coming. This is precisely what Peter was teaching. The wicked scoff, and will be overtaken unexpectedly by the day of fiery judgment. But wise believers are watching, preparing to be found "without spot," and are "hastening" the coming of that day by their obedience to the Great Commission.

Verse 17 is a final warning against falling short. In chapter 2, Peter warned of the false prophets who seduce believers away from the faith, just as Jesus and Paul warned that many believers would fall away in the days before Jesus' coming (cf. Matt. 24:9-13 & 2 Thess. 2:1-3). We should see this warning by Peter as the consequence of ignoring his earlier exhortation at the beginning of this Epistle, regarding how we might assure our abundant entrance into Christ's Kingdom.

2 Pet 1:2-11
 2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,
 3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:
 4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.
 5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;
 6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;
 7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.
 8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.
 10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

(KJV)

Notice the theme in this Epistle is the preparation of believers to have an abundant entrance into Christ's coming Kingdom. Chapter two warns of the pitfalls along the way that have and will bring ruin to many believers. Chapter three deals with the eschatology of Christ's coming Kingdom and its role in encouraging us to be found in Him without spot and blameless, as well as motivating us to complete our task of world evangelism. We as Christians can hasten the coming of the Day of the Lord. But we need to be ready to meet Him when He comes.

Joel & the Day of the Lord

By Tim Warner - 11/2001

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The "Day of the Lord" is one of the most debated topics in Christian eschatology. How we define the "Day of the Lord" has a dramatic effect on the rapture question. In 1 Thessalonians 5, Paul wrote that Christians should be watching for the Day of the Lord, implying that we will be here when it comes. He wrote that it will overtake unbelievers "as a thief." But because we are watching, believers will not be surprised when the Day of the Lord comes. Since the Day of the Lord is the day of Christ's coming at the end of the tribulation, the rapture can only be after the tribulation. For an in-depth discussion of 1 Thess. 5, see our article [The Day of the Lord in 1 Thess. 5.](#)

Pre-tribbers recognize the problem here, and have developed a view of the Day of the Lord that can accommodate their scenario. Basically, they say the Day of the Lord is the rapture and entire tribulation period, allowing Christians to still be here when the beginning of the tribulation comes. However, all Scripture regarding the Day of the Lord is compatible with a single day scenario. Post-tribbers take the term "day" literally, rather than stretching it into several years, as pre-tribbers do. In our article [The Day of the Lord does not include the tribulation](#) we have given nine biblical reasons why the Day of the Lord cannot include the tribulation but must follow it.

Another pre-trib attempt to sidestep the problem is to claim there are multiple "days of the Lord." In this way they can claim that the "Day of the Lord" Paul connects with the rapture in 1 Thess. is not the same "Day of the Lord" which follows the cosmic signs in Acts 2:20 & Joel 2:31. In support of their thesis, they point to the book of Joel, claiming that Joel referred to a past plague of locusts that devoured Israel's crops as a "Day of the Lord."

One point that needs to be stressed is that in each and every case where the Day of the Lord is mentioned in Scripture, it is in the future tense. Not once is the Day of the Lord referred to in the past tense, even in Joel. Furthermore, never is the Day of the Lord referred to in the plural. It is always singular.

When pre-tribbers use Joel to support a past "Day of the Lord," they have completely misunderstood the purpose of the book. Joel did NOT refer to the past plague of locusts as a "Day of the Lord." Rather, he referred to the disaster of the plague of locusts as an illustration of the FUTURE Day of the Lord to come at Christ's coming. Following is Joel chapter one. Pay particular attention to the tenses of the verbs which are color coded for simplicity. In verses 1-14, while describing the plague of locusts that God sent among Israel as a form of judgment, the **past tense** is used throughout. When speaking of the current results of the plague, the **present tense** is used. But, when Joel mentions the Day of the Lord, he always speaks of it in the **future tense**.

Past	tense	verbs	are	red.
Present	tense	verbs	are	blue.

Future tense verbs are green.

Joel 1:1-2:1

1 The word of the LORD that came to Joel the son of Pethuel.

2 Hear this, you elders, and give ear, all you inhabitants of the land! Has anything like this happened in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?

3 Tell your children about it, let your children tell their children, and their children another generation.

4 What the chewing locust left, the swarming locust has eaten; what the swarming locust left, the crawling locust has eaten; and what the crawling locust left, the consuming locust has eaten.

5 Awake, you drunkards, and weep; and wail, all you drinkers of wine, because of the new wine, for it has been cut off from your mouth.

6 For a nation has come up against My land, strong, and without number; his teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he has the fangs of a fierce lion.

7 He has laid waste My vine, and has stripped it bare and thrown it away; its branches are made white.

8 Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth.

9 The grain offering and the drink offering have been cut off from the house of the LORD; the priests mourn, who minister to the LORD.

10 The field is wasted, the land mourns; for the grain is ruined, the new wine is dried up, the oil fails.

11 Be ashamed, you farmers, wail, you vinedressers, for the wheat and the barley; because the harvest of the field has perished.

12 The vine has dried up, and the fig tree has withered; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree-- all the trees of the field are withered; surely joy has withered away from the sons of men.

13 Gird yourselves and lament, you priests; wail, you who minister before the altar; come, lie all night in sackcloth, you who minister to my God; for the grain offering and the drink offering are withheld from the house of your God.

14 Consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly; gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the LORD your God, and cry out to the LORD.

15 Alas for the day! For **the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come** as destruction from the Almighty.

16 Is not the food cut off before our eyes, joy and gladness from the house of our God?

17 The seed shrivels under the clods, storehouses are in shambles; Barns are broken down, for the grain has withered.

18 How the animals groan! The herds of cattle are restless, because they have no pasture; even the flocks of sheep suffer punishment.

19 O LORD, to You I cry out; for fire has devoured the open pastures, and a flame has burned all the trees of the field.

20 The beasts of the field also cry out to You, for the water brooks are dried up, and fire has devoured the open pastures. (NKJV)

Chapter two begins speaking about the future Day of the Lord.

Joel 2:1-2

1 Blow 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 is coming, for it is at hand:**

2 A day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, like the morning clouds spread over the mountains. A people come, great and strong, the like of whom has never been; nor will there ever be any such after them, even for many successive generations. (NKJV)

This chapter continues to describe the future Day of the Lord, where God's angelic army will devour the wicked with fire and destruction. Joel uses language that is nearly identical to the description of the plague of locusts mentioned in chapter one. This is done to drive home to the Jews the totality of the destruction that is coming, while the results of the locust plague was still fresh in their minds. The message is REPENT before the Day of the Lord overtakes them. If they repent, God promised to restore their crops that the locusts had eaten (vss. 25-27).

This is followed by a famous prophecy of the Day of the Lord quoted by Peter on the Day of Pentecost. Here again, the Day of the Lord is referred to in the future tense.

Joel 2:28-32

28 "And it shall come to pass afterward that 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.

29 And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

30 "And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth; blood and fire and pillars of smoke.

31 *The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, **before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.***

32 *And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the remnant whom the LORD calls. (NKJV)*

Again, the Day of the Lord is consistently FUTURE. The last chapter goes into detail, giving the events of the Day of the Lord in graphic detail.

Joel

3:9-17

9 *Proclaim this among the nations: "Prepare for war! Wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near, let them come up.*

10 *Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, 'I am strong.'"*

11 *Assemble and come, all you nations, and gather together all around. Cause Your mighty ones to go down there, O LORD.*

12 *"Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations.*

13 *Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow-- for their wickedness is great."*

14 *Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! **For the day of the LORD is near** in the valley of decision.*

15 *The sun and moon will grow dark, and the stars will diminish their brightness.*

16 *The LORD also will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; the heavens and earth will shake; but the LORD will be a shelter for His people, and the strength of the children of Israel.*

17 *"So you shall know that I am the LORD your God, dwelling in Zion My holy mountain. Then Jerusalem shall be holy, and no aliens shall ever pass through her again."*

(NKJV)

It is clear, in verses nine and following, that the Day of the Lord begins AFTER the armies have gathered for the battle of Armageddon. We know that the darkening of the sun and moon occurs "immediately after the tribulation," according to Matt. 24:29. Yet, according to Joel, after the armies have gathered and the sun and moon are darkened, the text says the Day of the Lord is "NEAR in the valley of decision." This implies that the Day of the Lord FOLLOWS the cosmic signs (as 2:31 explicitly says) and that the Day of the Lord is intimately connected with the Battle of Armageddon.

There is no biblical reason to suppose that the "Day of the Lord" is anything more than a single 24 hour day. It is the day of the second coming after the tribulation.

The fact is, pre-tribbers' attempts to get around the problem of 1 Thess. 5 are all doomed to failure. The Day of the Lord is a single day, immediately following the darkening of the sun and moon (Joel 2:31 & Acts 2:20) which immediately follows the tribulation (Matt. 24:29). Since Paul indicates that we as Christians are watching for the coming of the Day of the Lord, and connects the rapture with this day, the rapture is necessarily post-trib, and occurs the same day Jesus destroys the armies gathered at Armageddon. (See also our article As in the Days of Lot, and We Rest After the Tribulation, for more evidence that the rapture is **the same day** the wicked are destroyed.)

The Day of the Lord is One Day

By

Tim

Warner

-

11/2001

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All of the various rapture views, except post-trib, see the "Day of the Lord" as an extended period of time. For pre-tribbers, it includes the entire 7 year tribulation and pre-trib rapture. This is in order to account for Paul's encouragement for Christians to be watching for the Day of the Lord in 1 Thess. 5:1-9. How could we be watching for the Day of the Lord if we are raptured out of here 7 years before it comes? Consequently, they must stretch it forward to a time when we are still here prior to the tribulation in order to maintain their view. Many also include the entire Millennium in order to harmonize Peter's comments in 2 Peter 3 with Revelation. Peter places the burning of the earth on the "Day of the Lord." So, for these pre-tribbers, the "Day of the Lord" is 1007 years long! Quite a stretch for the little word "day!" Even pre-wrath folks view the Day of the Lord as at least several months in order to accommodate the trumpets and vials of Revelation, one of which lasts 5 months.

There is really no biblical reason to abandon the literal meaning of the word "day." It is the day of the second coming after the tribulation. It follows the darkening of the sun and moon (Joel 2:31 & Acts 2:20) which follows immediately after the tribulation (Matt. 24:29 & Mark 13:24).

Some pre-tribbers claim that too many things are said to occur on the Day of the Lord that cannot fit within a 24 hour period. But, that is simply not true. When pressed to produce these things, they typically do not go to passages that specifically mention the Day of the Lord. Rather, they point to several passages in the Old Testament that refer to "that day," claiming the term "that day" is a synonym for the Day of the Lord. But, "that day" does not necessarily point to the Day of the Lord. Sometimes it does, especially in the New Testament. But, there are scores of examples where "that day" clearly does NOT refer to the Day of the Lord. Such a non-specific phrase must be interpreted in its context. "That day" simply refers to whatever day the particular context has in view, rather than having a specific technical meaning itself, like the phrase "the Day of the Lord." In prophetic passages, sometimes "that day" refers to the tribulation, and sometimes to the Millennium. Yes, sometimes "that day" does refer to the Day of the Lord, when the context clearly indicates the Day of the Lord is in view. But, in order to sustain the pre-trib argument that too

many things occur within the Day of the Lord to fit within a 24 hour period, one must stick to passages that are indisputably referring to the Day of the Lord. If you look at all of the passages in Scripture **that specifically mention the "Day of the Lord,"** all of them are compatible with a single 24 hour day. Here are all Scriptures that mention the Day of the Lord. (Isaiah 2:12, Isaiah 13:6,9, Jer. 46:10, Ezek. 13:5, Ezek. 30:3, Joel 1:15, Joel 2:1,11,31, Joel 3:14, Amos 5:18,20, Obadiah 1:15, Zeph. 1:7,14, Zech 14:1, Mal. 4:5, Acts 2:20, 1 Cor. 5:5, 2 Cor. 1:14, 1 Thess. 5:2, 2 Thess. 2:3 NASB/NIV, 3 Peter 3:10).

The most important evidence that the Day of the Lord is a single 24 hour day comes from Zechariah 14.

Zech

14:1,6-7

1 Behold, **the day of the LORD cometh**, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. ...
 6 And it shall come to pass **in that day**, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark:
 7 But **it shall be ONE DAY** which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that **at evening**
time it shall be light.

(KJV)

In this case, "that day" in verse 6 is clearly referring to the Day of the Lord in verse 1. Zechariah says "the day of the Lord cometh" and then immediately speaks of the coming of Christ to defeat the armies of the nations gathered against Jerusalem. The word "cometh" implies arrival. The Day of the Lord will arrive when Christ returns at the end of the tribulation. But, notice verse 6 and 7. Terminology that can only apply to a single 24 hour day is applied to "that day" - the "Day of the Lord." While the word "day" in the Bible sometimes refers to longer periods, in this case such a view is impossible. Zechariah's description of the Day of the Lord presents "day" contrasted with "night," and "evening" with "morning." The "Day of the Lord" has a "morning" and an "evening." And the unique lighting conditions of that "day" are contrasted with normal 24 hour "days." Creationists insist that everything was created in six literal days, because Genesis describes each of the six days as having an "evening" and "morning." Why would not the same logic apply here? The lighting conditions on the Day of the Lord will be unlike any other "day" in history. That is what Zechariah is saying. Several passages indicate that the sun and moon will be darkened just prior to the coming of the Day of the Lord (Joel 2:31 & Acts 2:20). Perhaps the day before, or a few days before. But, sometime during the evening of the Day of the Lord, a new source of light will appear against the backdrop of total darkness. We know from many other passages that this source of light is the glory of Christ Himself, as He appears in the sky (Matt. 24:29-31). That is what the "glorious appearing" is all about. Christ's glorious appearing will be against the background of total darkness. (See also: Joel 2:1,2, Amos 5:18-20, Zeph. 1:15,16).

Another passage that deserves note is Isaiah 10:17. This passage does not mention the "Day of the Lord" by name, but I am convinced from the context that it is referring to that day.

Isa

10:12-23

12 Wherefore it shall come to pass, that **when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem**, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks.
 13 For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man:
 14 And my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people: and as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped.
 15 Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood.
 16 Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness; and under his glory he shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire.
 17 **And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame: and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briars**
in one day;

18 And shall consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field, both soul and body: and they shall be as when a standardbearer fainteth.

19 And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few, that a child may write them.

20 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.

21 The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God.

22 For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness.

23 For the Lord GOD of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined, in the midst of all the land.
 (KJV)

This passage parallels several others that speak of Christ's coming as being a day of consumption of the wicked and the land by fire (See also: Isaiah 66:15,24, Joel 2:1-11, Zech. 14:12, Mal. 4:1-5, 2 Thess. 1:7-10, 2 Peter 3:10-12). Notice the phrase "in one day" in verse 17. While we cannot prove that this "one day" is the Day of the Lord because that phrase is not specifically mentioned, by comparing it to these other passages we can be fairly certain.

See our article The Day of the Lord does not include the Tribulation for 9 reasons why the Day of the Lord is after the tribulation.

Sequence of events

The *Day of the Lord* is the climax of all Bible Prophecy. It is the day Christ is manifest in all His glory, and puts an end to Antichrist and his followers. This article deals with the sequence of events that will occur on that day, to the best of my understanding. This sequence is based on harmonizing many passages of Scripture. I could be mistaken about the exact order of some of these events. But, I am convinced that it is generally correct.

1. Before the Day of the Lord, the armies of the nations mass around Jerusalem for the battle of Armageddon [Joel 3:9-14, Rev. 16:13-16]

2. The sun turns black and the moon turns dark red "immediately after the tribulation" [Matt. 24:29, Mark 13:24], perhaps hours or moments before the "Day of the Lord" [Joel 2:31, Acts 2:20].

3. Jesus sitting on a white horse, the Father coming on His Throne [Ezek. 43:1-7 (cf. Ezek. 1:4- 28), Dan. 7:21,22, Mark 14:62, Rev. 6:16,17], the angels, and saints who have died, descend from heaven, circle the earth from east to west for all to see [Matt. 24:27, Rev. 1:7], and hover above the Mount of Olives in a thick cloud cover [Zech. 14:4,5b, Joel 2:2, Zeph. 1:15].

4. Jesus sounds the trumpet, the dead believers are raised and the living changed [1 Cor. 15:50- 54], His angels are dispatched over the whole earth to gather together His elect in the clouds above the Mount of Olives [Matthew 24:29-31, Mark 13:24-27, 1 Thess. 4:13-17].

5. Meteors fall from the sky [Isa. 34:4, Matt. 24:29, Rev. 6:13, Rev. 16:21].

6. The cloud cover over the Mount of Olives rolls back, revealing Christ, the Father, saints and angels [Isa. 34:4, Rev. 6:14], the people gathered for battle run for cover among the rocks [Isa. 2:10,19, Rev. 6:15-17].

7. The Jewish remnant, preserved by God throughout the tribulation [Isa. 26:20,21, Rev. 12:6,14], recognize Jesus as the Messiah, repent and believe, and are saved and sealed [Isa. 10:20,21, Isa. 66:8, Joel 2:32, 3:21, Zech. 12:9,10, 13:1,8,9, Mal. 3:1-3, 4:16-5:3, Rom. 11:26,27, Rev. 7:3-8].

8. Christ descends to the Mount of Olives [Zech. 14:4, Acts 1:11,12], the world's largest earthquake occurs [Isa. 2:19,21, Isa. 13:13, Isa. 24:18-23, Ezek. 38:19,20, Joel 3:16, Hag. 2:6,7,21, Nahum 1:5,6, Heb. 12:26,27, Rev. 6:14, Rev. 16:18], the Mount of Olives splits in two from east to west, and the faithful Jewish remnant flees toward Christ, through the valley created by the splitting of the mountain [Zech. 14:4,5].

9. The battle ensues, Christ throws the Antichrist and False prophet into the lake of fire and destroys the remaining kings [Rev. 19:11-21].

10. The angelic army takes care of the rest of the armies of the nations with fire [Isa. 13:3-11, Isa. 66:15,16, Joel 2:1-11 (cf. 2 Kings 6:17), Zech. 14:12, 2 Thess. 1:7-10].

11. The Lord destroys the remaining Jews who have worshipped the image of the Beast [Amos 5:15-20, Zeph. 1:all, Zech. 13:7-9]

12. The earth is purged by fire and the curse removed [Isa. 10:17-23, Nahum 1:2-6, Mal. 4:1-3, Romans 8:19-23, 2 Peter 3:10-12 (cf. Isa. 65:17-25)]