

The Day of the Lord

The book of Daniel is extremely important among the prophetic books of the Bible because it provides the road map for understanding all the prophecies about God's plan for the future. Without a clear understanding of Daniel, it would be very difficult to understand the other prophecies in both the Old and New Testaments. It would be difficult to understand the book of Revelation, Jesus' teachings, and the apostle's teachings about God's plan for the future. The book of Daniel was written after most of the major and minor prophetic books were written - except for the books of Ezekiel, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. These four books, plus the book of Daniel, are unusual also because all five of them, notice my emphasis on the word "all," contain very important prophecies about the future millennial kingdom. The book of Daniel is important for another reason. It is the only book that gives us the timeline of future events from the Babylonian Empire, past the death and resurrection of Christ, past the future millennial kingdom, and on into eternity.

We discovered in our last study that the book of Daniel contains three major prophecies about the future of the world. The prophecies started with the Babylonian Empire, which was followed by the Medo-Persian Empire, the Empire of Greece, and the Roman Empire. It was during the Roman Empire that Christ died and rose again. Daniel 9:24-26 accurately prophesied the date after which the Messiah would die, and He died within eight days. In addition, Daniel 9:26 prophesied that

the destruction of Jerusalem would occur next, and Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70. It is important to notice that these prophecies were literally and accurately fulfilled. These prophecies give us confidence that the next prophecy in Daniel 9:27 will literally and accurately be fulfilled.

The prophecy of Daniel 9:27 is about the Tribulation, which will occur at some point in the future. We are still waiting for this prophecy to be fulfilled. This period of time was symbolically called the ten toes in Daniel 2:42-43 and ten horns in Daniel 7:7-8. The ten toes or ten horns represent a future alliance of nations which eventually will be led by the antichrist. When the antichrist comes to power, he will rule the world. Then we learned that Daniel had prophesied the second coming of Christ would occur next, followed by the future

millennial kingdom, and then that kingdom will continue into eternity. When we came to the end of the last study, I stated that a) the Day of the Lord will start at the beginning of the tribulation, and b) that we would study the Day of the Lord some

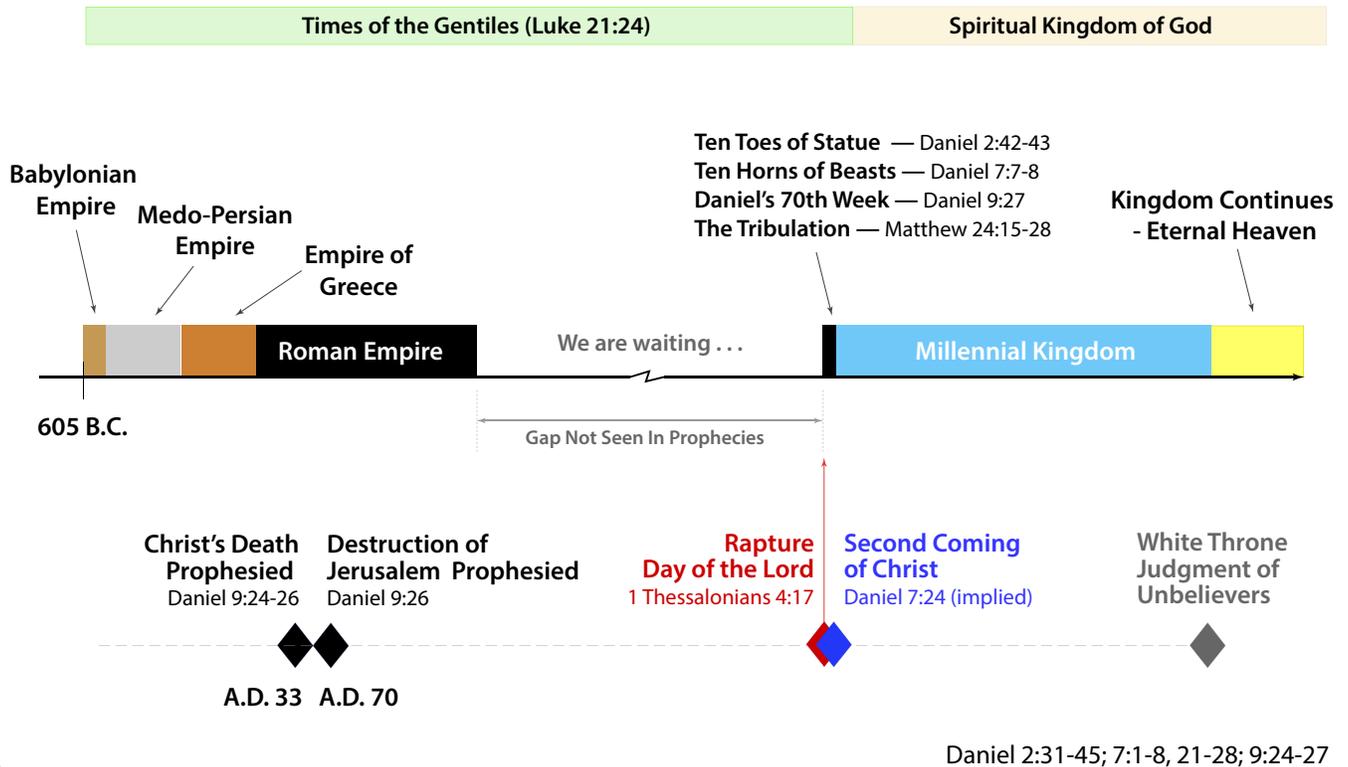


more in the second study of this series.

PURPOSE OF THIS SECOND STUDY. This is our second study of 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2 and as I promised we will be studying the Day of the Lord. But first, I want to begin by reading that passage again and remind you of what we are trying to learn.

[Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our](#)

Five Kingdoms Prophesied In Daniel



Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2 (NASB)

In our first study, we discovered that we needed to understand two important phrases in order to know the meaning of these two verses. The two phrases are “the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him,” and the “Day of the Lord.” In order to understand both phrases, we visited the book of Daniel, so that we could discover God’s plan for the future. In my introduction, I just reviewed what we learned in the last study about God’s plan for the future. Therefore, we are now ready to understand the meaning of these two phrases.

THE DAY OF THE LORD. The phrase “Day of the Lord” appears thirteen times in the Old Testament and five times in the New Testament. The phrase refers to an eschatological

Day of the Lord. It refers to the day of God’s vengeance upon a wicked world. It is a day when God pours out His wrath on unrepentant, wicked men and women.

Judgment on the Universe. For this study, we will visit only five passages that refer to the Day of the Lord. Each of them refers to three different points in time in God’s future plan for this fallen world. I plan to take them in the reverse order in which they will occur. The first passage we will study is 2 Peter 3:10-13. Here is the passage,

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt

with intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. 2 Peter 3:10-13 (NASB)

Here we are told the Day of the Lord will come like a thief. That is, when Jesus comes it will be a surprise. We are told that when He comes, the heavens will pass away or cease to exist. When we read these verses, they sound like an atomic bomb explosion because the elements are destroyed. Intense heat will occur. The earth will be burned up. Then the apostle Peter says that everything in the universe will be destroyed. We do not have an atomic bomb that can accomplish that level of destruction. It will be a direct act of God.

Next, verse 13 promises the long awaited-for-event. Finally, only righteousness will exist. The climax of God's plan for the future will finally be reached and believers will live with God for eternity. Now, what did we just learn? We learned that the day of the Lord can refer to the destruction of this wicked

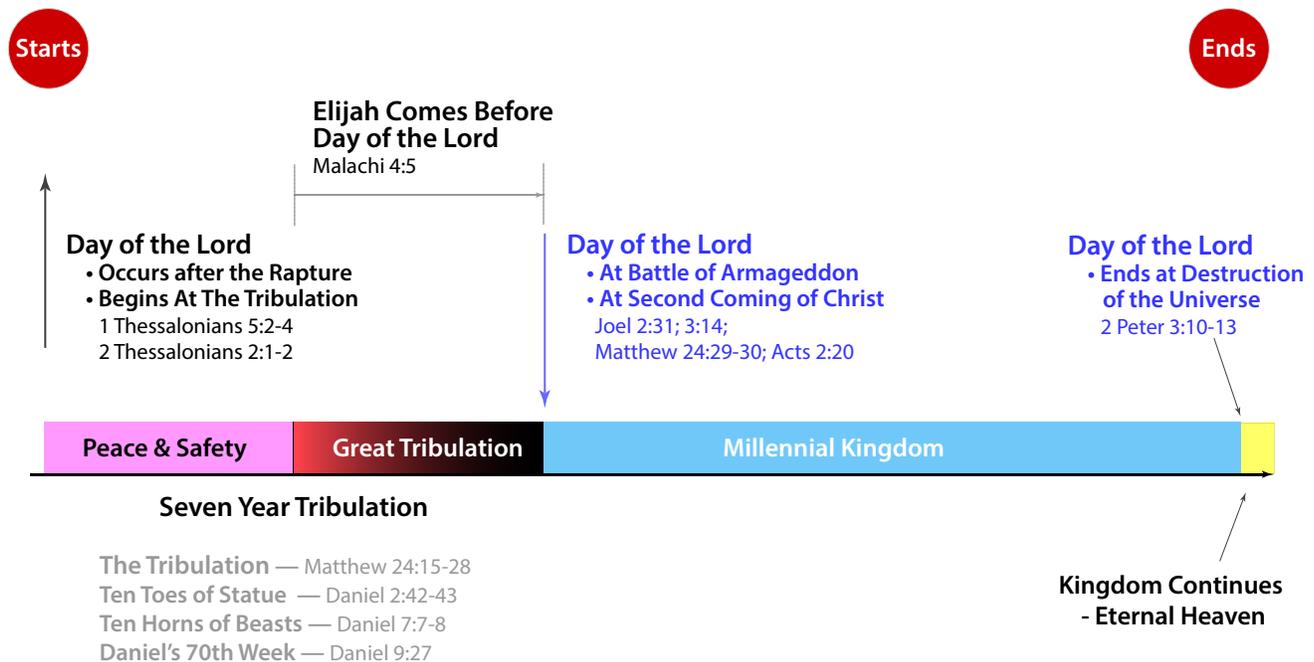
universe. Remember that the day of the Lord refers to God's wrath being poured out on wickedness.

Judgment at the Battle of Armageddon. The next two passages that mention the Day of the Lord occur at the second coming of Christ. Joel 2:30-31 is the first passage we want to visit. It says,

I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth,
 Blood, fire and columns of smoke.
 The sun will be turned into darkness
 And the moon into blood
 Before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. Joel 2:30-31 (NASB)

This is the same description that we find in Matthew 24:29-30. The passage says that Jesus told His disciples,

The Day of the Lord



But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.
Matthew 24:29-30 (NASB)

Both the Joel and Matthew passages refer to the second coming of Christ. Then, if we keep reading in Joel 3:12-16, we learn that the Day of the Lord is also used in reference to the battle of Armageddon.

Let the nations be aroused
And come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat,
For there I will sit to judge
All the surrounding nations.
Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe.
Come, tread, for the wine press is full.
The vats overflow, for their wickedness is great.
Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!
For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.
The sun and moon grow dark
And the stars lose their brightness.
The LORD roars from Zion
And utters His voice from Jerusalem . . . Joel 3:12-16a (NASB)

Notice in verse 12 that we are told nations of the world come to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. In verse 14, the Valley of Jehoshaphat is called the Valley of Decision. These are terms used for the battle of Armageddon. Once again, we read about the sun and moon being darkened and the stars losing their light. That occurs at the second coming of Christ. We are told the Lord roars from Zion. That is, the battle is over, and Jesus has achieved victory. It is “V-Day” for Christ against all His enemies and also against our enemies. Revelation 19:16-19 adds this,

And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written,
“KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.” Then I saw an

angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in mid-heaven, “Come, assemble for the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great.” And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.
Revelation 19:16-19 (NASB)

This means the Day of the Lord includes the second coming of Christ at the battle of Armageddon to rescue Israel. You can read more about this event in Zechariah 14:1-9. On the day of the Lord, Christ will destroy the armies of the world, and they will be sent to hell and the time of the Gentiles will come to an end. Malachi 4:5 also prophesies of this event, when it says that Elijah will come before the day of the Lord.

Judgment During the Tribulation. Scripture also uses the term, day of the Lord, to refer to the start of the tribulation. 1 Thessalonians 5:2-5 teaches us this point. It says,

For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day. 1 Thessalonians 5:2-5a (NASB)

Now notice that verse 2 refers to the day of the Lord, and we are told the day of the Lord comes like a thief in the night. In verse 3 we are told the day of the Lord will occur when people are saying “Peace and safety!” and then destruction follows. It is important to remember that the tribulation is described in Daniel 9:27 as the last week of Daniel’s seventy weeks. The tribulation begins when the antichrist makes a peace treaty with Israel. Daniel 9:27 told us that the first 3.5 years of the tribulation would be a time of peace and safety. In the middle of the Tribulation, the peace will be broken, and the antichrist will make war with Israel. So when 1 Thessalonians 5:3 refers to “Peace and safety!” that is a reference to the first 3.5 years

of peace in the tribulation. The deceptive peace is allowed by God as an act of judgment on a God-rejecting, anti-Semitic, and anti-Christian world.

So, what have we learned? The future day of the Lord is a period of time that begins with the tribulation and includes the second coming of Christ at the battle of Armageddon and concludes when the universe is finally destroyed. God will destroy all evil and bring in everlasting righteousness! That is the day of the Lord. I have now explained the meaning of the second term in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2.

THE RAPTURE. Now let us read 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2 again and prepare to learn the meaning of the first phrase.

Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2 (NASB)

Notice that we are told the “coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him” occurs before the day of the Lord. So, let me ask you a question, “When will the ‘coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him’ start in the future?” The answer is before the day of the Lord or the beginning of the tribulation. This means the phrase “The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him” occurs before the day of the Lord. So, remember this important point, and turn to 1 Thessalonians 4:13-15.

We are about ready to tie everything together. Here is 1 Thessalonians 4:13-15,

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-15 (NASB)

Now, I will not completely explain these verses because I will return to this passage in our next study. So, let me just say that

in verse 13, the apostle Paul uses the term “asleep” to refer to physical death. Then the apostle Paul tells the believers in Thessalonica that those Christians who had already died would be resurrected at the coming of the Lord. Then Paul refers to the coming of the Lord.

In verses 16-17, Paul says that the Lord will come with a shout and with the trumpet of God.

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 (NASB)

This is wonderful! God cares so much about the Christians who are already dead that He raises them first. Then in verse 17, we are told that every believer who is alive on the earth will be caught up together with the newly resurrected believers in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. In theology, this is called the rapture. The phrase, “the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him,” refers to the rapture. At the rapture, Jesus comes in the air and believers are gathered up to Him. Our Lord at the point does not come all the way down to the earth. So, now we know the meaning of the first phrase and the second phrase.

Now we must continue reading into the next chapter and notice we are told the rapture occurs before the day of the Lord. Before I read 1 Thessalonians 4:18-5:3, remember that when Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians, the book did not have chapters and verses. So, chapter four flowed into chapter 5. There should be no break.

Therefore comfort one another with these words. Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape. 1 Thessalonians 4:18-5:3 (NASB)

What do we learn from these verses? The rapture will occur just before the day of the Lord. We previously had learned when we visited these verses that the day of the Lord begins with the tribulation. This means the rapture occurs before the tribulation. Now there is more we need to learn about the rapture, but I do not have time in this study. Also, I want to give you some reasons why I do not believe Christians will enter the tribulation. So, our next study will continue our study about the rapture.

I want to share a quote from Harry Ironside. He summarizes what we have been studying. He was a professor of Dr. J. Vernon McGee years ago at Dallas Theological Seminary. He wrote this in his commentary on 1 and 2 Thessalonians,

The day of the Lord is the time when—the day of grace having ended—God will visit the world in judgment. Prior to that day of wrath, the first great event that will startle the world will be the disappearance of millions of people who have known and loved the Lord Jesus Christ. One moment they will be on the earth: some will be sleeping; some will be suffering in hospitals; some will be enduring pain, grief, and distress; some will be gathered together for worship. But the next moment “in the twinkling of an eye” these redeemed ones will be changed and they will disappear (1 Corinthians 15:52). The world will waken to find them gone.

I read of a gentleman who once a month went to a certain city where great steel mills were constantly pounding, pounding, pounding. He wondered how the citizens of that city could sleep, but they were so used to the noise that it did not bother them. He could get no sleep when he spent the night in that town. Then in the middle of one night, something happened to the electricity and in a moment the mills stopped. Suddenly the whole town woke up. They were so used to the noise that it put them to sleep.

The world has heard the gospel down through the centuries and still sleeps on. But some day the church will be gone and the gospel, as now preached, will be silenced. Then the world will wake up to find that it is entering the day of the Lord. “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” (1 Thessalonians 5:3).¹

CONCLUSION. What was Paul telling the believers in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2? He was trying to comfort them that they had not missed the rapture. The rapture will occur before the day of the Lord. They were not in the tribulation, and the Antichrist was not yet in power. Had they missed the rapture, that would have meant they were not really believers. This should be a comfort to every believer living today! The rapture will occur before the tribulation. If this occurs at some point in our life, we will leave this old world and everything behind. Whatever you own will be left behind. It is worthless and of no value in heaven. I like Paul’s words in 1 Thessalonians 4:17-18. He said that we Christians, . . .

. . . will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words. 1 Thessalonians 4:17-18 (NASB)

1. Harry Ironside. 1 & 2 Thessalonians. Loizeaux. 1997. p. 49.