

## **The Day of the Lord Comes Like a Thief in the Night**

**11-15-15 PM**

What is the Day of the Lord? Some people would say that it is “events that take place at the end of history”; others “the second coming of Christ” or “the end of time” or “the last day”. From a study of the Scriptures we find that the Day of the Lord is used in two ways: in the Old Testament (and in the first part of Matthew 24/Mark 13/Luke 21) it is used to describe God’s judgment against a group of people / nation for their sins. In the second part of Matthew 24/Mark 13/ Luke 21 it is used to describe one particular event. Understanding this change in meaning is of great importance to a Christian.

### **The Old Testament Usages of the Day of the Lord:**

Joel 1:15 - *Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is at hand; It shall come as destruction from the Almighty.*

Destruction of Judah (by Babylon)

Day of the Lord - darkness, locusts, famine

Zechariah 14:1 - *Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, And your spoil will be divided*

Destruction of Jerusalem (by Babylon)

Day of the Lord - all the nations gathered

Jeremiah 46:10 - *For this is the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, A day of vengeance, That He may avenge Himself on His adversaries. The sword shall devour; It shall be satiated and made drunk with their blood; For the Lord GOD of hosts has a sacrifice In the north country*

Destruction of Egypt by the northern nation (Babylon)

Day of the Lord - the swift may flee, escape

Lamentations 2:22 - *"You have invited as to a feast day The terrors that surround me. In the day of the LORD'S anger There was no refugee or survivor. Those whom I have borne and brought up My enemies have destroyed."*

Destruction of Jerusalem (by Nebuchadnezzar/ Babylon)

Day of the Lord - punishment, destruction

Isaiah 2:12 - *For the day of the LORD of hosts Shall come upon everything proud and lofty, Upon everything lifted up-And it shall be brought low*

Destruction of Jerusalem (Babylon or Rome)

Day of the Lord – it will come after the Mountain of the Lord is established (vs 2)

Isaiah 13:6 - *Wail, for the day of the LORD is at hand! It will come as destruction*

Destruction of Babylon by the Medes and Persians

Day of the Lord - stars will not shine, great noise, pangs like childbirth

Ezekiel 30:3 - *For the day is near, Even the day of the LORD is near; It will be a day of clouds, the time of the Gentiles.*

Destruction of Egypt and Ethiopia by Nebuchadnezzar

Day of the Lord - fire, day of clouds, time of Gentiles

*Zephaniah 1:14 - The great day of the LORD is near; It is near and hastens quickly. The noise of the day of the LORD is bitter; There the mighty men shall cry out.*

Destruction of Jerusalem (by Nebuchadnezzar/ Babylon)

Day of the Lord - no light to shine, noise, trumpets

*Zephaniah 2:2 - Before the decree is issued, Or the day passes like chaff, Before the LORD'S fierce anger comes upon you, Before the day of the LORD'S anger comes upon you!*

Destruction of: Philistia, Moab, Amon, Ethiopia, Assyria

Day of the Lord - desolation

*Obadiah 1:15 - For the day of the LORD upon all the nations is near; As you have done, it shall be done to you; Your reprisal shall return upon your own head.*

Destruction of Edom

Day of the Lord - destruction

### **The Day of the Lord in the New Testament**

So as we see in these passages, in the Old Testament the Day of the Lord refers to Judgment from God in the form of another nation. We note that "catastrophic" language is used to describe it, language which is more symbolic than literal. The purpose of this language specific to this term is to reveal God's part in a disaster or conquest. What we need to understand is that in the teaching of Matthew 24/Mark 13/Luke 21, Jesus used this language for the FIRST PART. This indicates that He was teaching about a destruction coming on Jerusalem. However, we need to note that in the second part of His teaching, Jesus changed the meaning of the Day of the Lord to refer to something quite different. We see this for example in Mark 13:32-37. There Jesus began describing a day and hour no man knows, one for which there will be no signs or warnings. Specifically, He says in Matthew 24:43 "*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.*"

This is a key to understanding: Jesus warned of a day that would come as a Thief. From this time on in the New Testament, the Day of the Lord is identified with the Thief in the Night. It is in 1 Thessalonians 5:1-5 (*For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night*) and in 2 Peter 3:1-10 (*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*).

We see some further explanation of this in Matthew 24-25 and three parables that surround the last Day of the Lord. The 2 Servants, the 10 Virgins and the Talents all point to a particular literal coming of the master that is summed up in Matthew 25:31-46. Thus we see Jesus is saying that the THIEF Comes on **The Judgment Day**.

Now we consider the Thief in the Night from Paul's view. We turn to 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (and 1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 50-57) and see that when Paul reference the day that comes as a Thief in the Night, he is referring to **the Resurrection Day**. Finally, when we spend more time in Peter's Thief in the night passage in 2 Peter 3:11-14 (and Hebrews 1:10-12), we see that Peter says that the THIEF comes on **the Last Day**.

So does this refer to three different days? We quickly see that this is not the case; we are saying that the day of the Lord that comes as a Thief in the Night is one day in which three things happen: the dead are raised, the Judgment of Christ occurs, and the end of the Creation occurs.