

The Day of the Lord: What It Really Means - Part 1

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As I have mentioned before, one serious problem with online evangelism which I have personally observed many times over the years, is that there are a lot of people who are still young in the Christian faith, and yet who endeavor to pass themselves off as experienced Bible teachers. While some of my readers will no doubt take offense, the simple truth of the matter is that such misguided people have absolutely no right to teach the Scriptures, because clearly, they don't know what they are talking about. As the Apostle Paul writes in his first Epistle to the brethren at Corinth:

"And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know."

1 Corinthians 8:2, KJV

Seriously, my friends, some of the claims that they make, and some of their interpretations of the Holy Scriptures, are quite outlandish. They are enough to make your jaw drop. Tragically, due to the very nature of the Internet, and the social networks in particular, regardless of whether they are right or wrong, the minute such people post something online, it can quickly spread like wildfire, and before you know it, another false doctrine has been born and henceforth is in circulation.

One particularly grave teaching error, which again, I have been exposing for many years now, is the practice of taking ancient, already-fulfilled Bible prophecies, and applying said prophecies to our modern day, as if they have not been fulfilled yet, when in fact they were fulfilled thousands of years ago. In this article, I want to address one particular phrase, because I have seen it being posted as a meme in recent days on the Facebook platform, along with a faulty interpretation of the same. The actual meme I have seen was based on the following set of verses which are found in the Book of the Prophet Zephaniah:

"The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD'S wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land."

Zephaniah 1:14-18, KJV

Now, lest any Futurist-leaning Christians try to ignorantly or intentionally misinterpret these verses which are found in the Book of Zephaniah, let me point out very clearly that the previous verses have absolutely nothing to do with some future return of Jesus Christ sometime during our current

century -- some say any day now -- as certain Futurists claim.

To give you a very brief background, the Prophet Zephaniah was a contemporary of Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel and some of the Minor Prophets. For those of you who may not be aware of it, within theological circles, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel are regarded as the Major Prophets, while all of the rest of the Prophets of the Old Testament are referred to as Minor Prophets. The sheer volume of the writings of the first four Prophets -- meaning Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel -- as compared to the others, easily reveals why this is so. It is certainly not to imply that the writings of the Minor Prophets were any less important. After all, it is all the inspired Word of God, and it is all very powerful.

To continue, just as Jeremiah began preaching as a young boy during the reign of King Josiah -- and continued to preach for forty years after that -- Zephaniah likewise began his preaching ministry during the reign of that same king. This fact can be easily confirmed by reading the opening verses of both Books, as we see here:

"The word of the LORD which came unto Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hizkiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah."

Zephaniah 1:2, KJV

"The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests that were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin: To whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, unto the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah king of Judah, unto the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month."

Jeremiah 1:1-3, KJV

To reiterate, the phrase "the great day of the LORD" which is mentioned in the previous group of verses in Zephaniah is NOT describing a future return of Jesus Christ to the Earth in our modern times, despite what certain well-meaning, but misguided, Futurist-leaning Christians say and teach. If you are not familiar with the various theological perspectives,

I invite you to read my seven-part series entitled "Jesus Christ's Return: Have We Been Deceived?", a link for which you will find at the end of this same article.

Please understand that in the Holy Scriptures, this phrase, "the great day of the LORD", is sometimes used to describe a time of great and terrible judgment, chastisement and major destruction when the Lord used the enemies of Israel to mete out His judgments against a proud, stubborn and rebellious people. In other words, at the time that these events occur, God does not actually come to the Earth such as is believed with the Second Coming doctrine which is embraced by so many Christians today. God simply intervenes via the enemies of Israel to pour out His judgments.

In short, the Lord used normal human beings as His agents of judgment, chastisement and destruction. It doesn't matter at all that these special agents of destruction were heathens. All God cared about was that they performed His Will, which as I have already explained, was to chastise the Israelites for their sins. King Nebuchadnezzar was clearly a Babylonian pagan who worshipped false gods. Yet because he performed God's Will by invading Israel on three different occasions, the Lord called Nebuchadnezzar "my servant" three times in the Book of Jeremiah, as we see by this group of verses:

"Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations."
Jeremiah 25:9, KJV

"And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him. And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his sons son, until the very time of his land come: and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him."
Jeremiah 27:6-7, KJV

"And say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will send and take Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will set his throne upon these

stones that I have hid; and he shall spread his royal pavilion over them."

Jeremiah 43:10, KJV

For those of you who may be interested, I discuss this same topic concerning the repeated invasions of Israel by her enemies in articles such as the series entitled "The Fruits of Disobedience". This reminds me of another Biblical phrase which is used in a very similar fashion. That is the phrase "I will visit". Let me provide you with several Scriptural examples so that you can clearly see what I am referring to:

"And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them. And the LORD plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made."

Exodus 32:33-35, KJV

"Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD."

Jeremiah 23:2, KJV

"For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Let not your prophets and your diviners, that be in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed. For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the LORD. For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place."

Jeremiah 29:8-10, KJV

"Flee ye, turn back, dwell deep, O inhabitants of Dedan; for I will bring the calamity of Esau upon him, the time that I will visit him."

Jeremiah 49:8, KJV

"Behold, I am against thee, O thou most proud, saith the Lord GOD of hosts: for thy day is come, the time that I will visit thee. And the most proud shall stumble and fall, and

none shall raise him up: and I will kindle a fire in his cities, and it shall devour all round about him."

Jeremiah 50:31-32, KJV

"And now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and none shall deliver her out of mine hand. I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts. And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees, whereof she hath said, These are my rewards that my lovers have given me: and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them. And I will visit upon her the days of Baalim, wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgot me, saith the LORD."

Hosea 2:10-13, KJV

As you can plainly see, in all of the previous verses, the word "visit" is associated with judgment, chastisement and destruction, very similar to how the phrase "the day of the LORD" is likewise used. In the previous verses, the word "visit" is translated from the Hebrew word "paqad", which means to attend to, muster, number, reckon, visit, punish, appoint, look after, or care for, according to the Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius Hebrew Aramaic English Lexicon. So we can say that the Lord is saying that He will attend to their judgment, chastisement and destruction. He will reckon with them. He will punish them.

Of course, we should not rule out entirely the possibility that the Lord actually did visit them in either a spiritual or even a physical form during those times of chastisement and destruction. As I point out in the article called "Sex, a Bowl of Soup and the Nature of Angels", there are certain circumstances where spiritual entities are in fact permitted to materialize within our physical world. One well-known example concerns Jesus Himself who was able to materialize and dematerialize following His resurrection from the dead. Consider the following two examples which are found in the Gospels of Luke and John:

"And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight . . . And as they thus spake, Jesus

himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet."

Luke 24:30-31, 36-40, KJV

"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, WHEN THE DOORS WERE SHUT where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord."

John 20:19-20, KJV

One other amazing example which I would like to share with you which seems to support this understanding of spiritual entities materializing in the physical realm, concerns what happened during the decisive battle for Jericho as found in the Book of Joshua. Consider the following group of verses:

"And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? And the captain of the LORD'S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so."

Joshua 5:13-15, KJV

Now, whether that mysterious visitor was Archangel Michael, or Jesus Himself, or some other spiritual entity, I will leave for you to decide. Whoever he was, he was there in a very physical form, and could easily pass for a human being. This should not surprise us, for as the Apostle Paul writes:

"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

Hebrews 13:2, KJV

Returning to our primary discussion, thus, similar to the Prophet Jeremiah who warned of the coming invasion from the north for forty years, those verses in the Book of Zephaniah are in reality likewise describing the coming judgment and destruction of Judah and Jerusalem by the hand of the armies of Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar. That is what is meant by "The great day of the LORD", because He was going to visit judgment, chastisement and destruction upon the Israelites. We know this to be so without a shadow of a doubt because verse four of the first chapter states the following:

"I will also stretch out mine hand upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place, and the name of the Chemarims with the priests;"

Zephaniah 1:4, KJV

As I point out in more detail in a number of my other Bible Basics articles, this terrible event being described by the Prophet Zephaniah actually occurred during the third and final Babylonian siege against Jerusalem around the year 587 BC. It resulted in the destruction of both Jerusalem and Solomon's temple, and in the enslavement of many thousands of Jews who were carried off to Babylon, where they remained for a period of seventy years. This was God's harsh judgment against the Jews due to their stubbornness, rebellion, their sacrificing of their own children to the false god Molech, and their defiant worship of other false gods, such as the so-called "queen of heaven". Consider this group of verses:

"The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger."

Jeremiah 7:18, KJV

"But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil. But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have

wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine. And when we burned incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink offerings unto her, did we make her cakes to worship her, and pour out drink offerings unto her, without our men? . . . Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saying; Ye and your wives have both spoken with your mouths, and fulfilled with your hand, saying, We will surely perform our vows that we have vowed, to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her: ye will surely accomplish your vows, and surely perform your vows."

Jeremiah 44:17-19, 25, KJV

So concerning these verses in the Book of Zephaniah, if anyone tries to explain them to you differently -- such as by pushing their fulfillment far into the future to our current time -- in my view, they are deceived, and they do not know what they are talking about. As such, I strongly urge you to please just ignore them.

As I mentioned previously, the phrase "the day of the Lord" generally refers to a dark time of judgment, chastisement and destruction in the Scriptures. However, each time that it is used, it is NOT always referring to the same prophetic event. It depends in large part on WHO is doing the warning, WHEN they are issuing the prophetic warning, and to WHOM the warning is being given. As we have already discussed, in the case of Zephaniah, he was a contemporary of Jeremiah, and he was warning the Jews of the coming destruction of Jerusalem and the temple compound at the hand of the Babylonian armies around 587 BC. THAT was Zephaniah's "the day of the Lord".

In the case of the Prophet Jeremiah, we find the phrase "the day of the Lord" being used only one time in his main book. Not only that, but rather than being directed towards the the disobedient Jews, the Lord has Jeremiah use the phrase as a stiff warning of judgment, chastisement and destruction against the armies of Egyptian king, Pharaoh Necho, who went up to do battle against the armies of King Nebuchadnezzar, at Carchemish on the Euphrates River in Syria. This war -- which the Egyptians lost -- occurred during the fourth year of the reign of King Jehoiakim, who was the son of King Josiah. We find the phrase "the day of the Lord" in the following group of verses:

"Come up, ye horses; and rage, ye chariots; and let the mighty men come forth; the Ethiopians and the Libyans, that handle the shield; and the Lydians, that handle and bend the bow. For this is the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries: and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood: for the Lord GOD of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates."

Jeremiah 46:9-10, KJV

Now concerning why the Lord sought this particular revenge against the Egyptians and their allies, my personal belief is that it is because Josiah -- the father of Jehoiakim -- foolishly went up to fight against Pharaoh Necho's armies, even though the Egyptian king had told Josiah that he had no quarrel with him. Nevertheless, Josiah insisted on fighting against him. The tragic result was that Josiah was mortally wounded and eventually died. So as I said, perhaps this is why the Lord sought revenge. Following is a Biblical account of this event. Please notice the presence of Jeremiah in these verses. As we learned earlier, it was during the reign of Josiah that Jeremiah first began preaching as a young boy:

"After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Carchemish by Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him. But he sent ambassadors to him, saying, What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war: for God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not. Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo. And the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants, Have me away; for I am sore wounded. His servants therefore took him out of that chariot, and put him in the second chariot that he had; and they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died, and was buried in one of the sepulchres of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah: and all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel: and, behold, they are written in the

lamentations."

2 Chronicles 35:20-25, KJV

Let me mention here that years later, during the reign of King Zedekiah -- who was the final king of Judah -- and just prior to the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians, against the Prophet Jeremiah's sound advice, some of the rebellious Jews fled to Egypt, hoping to avoid the Lord's chastisement against them. However, if you read all of Jeremiah 46, you will see that the Lord pronounced judgment against both the Egyptians AND against the fleeing Jews who went there.

The phrase "the day of the Lord" is used in a slightly different way by Jeremiah in the Lamentations of Jeremiah. While he is writing about the same judgment, chastisement and destruction which was meted out by the Babylonians, in this case, Jeremiah does not use the phrase with regard to judgment against the Egyptians and the rebellious Jews who have fled to Egypt. Rather, the Prophet uses the phrase as he is pleading with the Lord concerning what has befallen the Jerusalemites. To give you some background, the invasion and destruction has already occurred by this time. Those who remain in Israel are greatly suffering. The peoples skin is turning black from starvation. Women are eating their very own babies. Death, suffering and destruction are everywhere. In the midst of all of that, Jeremiah -- who is known as the Weeping Prophet -- writes the following:

"Behold, O LORD, and consider to whom thou hast done this. Shall the women eat their fruit, and children of a span long? shall the priest and the prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord? The young and the old lie on the ground in the streets: my virgins and my young men are fallen by the sword; thou hast slain them in the day of thine anger; thou hast killed, and not pitied. Thou hast called as in a solemn day my terrors round about, so that in the day of the LORDS anger none escaped nor remained: those that I have swaddled and brought up hath mine enemy consumed."

Lamentations 2:20-22, KJV

"Their visage is blacker than a coal; they are not known in the streets: their skin cleaveth to their bones; it is withered, it is become like a stick. They that be slain with the sword are better than they that be slain with hunger:

for these pine away, stricken through for want of the fruits of the field. The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children: they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people."

Lamentations 4:8-10, KJV

"Our skin was black like an oven because of the terrible famine."

Lamentations 5:10, KJV

The main point which I again want to emphasize, and which I want you to recognize from these two accounts in the Book of Jeremiah, is that the phrase "the day of the Lord" does NOT refer to one specific event as is believed by some modern Christians. It is NOT talking about a twenty-first century return of Jesus Christ. You need to get that false idea out of your head. To the contrary, as we have now seen through several Scriptural examples, "the day of the Lord" is used in association with MULTIPLE prophetic events, all of which were fulfilled many centuries ago. A day of the Lord is a day of major judgment, chastisement and destruction. That is what the phrase means.

As I mentioned earlier, the Prophet Ezekiel was also counted among the Major Prophets of Israel. He was a contemporary of the Prophet Jeremiah. In the opening verses of his book, we learn that he was part of the captives who settled near the Chebar River in Babylon, as we see here:

"Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity, The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was there upon him."

Ezekiel 1:1-3, KJV

Please note that Ezekiel was taken captive prior to the actual destruction of Jerusalem and the temple compound in 587 BC. As I explain in other articles, there were three Babylonian sieges against Jerusalem, and it was during the third and final siege that Jerusalem finally fell. Prior to

the destruction of Jerusalem, King Nebuchadnezzar installed puppet kings in Jerusalem who were supposed to do his royal bidding. However, the last three kings were rebellious. The second to the last king was Jehoiachin, who only reigned for three months before he surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar and was taken captive to Babylon, where he was imprisoned for about thirty-seven years. Consider the following verses:

"Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and his abominations which he did, and that which was found in him, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead. Jehoiachin was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD. And when the year was expired, king Nebuchadnezzar sent, and brought him to Babylon, with the goodly vessels of the house of the LORD, and made Zedekiah his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem."

2 Chronicles 36:8-10, KJV

Please notice that Ezekiel specifically says that he had his vision during the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity. Being as Jehoiachin's brother, Zedekiah, reigned in Jerusalem for a period of eleven years before Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians, this is how we know that Ezekiel began having his visions and prophesying about six years BEFORE Jerusalem actually fell. Please consider this group of verses:

"Zedekiah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD his God, and humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet speaking from the mouth of the LORD. And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the LORD God of Israel."

2 Chronicles 36:11-13, KJV

Please go to part two for the continuation of this series.

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The Day of the Lord: What It Really Means - Part 2

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The Prophet Ezekiel's Two Instances Of "The Day Of The Lord", Prophecy Against Judah And Jerusalem, Prophecy Against Egypt, Prophet Amos Warns Israel Judah And The Surrounding Nations, Tiglath-Pileser III And Shalmaneser V Invade Northern Israel, Assyrian's War Strategy Of Expatriation And Repopulation, Why The Jews Of Southern Israel Hated The Israelites Of The North, Assyrian Kings Sargon II And Sennacherib Subjugate Kingdom Of Judah, Pagan Conquering Kings Who Are Mentioned In The Bible, The Bible Is A Reliable Source Of Historical Information, "The Day Of The Lord" Is Connected To Multiple Fulfilled Prophetic Events, Amos Prophecies The Captivity And Expatriation Of The Israelites, The Long Ministry Of Prophet Isaiah, Assyrian King Shalmaneser V Conquers Samaria During Isaiah's Life, Assyrian King Sennacherib Conquers Judah And Jerusalem, Prophet Isaiah Encourages King Hezekiah To Resist Sennacherib, God Smites The Assyrian Army, Similarity Between Assyrians And Babylonians, Prophet Isaiah Used "The Day Of The Lord" Four Times, Common Prophetic Patterns, It Makes No Sense To Apply "The Day Of The Lord" To The Twenty-First Century, Obadiah's Prophecy Against Edom, Esau And Edomites, Malachi's Prophecy Regarding Elijah And John The Baptist, Isaiah's Prophecy, Jesus Before Pilate

Continuing our discussion from part one, the reason why it is important to establish when Ezekiel was in Babylon and began prophesying, is because it reveals that similar to Zephaniah, Jeremiah and other Prophets, he specifically used the phrase "the day of the Lord" to describe God's soon-coming, fierce judgment against Judah and Jerusalem, which at that time was only six years into the future from Ezekiel's perspective. We can easily verify this point with the following verses:

"And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and

say thou unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts,
Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe
unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and
have seen nothing! O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes
in the deserts. Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither
made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the
battle in the day of the LORD."

Ezekiel 13:1-5, KJV

It is quite evident that the Prophet Ezekiel is addressing the lying prophets of Israel when he uses the phrase "the day of the Lord". He is most certainly NOT talking about a future return of Jesus Christ in the twenty-first century. Regarding why God is having Ezekiel say this, if you take the time to read some of my other BBB articles -- or simply read the Book of Jeremiah -- you'll discover that there was a verbal battle going on between Jeremiah and the deceptive false prophets in Jerusalem who were bad-mouthing Jeremiah, and prophesying peace, when in fact utter destruction upon Judah and Jerusalem was only years away.

Aside from the previous example, there's only one other place in his prophetic book where Ezekiel employs the use of the phrase "the day of the Lord". Once again, it has absolutely nothing to do with the return of Jesus Christ sometime in the twenty-first century, as many modern Christians anticipate. That second instance of the phrase is found in the following verses where the Lord has Ezekiel pronouncing judgment and destruction against the Egyptians and their allies. Exactly how will this great destruction arrive? By the hand of King Nebuchadnezzar and his armies. Now what is interesting about this, is the fact that in part one I mentioned how Jeremiah ALSO used the phrase as a judgment against Pharaoh Necho and the Egyptians. Consider the Scriptural proof:

"The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Howl ye, Woe worth the day! For the day is near, even the day of the LORD is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen. And the sword shall come upon Egypt, and great pain shall be in Ethiopia, when the slain shall fall in Egypt, and they shall take away her multitude, and her foundations shall be broken down. Ethiopia, and Libya, and Lydia, and all the mingled people, and Chub, and the men of the land that is in league, shall fall with them by the sword. Thus saith the

LORD; They also that uphold Egypt shall fall; and the pride of her power shall come down: from the tower of Syene shall they fall in it by the sword, saith the Lord GOD. And they shall be desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities shall be in the midst of the cities that are wasted. And they shall know that I am the LORD, when I have set a fire in Egypt, and when all her helpers shall be destroyed. In that day shall messengers go forth from me in ships to make the careless Ethiopians afraid, and great pain shall come upon them, as in the day of Egypt: for, lo, it cometh. Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also make the multitude of Egypt to cease by the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon. He and his people with him, the terrible of the nations, shall be brought to destroy the land: and they shall draw their swords against Egypt, and fill the land with the slain."

Ezekiel 30:1-11, KJV

The fact that Ezekiel very specifically tells us who is the target of God's wrath -- the Egyptians and their allies -- and who will be used to mete out God's wrath -- the armies of King Nebuchadnezzar -- provides us with the precise time frame for this instance of the phrase "the day of the Lord". So I am sure that it is obvious to you that just as in all of the other Scriptural examples I have thus far provided for you, the phrase "the day of the Lord" is being used to describe a past, fulfilled prophetic event which occurred literally thousands of years ago. In the Book of Ezekiel, the phrase has absolutely nothing to do with our current time.

To continue, let us examine another one of the Minor Prophets by the name of Amos. Unlike Zephaniah who was a contemporary of the Prophet Jeremiah, Amos lived many decades earlier and was a contemporary of the Prophet Isaiah. While Jeremiah and his contemporaries primarily warned the Jerusalemites of the impending invasion by the Babylonian armies, Isaiah and his contemporaries warned the Israelites of the northern ten tribes of the coming invasion and conquest by the Assyrians.

However, they likewise warned that the Assyrian scourge would eventually reach deep down into the southern kingdom of Judah as well. In fact, in the opening chapter of his book, Prophet Amos also warns of coming judgment against the nations which surround Israel.

Just as we pinpointed the timing of Jeremiah, Zephaniah and Ezekiel's prophesying by discovering who was king at that time, or by closely looking at other facts they mention in their books, we can do the very same thing with regard to Amos. Thus, in chapter one of the Book of Amos, we read the following lines:

"The words of Amos, who was among the herdmen of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake."

Amos 1:1, KJV

As you can easily see, when Amos began prophesying, Jeroboam -- historically known as Jeroboam II -- was the king of the northern kingdom of Israel, while Uzziah was the king of the southern kingdom which consisted of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. This places Amos around 750 BC, or approximately one hundred and seventy years before the fall of Jerusalem to the armies of Babylon, and only a few decades before the northern kingdom of Israel -- with its capital at Samaria -- was conquered by the Assyrian kings Tiglath-Pileser III and Shalmaneser V.

As I mention in the series "The Fruits of Disobedience", as was their custom, in order to weaken an enemy, the Assyrians carried off thousands of captives from northern Israel to serve as slaves in other regions of the Assyrian empire. At the same time, the Assyrians would also import foreigners into the conquered lands, thus polluting the native gene pool. This is one reason why the self-righteous leaders of Judah hated the Israelites of northern Israel, and viewed themselves as much superior to them. Do you remember how the Samaritan woman was surprised when Jesus spoke to her at the well? Do you also recall how Nathanael replied when Philip informed him that they had found the Messiah? This is the reason why. Consider the following verses where these two incidents are mentioned:

"Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see."

John 1:44-46, KJV

"Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans."
John 4:9, KJV

According to a number of online sources, a few decades after the Assyrian conquest of the northern kingdom of Israel, the Assyrian kings Sargon II and Sennacherib were likewise able to subjugate the southern kingdom of Judah following a siege against Jerusalem in about 701 BC. However, while the Jews were subjugated, nevertheless, the Assyrians were unable to actually annex the southern kingdom of Judah as a part of Assyrian territory. As I already noted, Jerusalem and the temple compound would not meet full destruction until the third Babylonian siege in 587 BC, as had been prophesied by the Prophet Jeremiah and others.

Incidentally, you should know that while the various names of the Assyrian and Babylonian kings are well known amongst secular historians, some of them are likewise specifically mentioned by name in the Holy Scriptures. Some kings' names are given a localized name in the Bible, so sometimes they can be a little more difficult to identify. As an example, there are several Persian kings -- namely Darius, Xerxes I and Artaxerxes -- who seem to be associated with the Hebrew name Ahasuerus. This important connection adds weight to the validity of the Bible being a reliable source of information. Or, if you prefer, we can look at it in reverse and say that the Biblical record confirms the historical record. At any rate, following are some example verses which mention some of the Assyrian conquering kings:

"In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah began Hoshea the son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, but not as the kings of Israel that were before him. Against him came up Shalmaneser king of Assyria; and Hoshea became his servant, and gave him presents. And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea: for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year: therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison. Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to

Samaria, and besieged it three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes."

2 Kings 16:1-6, KJV

"In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod, (when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him,) and fought against Ashdod, and took it; At the same time spake the LORD by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot."

Isaiah 20:1-2, KJV

"Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them."

2 Kings 18:13, KJV

"After these things, and the establishment thereof, Sennacherib king of Assyria came, and entered into Judah, and encamped against the fenced cities, and thought to win them for himself. And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib was come, and that he was purposed to fight against Jerusalem, He took counsel with his princes and his mighty men to stop the waters of the fountains which were without the city: and they did help him."

2 Chronicles 32:1-3, KJV

"Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them."

Isaiah 36:1, KJV

Returning to our primary discussion, as we have already seen, contrary to the popular, modern opinion which is embraced by some misguided Christians which claims that the phrase "the day of the Lord" specifically -- and perhaps only? -- refers to a future return of Jesus Christ, this phrase is actually used to describe and warn of multiple prophetic events which were fulfilled in the distant past. This terrifying phrase signified severe judgment, chastisement and destruction from the Lord via the enemies of Israel, or in some cases against the enemies of Israel. Concerning the case of the Prophet Amos, he used the phrase in the following manner:

"Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to what end is it for you? the day of the LORD is darkness, and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of the LORD be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?"

Amos 5:18-20, KJV

So considering when Amos lived and preached, it would seem that Amos' "day of the Lord" was referring to the Assyrian conquest of the northern kingdom of Israel during the eighth century BC, and the subsequent subjugation of the southern kingdom of Judah as well. In fact, if you closely read into what Amos wrote, you will see that he repeatedly addressed the house of Israel by name in multiple verses.

But that is not all. As I previously discussed, it was the regular custom of the Assyrians to pollute the gene pool of the people which they conquered by not only enslaving them and carrying them away as captives to other areas of their empire, but also by introducing foreigners into the conquered lands. Thus, it is no surprise that only seven verses later, we in fact find Amos prophesying how the Israelites will be carried away as captives into other regions of the Assyrian empire. Consider this set of verses:

"Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves. Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the LORD, whose name is The God of hosts."

Amos 5:25-27, KJV

Moving forward with our list of Prophets who used the phrase "the day of the Lord", we come to one of the Major Prophets. In fact, he is viewed as the first Major Prophet, and his name is Isaiah. Once again, we can learn exactly when Isaiah preached his warning messages and saw his terrible visions, simply by reading the very first verse in his prophetic book, and seeing which kings reigned in the southern kingdom of Judah during the time of his preaching ministry:

"The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah."

Isaiah 1:1, KJV

You might find it interesting to know that if we add up the full number of years which each of the aforementioned Judean kings reigned, we arrive at a total of one hundred and one years according to the Scriptures. While we do not know with any degree of certainty in which year of King Uzziah's reign Isaiah began to prophesy, or in which year of Hezekiah's reign he concluded his work for the Lord, we can still see that he prophesied for quite a long time. Some theologians estimate that the full length of Isaiah's preaching ministry may have been around sixty-four years. This would make his time of warning Israel about twenty years longer than the ministry of the Prophet Jeremiah who arrived on the scene about a century later.

Aside from learning how long Isaiah preached against Israel, what we can also determine from the very first verse of his book is that his prophetic vision was directed to Judah and Jerusalem. However, as I already explained to you, and as we saw in earlier verses, let me point out that it was during Isaiah's lifetime that Assyrian king Shalmaneser V initiated his conquest of Israel, beginning with the conquest of the northern kingdom of Israel -- a.k.a. Ephraim -- and the destruction of its capital, Samaria. As the previous verses likewise explain, in later years, during the reign of King Hezekiah, Assyrian king Sennacherib, conquered and subdued the southern kingdom of Judah, and Hezekiah was subject to him, at least initially.

For a while, Sennacherib was occupied with other battles. But when the Prophet Isaiah encouraged Hezekiah to rebel against Sennacherib, the Assyrian king sent a threatening letter to Hezekiah in which he warned him to submit. However, Prophet Isaiah told Hezekiah to not yield to Sennacherib, because the Lord was going to deliver the Israelites out of Sennacherib's hand. That is precisely what did in fact occur, as we see by the following group of verses. When Sennacherib came against Jerusalem for the second time, the Angel of the Lord smote his army:

"Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of

Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD. For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant Davids sake. Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia: and Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead." Isaiah 37:33-38, KJV

Before continuing our discussion regarding the phrase "the day of the Lord", being as we are examining the Assyrian and the Babylonian invasions and conquests of the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel, allow me to interject one other very interesting point. As I mention in other articles, the Assyrians and the Babylonians were basically the same people culturally, socially and religiously. In fact, you may find it interesting to know that Nebuchadnezzar's father -- who was the first king of the Neo-Babylonian empire -- was an Assyrian by the name of Nabopolassar. So in a sense, the Neo-Assyrian empire morphed into the Neo-Babylonian empire.

Concerning the phrase "the day of the Lord", upon delving deeper into his writings, we discover that Isaiah employed this phrase four times in his prophetic book, as we see by the following group of verses. Please notice that in these verses, Isaiah pinpoints Judah and Jerusalem as the target of God's terrible wrath, and he then appears to identify the Babylonians -- "They come from a far country" -- as the human agents which God will use to punish Israel:

"The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem . . . For THE DAY OF THE LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low:" Isaiah 2:1, 12, KJV

"The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see. Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain, exalt the

voice unto them, shake the hand, that they may go into the gates of the nobles. I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in my highness. The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the LORD of hosts mustereth the host of the battle. They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the LORD, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land. Howl ye; for THE DAY OF THE LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt: And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames. Behold, THE DAY OF THE LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it."

Isaiah 13:1-9, KJV

"For it is THE DAY OF THE LORD'S vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion."

Isaiah 34:8, KJV

One thing you will discover as you really dig into all of prophetic books is that while God very clearly executed His judgment, chastisement and destruction against the nation of Israel -- sometimes the northern kingdom, sometimes the southern kingdom, and sometimes the entire nation -- as I have explained before, at the same time, He also pronounced the eventual fall and destruction of those nations which He used to punish Israel. Thus we see that His judgments and His justice are truly, and always righteous. This pattern of punishing both the target nation and the destroyers who were sent to destroy the target nation, is likewise found throughout the Book of Isaiah.

Thus far in this series, we've discussed Prophets Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos and Isaiah. We have seen the very same prophetic pattern with all of them. That is to say that whenever they used the phrase "the day of the Lord", it was always, without fail, used to describe a certain prophetic event which occurred, and which was fulfilled, in the very distant past from our modern-day perspective. If we honestly stop to think about this issue, it really makes zero sense to

even try to apply the phrase -- as used in their books -- to the second coming of Jesus Christ sometime in the twenty-first century. The reason behind this should be clear to you by now: The Prophets always gave us the particulars, so that we know the who, what, where and when; and those particulars always pertained to and pointed to events of centuries past.

While we have already covered a lot of territory, we're still far from done with discussing this prophetic phrase. In fact, as we continue, we will be discussing the Prophets Obadiah, Zechariah, Malachi and Joel who used "the day of the Lord" on one or more occasions in their writings. Let us begin with the first three, being as they only used the phrase one time.

While Obadiah's prophecy is rather short, being only a single chapter in length, in it he pronounces the Lord's judgment of the enemy nations which surround Israel. However, the Prophet in particular targets the nation of Edom, which, as I have explained in other articles, was populated by the descendants of Esau, who was also known as Edom. In fact, the dynasty of King Herod were Edomites, or Idumaeans. Today, Edom is a part of the nation of Jordan. If you are wondering about the name Edom, the word actually means "red"; and if you are wondering why Esau was called that, consider the following verses:

"And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. And the first CAME OUT RED, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau . . . And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint: And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same RED POTTAGE; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom."

Genesis 25:24-25, 29-30, KJV

"Now these are the generations of Esau, who is Edom . . . Thus dwelt Esau in mount Seir: Esau is Edom."

Genesis 36:1, 8, KJV

At any rate, as you read the following verses, take note of how the prophecy says "thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high" as well as "Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle". This is because Esau and his descendants inhabited the mountainous area of Mount Seir in Edom. So God warns the Edomites that He will humble them and bring them low:

"The vision of Obadiah. Thus saith the Lord GOD concerning Edom; We have heard a rumour from the LORD, and an ambassador is sent among the heathen, Arise ye, and let us rise up against her in battle. Behold, I have made thee small among the heathen: thou art greatly despised. The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD . . . For the day of the LORD is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head."

Obadiah 1:1-4, 15, KJV

So once again we see that the phrase "the day of the Lord" is used to describe the judgment and destruction of a nation which existed a long time ago. Thus, this prophecy was also fulfilled many centuries ago, and has nothing to do with our current time.

Next, we are going to examine the one instance where the Prophet Malachi uses the phrase "the great and dreadful day of the Lord". Being as I amply discuss this prophecy in a few of my other articles -- such as in the series "Elijah: Where Are the True Prophets of God?" -- I won't be going into a lot of detail in this current series. Here are the pertinent verses:

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

Malachi 4:5-6, KJV

So in a nutshell, as I amply explain in the aforementioned series, the Prophet Malachi was prophesying the arrival of John the Baptist during the First Century AD, just prior to when Jesus would begin His public ministry in Israel. As the Lord confirmed, John was in fact the Elijah who was to come. Furthermore, exactly as Malachi writes, John's ministry was a ministry of repentance which was designed to prepare people's hearts, and to make them receptive to the appearance of Jesus

Christ in their midst.

Now please notice that the Prophet Malachi says "before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD". At first glance, we might think that when Malachi uses the term "day of the Lord", he is talking about the events that occurred during Jesus' earthly ministry. However, doing so would be an error on our part. Why do I say this? Well, because in every Scriptural example we've examined thus far, the phrase has without fail been associated with what? Severe judgment, chastisement and destruction from the Lord.

As some of you will know, this most certainly did NOT happen during the time of Christ's ministry on Earth. Quite to the contrary, Jesus' ministry was in fact marked by love, mercy, forgiveness and compassion. Yes, He had some serious clashes with the unbelieving Scribes and Pharisees, but this was a far cry from the harsh judgment, chastisement and destruction we have seen in the previous examples. Furthermore, as Isaiah wrote, Jesus went silently to the Cross as a lamb led to the slaughter. Consider the following verses, taking note of the words I have placed in uppercase letters:

"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and AS A SHEEP BEFORE HER SHEARERS IS DUMB, SO HE OPENETH NOT HIS MOUTH. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken."

Isaiah 53:4-8, KJV

"And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate. And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering said unto him, Thou sayest it. And the chief priests accused him of many things:

BUT HE ANSWERED NOTHING. And Pilate asked him again, saying, ANSWEREST THOU NOTHING? behold how many things they witness against thee. BUT JESUS YET ANSWERED NOTHING; so that Pilate marvelled."

Mark 15:1-5, KJV

Please go to part three for the continuation of this series.

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The Day of the Lord: What It Really Means - Part 3

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Jesus' First Century Ministry Was Not The Great And Dreadful Day Of The Lord, John The Baptist's Ministry Did Not Signify The Arrival Of The Day Of The Lord, Malachi's Prophecy Also Concerned The Dramatic Events Of 70 AD, Why The Events Of 70 AD Occurred, The Old Testament Day Of The Lord Prophecies Do Not Have Anything To Do With Modern Times, Darius The Great, Zechariah Prophesied After 587 BC Fall Of Jerusalem And After Seventy Years Of Captivity, Zechariah Prophesied About The 70 AD Destruction Of Jerusalem And Temple Compound, Significance Of Mount Of Olives Splitting, Zechariah Warned Generation Of The Future To Flee To Mountains Just As Jesus And John The Baptist Did, Wrath Of God In 70 AD, Difficulty In Determining Time Frame For Prophet Joel, Different Arguments Used, Joel Describes Future 70 AD Destruction Of Jerusalem And Temple, Prophets Joel And Daniel Both Describe Roman Empire As Beast Or Lion With Great Teeth, Interesting Relationship Between Prophets Joel Daniel And Jeremiah, Why Joel Seems To Refer To Roman Army As The Lord's Army, Nebuchadnezzar My Servant

As I concluded in part two, because Jesus' public ministry

was marked by love, mercy, forgiveness and compassion, and NOT by severe judgment, chastisement and destruction, this could not be "the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD" that the Prophet Malachi wrote about. Let me also remind you that Malachi wrote that the Prophet Elijah -- meaning John the Baptist -- would appear in Israel "BEFORE the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD". In other words, John's appearance did NOT signify the arrival of that dreadful day of the Lord. It was simply a precursor to it. You will understand the significance of this point as we continue our examination of the Scriptures.

At any rate, it is due to the fact that Jesus' ministry was NOT marked by severe judgment, chastisement and destruction, that I am personally convinced that Malachi's words are in reality a prophetic warning of what actually occurred in 70 AD when Jerusalem and the temple compound were destroyed by Roman general Titus and his legions. Please notice that the Prophet Malachi writes "lest I come and smite the earth with a curse".

Why would the Lord do this? As I explain in some of my other articles, because many of the Jews did NOT repent due to the preaching of John the Baptist, and they in fact killed their own Savior. Thus, God poured out His wrath on Israel by way of the terrible events which transpired in 70 AD. And truly, that was indeed a "great and dreadful day of the LORD". If you doubt that this was so, then please continue reading this series, and I will provide clear, undeniable evidence of what I am stating here.

Thus far in this series, we have examined the writings of seven major and minor Prophets who used the phrase "day of the Lord". These seven Prophets are Amos, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Malachi, Obadiah, and Zephaniah. In all seven of these cases, the phrase is used to describe a fulfilled prophecy which occurred in the distant past. None of what they wrote has anything to do with our modern times, no matter what anyone tries to tell you.

The next Prophet who we are going to study is Zechariah. As we did with the previous Prophets of the Old Testament era, we can find out exactly when Zechariah lived and prophesied, simply by reading the opening verses of his book. Consider these verses:

"In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD unto Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying, The LORD hath been sore displeased with your fathers. Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye unto me, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye now from your evil ways, and from your evil doings: but they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the LORD. Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?"

Zechariah 1:1-4, KJV

What is most important to our current discussion is exactly when Zechariah lived and prophesied, because it will help us to understand his prophecies in their proper context, and place them in the right time frame. From the previous group of verses, we can determine that Zechariah began prophesying during the second year of the reign of Darius.

As I point out in other articles, the succession of the Medo-Persian kings is rather confusing. In fact there are conflicting views amongst historians. This confusion is due to the fact that these kings were known by different names by different cultures. To complicate the situation further, there were a number of different Medo-Persian rulers by the name of Darius, Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes. Concerning our current discussion, the Darius we see mentioned in the Book of Zechariah is believed to be Darius I, who was also known as Darius the Great. He was the third "King of Kings" of the Achaemenid Empire, and ruled from about 522-486 BC. His name in Persian was somewhat like Darryoosh or Dayara-Vahusha.

The key piece of information which we need to extract from all of this historical data is that unlike Prophets such as Jeremiah and Ezekiel who lived and prophesied before and during the final invasion by the Babylonians which resulted in the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the temple compound in 587 BC, as well as during the Seventy Years of Captivity which followed that invasion, Zechariah lived and prophesied at the conclusion of those events during what is commonly referred to as the post-exilic period.

Why is it important to know this? Because in the following verses where he says "the day of the LORD cometh", and then describes the invasion of Jerusalem, and the enslavement of half of the Jerusalemites, he is NOT describing the events that occurred in 587 BC, or about seventy years before the time of his prophecies. He is in fact describing a FUTURE invasion of Jerusalem, when the Jews were once again taken into captivity. In other words, similar to Malachi, he seems to be prophesying about the 70 AD event when Jerusalem and the temple compound were destroyed for the second time by Roman general Titus and his legions, along with his local allies, including King Herod. Consider the following group of verses:

"Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee."

Zechariah 14:1-5, KJV

Besides the explanation I have already offered, allow me to share two more interesting points with you. Notice how the previous set of verses state that the Mount of Olives splits in the middle. Are you aware of the fact that quite a few years ago, Holiday Inn had intentions of constructing one of their famous hotels on the summit of the Mount of Olives? However, the project never came to fruition, because a fault line was discovered running right through the mount. Now how did that fault line get there? Do the previous verses provide us with the answer?

Now, some of my Futurist-leaning readers might be thinking to themselves, "Now wait a minute there, Bill! Those verses clearly describe Jesus descending and standing on the Mount of Olives!" Yes, my friends, they do indeed. Well if you're wondering how that can possibly be, then I invite you to read my seven-part series entitled "Jesus Christ's Return: Have We Been Deceived?". I urge you to strap yourself in, because it is some pretty heavy meat to chew! You will find it listed at the end of this same series.

The second point I want to share with you regarding those verses from Zechariah concerns the fact that the Prophet Zechariah warns the Jerusalemites to flee to the mountains. Does that sound familiar to you? It should, because it is the very same warning that Jesus gave to His disciples when He told them about the coming destruction of Jerusalem and the temple compound in 70 AD. John the Baptist spoke of it as well. Is all of this starting to click together for you yet? Consider the following group of verses:

"But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"
Matthew 3:7, KJV

"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."
Matthew 24:15-22, KJV

"But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains: And let him that is on the

housetop not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his house: And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment. But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter. For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days."

Mark 13:14-20, KJV

"Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

Luke 3:7, KJV

"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people."

Luke 21:20-23, KJV

So it seems to me that Zechariah, John the Baptist and Jesus are all talking about the same wrath of God to come in 70 AD when another "day of the Lord" arrived, and severe judgment, chastisement and destruction was meted out to the unbelieving Jews. Amazing, isn't it? As we have seen multiple times now, every time that dreadful phrase is used, the result is always the same, and the prophecy is fulfilled.

The final Prophet from the Old Testament period who we're now going to discuss is the Prophet Joel. Now one problem that we encounter when trying to decipher exactly when Joel lived, is the fact that unlike all of the other Prophets whom we have discussed, Joel isn't too forthcoming regarding any kings who ruled during his lifetime. In fact, he doesn't mention any at all. As a result, scholars have debated for years concerning exactly when the time of his prophesying occurred. Some place

Joel in the 9th century BC, meaning that he may possibly have been a contemporary of the Prophet Isaiah. Now one reason why certain scholars place him in the 9th century BC is due to the similarity between the following two verses, one written by Joel, and the other by the Prophet Amos:

"The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel."

Joel 3:16, KJV

"And he said, The LORD will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither."

Amos 1:2, KJV

As we learned in part two of this series, it appears that the Prophet Amos lived and prophesied around 750 BC. That is to say, about one hundred and seventy years before the fall of Jerusalem to the armies of Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, and only a few decades before the northern kingdom of Israel and its capital, Samaria, was conquered by the Assyrian kings Tiglath-Pileser III and Shalmaneser V.

A second reason why some scholars suggest that Joel lived in the 9th century BC, and possibly around the time of Isaiah, is because both Joel and Amos mention a plague of palmerworm, grasshoppers and locusts. According to the original Hebrew words which are used in the verses below, the Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius Hebrew Aramaic English Lexicon indicates that these are all referring to locusts:

"That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten."

Joel 1:4, KJV

"And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you."

Joel 2:25, KJV

"I have smitten you with blasting and mildew: when your

gardens and your vineyards and your fig trees and your olive trees increased, the palmerworm devoured them: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD."

Amos 4:9, KJV

"Thus hath the Lord GOD shewed unto me; and, behold, he formed grasshoppers in the beginning of the shooting up of the latter growth; and, lo, it was the latter growth after the king's mowings. And it came to pass, that when they had made an end of eating the grass of the land, then I said, O Lord GOD, forgive, I beseech thee: by whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small. The LORD repented for this: It shall not be, saith the LORD."

Amos 7:1-3, KJV

While these literary similarities seem to support the opinion that the Prophet Joel may have lived and prophesied during the 9th century BC, not everyone agrees with this. I tend to agree with them and likewise view the previous verses as weak evidence for supporting that position. As I point out in the series entitled "The Fruits of Disobedience", due to their long history of stubbornness, rebellion and disobedience, the Lord frequently punished the Israelites via foreign invasions, famines, pestilences, plagues, etc. That being the case, Amos and Joel could very well have been describing two entirely different plagues of locusts.

In fact, there are other scholars who place Joel in either the 5th or the 4th century BC. If this is indeed the case, then similar to Zechariah, Joel lived and prophesied well after the three Babylonian invasions and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple compound in 587 BC, and after the Seventy Years of Captivity had been completed. So what this means is that in the verses we will now be discussing, Joel is describing another destruction of Jerusalem in the future from his perspective, and NOT the one that occurred in 587 BC. We find evidence that his prophecies describe a future event in the following group of verses.

"The word of the LORD that came to Joel the son of Pethuel. Hear this, ye old men, and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land. Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers? Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation . . . Alas for the day! for the day of the LORD

is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come."

Joel 1:1-2, 15, KJV

Notice that Joel clearly advises them to tell their children, so that they can then tell their children, and so that those children can likewise tell their children, meaning the great grandchildren. In other words, he is warning them of an event that's yet to come, and he wants to make sure that the future generations are aware of what is coming. Joel is saying that this day of the Lord which will result in destruction, has not arrived yet, as is evidenced by the fact that he says "shall it come", which is future tense.

One reason why we know that his prophecies concern the land of Judah and Jerusalem, is because in both chapter two and chapter three of his book, Joel mentions Zion, Jerusalem, and Judah multiple times. Consider this set of Bible verses:

"And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call."

Joel 2:32, KJV

"For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem . . . The children also of Judah and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their border . . . The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel. So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more . . . Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence against the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land. But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation."

Joel 3:1, 6, 16-17, 19-20, KJV

Even though we may not know with 100% certainty exactly when Joel lived, or even precisely where he lived, as I read his

book, I noticed certain sign posts or hints, which I believe precisely reveal which coming destructive event he was really writing about. To begin with, consider the following group of Bible verses:

"Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new wine; for it is cut off from your mouth. For a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion."

Joel 1:5-6, KJV

"Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand; A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations . . . And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?"

Joel 2:1-2, 11, KJV

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come."

Joel 2:28-31, KJV

"I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land. Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats 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 the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining."

Joel 3:2, 12-15, KJV

So, now, let us decipher a few key hints which are found in the previous group of verses. First of all, who is the great army which God anoints to descend upon Jerusalem in order to mete out His judgment, chastisement and destruction? In the first group of verses above, we find an answer. As you can see, this army is described as having "the teeth of a lion" and "the cheek teeth of a great lion". As I explain in some of my other articles, the Prophet Daniel, who lived in the generation just prior to Joel -- and who may possibly have still been alive -- also wrote about a great empire which he described as having "great iron teeth". Consider this verse:

"After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns."

Daniel 7:7, KJV

Many Bible scholars agree -- and I agree as well -- that the chronological historical record confirms that this empire, which Daniel also describes as being divided into a western portion and an eastern portion -- the two legs -- was in fact the Roman empire. Thus, Joel is describing how in the years to come, the Roman armies would sweep down into Israel, under the leadership of General Titus -- who was the son of Emperor Vespasian, and a future emperor himself -- and eventually arrive at Jerusalem, and destroy it and the temple compound.

Now, if an old Prophet Daniel was still alive at the time of Joel, then it seems quite natural to me that Joel would in fact describe Rome in a similar fashion to Daniel. Just as Joel was probably aware of Daniel's writings, Daniel in turn was also familiar with the writings of the Prophet Jeremiah as well. In fact, we know that Daniel came to understand how long the Jewish captivity in Babylon would last, by reading Jeremiah's prophetic writings, as is evidenced by this verse:

"In the first year of his [Darius] reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem."

Daniel 9:2, KJV

So again, Joel has provided us with a big hint regarding who this future invading, conquering army would be. Now before we look at our next hint, let me interject another important point. You will notice that in the previous group of verses from the Book of Joel, the Prophet refers to the army as the Lord's army. Why does Joel do this? I can think of two good reasons. First of all, as I have explained a number of times before -- such as in the series "The Fruits of Disobedience" -- throughout Biblical history, the Lord has used the armies of foreign nations as His tools of chastisement against the Israelites. In fact, in the case of the Babylonians, in the Book of Jeremiah, God referred to King Nebuchadnezzar as "my servant", because the king was fulfilling God's Will by invading Israel. This is evident in the following verses:

"Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations."

Jeremiah 25:7, KJV

"And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him."

Jeremiah 27:6, KJV

"Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah in Tahpanhes, saying, Take great stones in thine hand, and hide them in the clay in the brickkiln, which is at the entry of Pharaohs house in Tahpanhes, in the sight of the men of Judah; And say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will send and take Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will set his throne upon these stones that I have hid; and he shall spread his royal pavilion over them. And when he cometh, he shall smite the land of Egypt, and deliver such as are for death to death; and such as are for captivity to captivity; and such as are

for the sword to the sword."

Jeremiah 43:8-11, KJV

Please go to part four for the conclusion of this series.

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The Day of the Lord: What It Really Means - Part 4

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Spiritual Warriors And Armies Are Real, Did God Assist The Enemies Of Israel To Chastise The Jews? Eclipses: The Sun Is Darkened And The Moon Turns Into Blood, Jesus And Peter Warn About The Coming Day Of The Lord, Joel's Prophecy Regarding God's Spirit Being Poured Out On All Flesh Was Fulfilled In The First Century, Peter Pointed To A Soon-Coming Day Of The Lord, Christ's Return Following The Fulfillment Of Prophetic Signs, All Occurrences Of "Day Of The Lord" In The KJV Bible Pertain To Past Fulfilled Prophetic Events, Deception Of The Misguided Futurist-Leaning Christians, Scriptures Regarding False Teachers And False Doctrines, Conclusion, Reading List

As I concluded in part three, I can think of two reasons why Joel might say "And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great" when describing the army of the Romans which was encamped around Jerusalem in fulfillment of Jesus' own words. The second reason is very interesting.

If there is one thing that the Holy Scriptures teach us, it is that spiritual forces -- both good and evil -- are real. Spiritual warriors and armies are likewise real. If you doubt that this is so, then please consider the following group of verses which discuss these spiritual warriors and armies in

both the Old and the New Testaments. It is mind-boggling to consider what goes on all around us, unseen by human eyes:

"The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name."

Exodus 15:3, KJV

"And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? And the captain of the LORD'S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so."

Joshua 5:13-15, KJV

"And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."

2 Kings 6:16-17, KJV

"The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."

Psalms 34:7, KJV

"Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude. And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength. Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground. And, behold, an hand touched

me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands. And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling. Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days. And when he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground, and I became dumb. And, behold, one like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, O my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength. For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me. Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me, And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me. Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come. But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince."

Daniel 10:5-21, KJV

"And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."

Matthew 11:12, KJV

"Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?"

Matthew 26:52-53, KJV

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Ephesians 6:12, KJV

"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,"

Revelation 12:7, KJV

"These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful."

Revelation 17:14, KJV

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

Revelation 19:11-16, KJV

So, where am I going with this thought? Well, consider this. If God sent His Angels to assist Joshua and the Israelites in their battle against the city of Jericho; and if Angelic Beings fought as they tried to get messages to the Prophet Daniel; and if Jesus said that He had legions of Angels at His disposal; is it possible that the opposite can occur as well? In other words, instead of assisting the Israelites, what if God also sends His Angels to assist the enemies of the Israelites -- such as General Titus and the Romans -- because they are actually performing God's Will by invading and punishing the Jews? Let's not forget that God called

King Nebuchadnezzar "my servant". A heavy possibility, right?

The next big hint which helps us to identify the timing of this upcoming "great and the terrible day of the LORD" -- or "the great and dreadful day of the LORD" as Prophet Malachi referred to it -- can be found in Joel chapters two and three. In the previous set of verses I shared with you in part three, we find the following two significant verses:

"The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come."

Joel 2:31, KJV

"The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining."

Joel 3:15, KJV

As I asked you earlier regarding another verse, do these two verses sound familiar to you? Again, they should, because the very same description is used by three different individuals in the New Testament to describe the upcoming "day of the Lord" which occurred in 70 AD. That is right, folks, we are almost done with the Old Testament prophecies which concern the First Century "day of the Lord". The three people who used similar terminology are Jesus, the Apostle Peter, and the Apostle John. Consider the following verses as proof:

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:"

Matthew 24:29, KJV

"But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken."

Mark 13:24-25, KJV

"The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come:"

Acts 2:20, KJV

"And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo,

there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;"

Revelation 6:12, KJV

It is commonly believed that the terminology which is used in the previous verses is describing a solar eclipse, and a lunar eclipse. While some verses state that the Moon turns into blood, while others say that the Moon shall not give her light, these words are in reality describing the very same phenomenon, because as many of you will know, during a lunar eclipse, the Moon does in fact darken, and during the peak of the eclipse, it turns into a beautiful orangish-red color. Similar to myself, I am sure that many of you have seen it firsthand. It is amazing!

In part three of this series, I pointed out to you that the Prophet Malachi clearly wrote that Elijah -- meaning John the Baptist -- would arrive on the scene in Israel BEFORE "the great and dreadful day of the LORD". In other words, John's appearance did NOT signify the arrival of the day of the Lord just yet. John's appearance was simply a precursor to "the great and dreadful day of the LORD". So we move up a few centuries, and in the Gospels we find Jesus describing the very same astronomical events as the Prophets in the Old Testament. In short, Jesus is clearly confirming that their prophecies have not been fulfilled quite yet, but they are on the cusp of being fulfilled. The time is drawing near.

Then, as if that isn't already enough, sometime after John the Baptist has been beheaded, and fifty days after Jesus has been crucified during the feast of the Passover, and shortly after he and the other Apostles have been filled with the Holy Spirit in Acts chapter two, the Apostle Peter himself stands up with the other eleven Apostles and quotes directly from the Prophet Joel. Oh but guess what? Not only does Peter mention the Sun being darkened and the Moon being turned into blood, but look at what else he quoted from the Prophet Joel:

"But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days

of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:"

Acts 2:16-18, KJV

Now, as I point out in the article called "Are the Gifts of the Spirit for Today?", some modern-day Christians twist and distort the words of the Prophet Joel, and erroneously claim that his prophecy is being fulfilled in our modern day. But that is most certainly NOT what Peter is saying. Just as he and Jesus both said that Joel's prophecy regarding the Sun and the Moon were fulfilled during the First Century, Peter is saying the same thing regarding people being filled with the Holy Spirit, and giving prophecies, and having dreams and visions.

That is why Peter precisely says "this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel". In other words, Peter is saying, "This is happening right NOW! This is what Joel prophesied would happen. What you are now witnessing with your very own eyes is what Joel was talking about!" When did Peter and the other Apostles say this? Right after they themselves had just been filled with the Holy Spirit, in fulfillment of Joel's very prophecy.

HOWEVER, the clincher is this: Just as Malachi wrote that Elijah would appear "BEFORE the great and dreadful day of the LORD", and just as the Prophet Joel also wrote that the signs he mentioned would occur "BEFORE the great and the terrible day of the LORD come", and just as Jesus said that the Sun would be darkened and the Moon turned into blood right BEFORE He would return, the Apostles are saying the very same thing. In other words, once again, they are NOT saying that the day of the Lord had already arrived. By quoting Joel, they are saying that these signs would occur BEFORE the great day of the Lord arrives, and THEN the day of the Lord would come.

To summarize, in addition to all of the other signs which Jesus gave in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21 regarding the end of the age -- meaning the last days of the Seventy Weeks prophecy of the Prophet Daniel -- and His return, we see this progression of events:

1. The spirit of Elijah appears via John the Baptist during the First Century.
2. God's Spirit is poured out on all flesh resulting in

various manifestations including prophecies, dreams and visions during the First Century.

3. The Sun is darkened and the Moon turns to blood.

When do all of these events occur? BEFORE the day of the Lord arrives. So what is the next glorious event on God's agenda after these other things have been fulfilled? Jesus tells us plainly in the Gospels, as do the two Angels in the Book of Acts, as does the Apostle Paul in his Epistles, as does Peter in one of his Epistles, and as does John in the Book of Revelation. Consider the following group of verses as clear proof of this point:

"And THEN shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and THEN shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

Matthew 24:30, KJV

"And THEN shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory."

Mark 13:26, KJV

"And THEN shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and THEN shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

Matthew 24:30, KJV

"And Jesus said, I am: and ye -- meaning the high priest and other Sanhedrin members He was speaking to -- shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

Mark 14:62, KJV

"And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

Acts 1:9-11, KJV

"To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved IN THE DAY OF THE LORD JESUS."

1 Corinthians 5:5, KJV

"For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge; and I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end; As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours IN THE DAY OF THE LORD JESUS."

2 Corinthians 1:13-14, KJV

"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it UNTIL THE DAY OF JESUS CHRIST:

Philippians 1:6, KJV

"But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that THE DAY OF THE LORD so cometh as a thief in the night. 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. But YE, BRETHREN, ARE NOT IN DARKNESS, that that day should overtake you as a thief."

1 Thessalonians 5:1-4, KJV

"But THE DAY OF THE LORD will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto THE COMING OF THE DAY OF GOD, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?"

2 Peter 3:10-12, KJV

"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and THEY ALSO WHICH PIERCED HIM: -- meaning the Romans -- and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."

Revelation 1:7, KJV

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the

mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to THE BATTLE OF THAT GREAT DAY OF GOD ALMIGHTY."

Revelation 16:13-14, KJV

My friends, ALL of the previous verses are talking about the very same wonderful event. It is referred to as the day of the Lord, the day of Jesus Christ, the day of God, and the great day of God Almighty. It is the second coming of Jesus Christ in the company and glory of His holy Father, exactly as Jesus stated in the following verses:

"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."

Matthew 16:27-28, KJV

"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

Mark 8:38, KJV

Now it is quiz time, my friends, and there's only one simple question on this quiz: If all of the aforementioned signs were fulfilled during the First Century as the Prophets had written, and as Jesus and the Apostles confirmed, then when was Jesus due to return? Isn't the answer rather obvious? It doesn't take a rocket science to figure it out. But, if you still have doubts about this, and if you want to dig deeper into this subject, and see even more Scriptural proof, along with historical evidence which confirms what the Bible says, then I invite you to read my seven-part series entitled "Jesus Christ's Return: Have We Been Deceived?". You will find it listed at the end of this same series.

But let me give you one big hint. Please notice that in his Epistle to the brethren at Thessalonica, the Apostle Paul very clearly states "YE, BRETHREN, ARE NOT IN DARKNESS". To whom is Paul speaking in those verses? Is it to Christians who are living today? Or is it to the Christians of the First

Century to whom he was writing? What are they not in darkness about? The return of Jesus Christ! Why would Paul even say that to them if Jesus was not going to return for another two thousand years?

With these verses, we have now covered every single verse in the KJV Bible where the phrase "the day of the Lord" is used. To my knowledge, I have not missed any of them. And in every single case, we have come to learn that each time this phrase is used, it involves God's divine judgment, chastisement and the destruction of a certain people. Lastly, in every single case, these verses all describe events which occurred in the distant past as fulfilled prophecies. This includes the sad events which occurred in 70 AD when Jerusalem and the temple compound were destroyed, and 600,000 to 1,000,000 Jews were killed during the First Jewish-Roman War, and many thousands of other Jews were carried away captive to other regions of the Roman Empire. Again, you will find these events explained in more detail in other articles which are listed at the end of this series.

Stated more clearly, my friends, there is not one single case where the phrase "the day of the Lord" is used to describe the return of the Lord Jesus Christ sometime during the 21st Century. Folks, it is just not there, contrary to the rather misguided opinion of the Futurist-leaning Christians who are constantly setting false dates, and continuously shouting "Jesus is coming soon! Jesus is coming soon!" After almost two hundred years of such false predictions, one would think that these foolish people would finally get a clue, and come to realize that there is something very wrong with their understanding.

Sadly, many of these people are so deceived by Futurism, that any time someone tries to explain to them what the Scriptures actually state, their reaction is to immediately accuse that person of being deceived, a misguided teacher, a false prophet or worse terms. In other words, they prefer their deception instead of the Scriptural truth. Hopefully, some of them will eventually come around, just as I did after being a dedicated Futurist for forty-two years of my adult Christian life.

I began this series by issuing a warning regarding those young Christians who, while probably well-meaning and good intentioned, try to teach the Word of God to others, when

they really have no business doing so, because they have not yet themselves been properly grounded in the Scriptures. In their pride they may THINK that they are, but going by some of the things they share, it is rather obvious that they are not. Having said that, before concluding this series, let me again emphasize the importance of making sure that we are teaching Scripturally sound doctrine by sharing several more Bible verses with you concerning the subject of misguided, novice teachers who twist and pervert the meaning of God's Word:

"And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know."

1 Corinthians 8:2, KJV

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;"

1 Timothy 4:1-2, KJV

"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself."

1 Timothy 6:3-5, KJV

"From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm."

1 Timothy 1:6-7, KJV

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;"

2 Timothy 4:3, KJV

"Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are

become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

Hebrews 5:11-14, KJV

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."

2 Peter 2:1, KJV

"And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."

2 Peter 3:15-16, KJV

With these thoughts, I will bring this series to a close. It is my hope that you have found it informative, enlightening, and I pray that it has been a blessing in your life as well. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr or with any other social network, I would really appreciate if you'd take the time to click or tap on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thanks so much, and may God bless you abundantly!

For additional information and further study, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were either mentioned in this article, or which contain topics which are related to this article. All of these articles are likewise located on the Bill's Bible Basics web server. To read these articles, simply click or tap on any link you see below.

Abomination of Desolation: Explained!

Comet Elenin, Hercolubus, Nibiru, and Planet X

Elijah: Where Are the True Prophets of God?

Facebook False Prophets and Misguided Teachers

Jesus Christ's Return: Have We Been Deceived?

Modern Deceptions: Return to Israel, the Fig Tree and This Generation
Please Stop Misinterpreting the Scriptures
Sex, a Bowl of Soup and the Nature of Angels
The Fruits of Disobedience
The Misguided End of the World Predictions of Harold Camping
The Office of Prophets and Teachers
Who Hindered the Antichrist?

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