

ISSUE

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BULLETIN OF  
THE OLSEN  
PARK CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

# Faithful Sayings

August 28,  
2016

## Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

10:00 AM

11:00 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

### Elders:

Pat Ledbetter

Jeff Nunn

### Deacons:

Steve Dixon

Ryan Ferguson

Arend Gressley

Ben Hight

Blake McAlister

Brady McAlister

Walker McAnear

Sam Nunn

Lance Purcell

Rusty Scott

Justin Smiley

Trevor Yontz

### Evangelist:

Kyle Pope



## “The Day of the Lord”

by Kyle Pope

Often in both the Old and New Testaments the Holy Spirit speaks of the “**day of the Lord.**” It is clear, however, that not every reference to this *day* refers to the same point in time or to the same events taking place. In this study let’s examine how this phrase is used and consider some lessons that the Spirit would have us to learn from its application.

The prophet Isaiah lived during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah—four kings of Judah. Ahaz turned Judah to wickedness and idolatry. God revealed through Isaiah not only that He would call them to account for their sin, but He also offered the promise of the coming Messiah. As this judgment is discussed it is declared: “**For the day of the LORD of hosts shall come upon everything proud and lofty, upon everything lifted up and it shall be brought low**” (Isa. 2:12, NKJV). As the prophet expands upon what would take place on this day, he speaks in the next chapter of when God, “**takes away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stock and the store, the whole supply of bread and the whole supply of water**” (Isa. 3:1). This was fulfilled when God brought Babylon upon Judah, destroying Jerusalem and carrying off its people into captivity (2 Kings 24-25). Later in his prophecy Isaiah said again, “**Wail, for the day of the LORD is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty**” (Isa. 13:6). And further, “**Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land deso-**

**late; and He will destroy its sinners from it” (Isa. 13:9).** Jeremiah, who witnessed this Babylonian conquest spoke of **“the terrors that surround me. In the day of the LORD’s anger there was no refugee or survivor”** (Lam. 2:22). In these instances “the day of the Lord” refers to God’s day of judgment upon His people because of their sin. Upon this “day of the Lord,” physical punishment was brought on the people through the military conquest of an enemy. These passages are not pointing to a final day of judgment, but to events that were fulfilled in Jewish history.

There are other examples of this that use the phrase in

the same way but do not refer to the Babylonian conquest. Four times in the prophecy of Joel the phrase is found with at least two different applications. Thought to have been written earlier than Isaiah, Joel uses the phrase in reference to God’s judgment upon His people through the devastation brought by a **“northern army”** followed by a restoration. He declared, **“Blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the LORD is coming, for it is at hand”** (Joel 2:1). And further, **“The LORD gives voice before His army, for His camp is very great; For strong is the One who executes His word. For the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; Who can endure it?”** (Joel 2:11). There would be many times that Judah would be punished because of her sin from *northern armies* including those of Israel, Syria, and Assyria. Any of these instances of judgment would match this description of the “day of the Lord.” Yet, there is a second way that the phrase is used in Joel that is described as taking place **“afterwards”**—i.e. after the **“day of the LORD”** referred to in the beginning of chapter two (Joel 2:28). This is preceded by the promise of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (to which Peter refers on Pentecost, as we will consider below) and the promise of the sun being darkened and the moon turning to blood. These things are said to take place **“before the great and awesome day of the LORD”** (Joel 2:31). Was this another great physical day of judgment? Or was it an

ultimate end times day of judgment? A common feature of many prophecies that speak of the “Day of the Lord” is the use of *eschatological* (i.e. end times) language such as the sun being darkened and the moon turning to blood. When **“day of the Lord”** is used in the sense of physical punishment by a military conquest this language doesn’t refer to a literal occurrence but is used to indicate the great significance of the event. Later in Joel a similar pairing of two applications occurs. The first, which uses the phrase **“day of the Lord”** of judgment upon the enemies of God’s people (Joel 3:2) and the



second which speaks of God's judgment upon all mankind also using eschatological language (Joel 3:14-15).

Of the six times this phrase is used in the New Testament I believe most of them refer to a final day of judgment. The exception to this is the instance found in Acts 2:20. On the Day of Pentecost after the Lord's death, burial, and ascension into heaven, the apostles were given the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues. They taught the gospel to those assembled in Jerusalem who had come from other places. This was not a vision or a revelation of some future time. Yet, as Peter stands and teaches the people, by way of explanation he says:

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

Several things about this are significant. First, Peter says that what was happening on that day was **"what was spoken by Joel."** The fulfillment of this text through the outpouring of the Spirit is obvious as demonstrated by the apostles miraculously speaking in other languages they had not studied. What would have been less apparent to those on the day of Pentecost was the rest of the text. Scripture does not indicate that on that day there were any literal signs in the heavens. The sun did not literally **"turn to darkness"** nor did the **"moon into blood"** and yet Peter says that what was happen-

ing was what Joel prophesied. The unanswered question in the text rests on the last part of the quote. When Peter quotes Joel to say that these things happened **"BEFORE the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD"** (emphasis mine). It is not clear if this identifies Pentecost as the prophesied "day of the Lord," or some coming day in the future that is preceded by the outpouring of the Spirit and the signs demonstrated on Pentecost. Peter is either saying that Pentecost is **"the day of the Lord"** (in which case the eschatological language of Joel shows its great significance) or he is pointing out the aspect of Joel's prophecy that was fulfilled on that day. If the latter is the meaning both Peter and Joel point to some future coming **"day of the Lord."**

However we understand the sense in Acts chapter two, in his second epistle Peter uses the phrase **"day of the Lord"** in a manner I believe clearly points to a final day of judgment and destruction of this creation. He writes: **"But the day of the**



**Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up**” (2 Peter 3:10). If the earth, the works in it, and the elements themselves will melt and be **“burned up”** it is clear that this is not referring to some preliminary judgment at some past point in human history but to the final act of judgment upon this creation. How do we know Peter isn’t just using non-literal eschatological language? Usually when the Holy Spirit leads prophets to write in this way there are clues that indicate the language is figurative. Peter offers no such clues. Everything about his word-

ing before and after this appears literal. If so, we can understand figurative eschatological language as foreshadowing what will one day literally take place.

Other New Testament writers reinforce a literal interpretation of Peter’s words. Paul described this coming day as a time in which the spirit of the repentant believer will be saved. Writing to the Corinthians about their withdrawal from the man who had his father’s wife, he charged them to: **“deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus”** (1 Cor. 5:5). Here the discipline that the church imposes is aimed at affecting the flesh to such an extent that it will motivate the sinner to repent and be right with the Lord so that when the end comes he will be ready to stand before God. This is a day in which the work that one has done in service to the Lord will become manifest. In the second epistle to the Corinthians Paul told them, **“we are your boast as you also are ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus”** (2 Cor. 1:14b). In other words, the relationship that the Corinthians and Paul had maintained with one another throughout this life would become to them an evidence (or boast) of their faithfulness on the final Day of Judgment.

So when is **“the day of the Lord”**? There have been many *days of the Lord* throughout God’s dealings with mankind. The phrase is a way of describing a time of judgment, divine action, and events of great significance. Yet, past judgments described in this way set the stage for and anticipate a final **“day of the Lord”** that will be the ultimate act of divine judgment. The prudent soul will learn from God’s judgments in the past in order to prepare himself for that final judgment that is yet to come.

