

THE JUDGMENT AT CHRIST'S COMING (2 Thess 1:5-12, ESV)

This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering— since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed. To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

GOD'S JUDGMENT AND GLORY (2 Thess 1:5-12, CSB)

We ought to thank God always for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, since your faith is flourishing and the love each one of you has for one another is increasing. Therefore, we ourselves boast about you among God's churches—about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and afflictions that you are enduring. It is clear evidence of God's righteous judgment that you will be counted worthy of God's kingdom, for which you also are suffering, since it is just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you and to give relief to you who are afflicted, along with us. This will take place at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his powerful angels, when he takes vengeance with flaming fire on those who don't know God and on those who don't obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will pay the penalty of eternal destruction from the Lord's presence and from his glorious strength on that day when he comes to be glorified by his saints and to be marveled at by all those who have believed, because our testimony among you was believed. In view of this, we always pray for you that our God will make you worthy of his calling, and by his power fulfill your every desire to do good and your work produced by faith, so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified by you, and you by him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

(Connective Verses) DAY OF THE LORD: LORD below is YHWH in Hebrew

Isaiah 2:12 -- For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low:

Isaiah 13:6 -- Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.

Isaiah 13:9 -- 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 34:8 -- For it is the day of the LORD's vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion.

Jeremiah 46:10 -- 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.

Lamentations 2:22 -- Thou hast called as in a solemn day my terrors round about, so that in the day of the LORD's anger none escaped nor remained: those that I have swaddled and brought up hath mine enemy consumed.

Ezekiel 13:5 -- 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 30:3 -- For the day is near, even the day of the LORD is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen.

Joel 1:15 -- Alas for the day! for the day of the LORD is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come.

Joel 2:1 -- 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;

Joel 2:11 -- 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 2:31 -- The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.

Joel 3:14 -- Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.

Amos 5:18 -- 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.

Amos 5:20 -- Shall not the day of the LORD be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?

Obadiah 1:15 -- 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.

Zephaniah 1:7 -- Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord GOD: for the day of the LORD is at hand: for the LORD hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests.

Zephaniah 1:8 -- And it shall come to pass in the day of the LORD's sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king's children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel.

Zephaniah 1:14 -- 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.

Zephaniah 1:18 -- 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 2:2 -- Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD come upon you, before the day of the LORD's anger come upon you.

Zephaniah 2:3 -- Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD's anger.

Zechariah 14:1 -- Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.

Malachi 4:5 -- Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD

VERSE 9 COMMENTARIES

- Harold W. Hoehner, Philip W. Comfort, and Peter H. Davids, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1&2 Thessalonians, Philemon.*, vol. 16 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2008), 383–384.

1:9 will be punished. Literally, “will pay a penalty.”

eternal destruction. The combination of words in Greek, *olethron aiōnion* [Tyndale-Strong's Greek number 3639/166, Zondervan Greek number 3897/173], conveys the idea of “eternal death” (BDAG *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich) [2000] 702). The word *olethron* was also used in 1 Thess 5:3 to speak of the utter ruin and destruction that would come upon unbelievers at the time of Jesus' parousia.

separated from the Lord. The Greek preposition *apo* [Tyndale-Strong's Greek number 575, Zondervan Greek number 608] (from) signals separation. The result of the punishment of eternal destruction is to be separated from the Lord eternally. Such separation means absolute destruction (*olethron*) because the Lord is the source of life; to be cut off from the Lord Jesus is to be cut off from life (1 John 5:12).

and from his glorious power. This language harkens back to Isa 2:10, 19, 21, which speak of the dreadful day of Yahweh's judgment, a day when people will try to hide from the splendor of his majesty.

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- D. Michael Martin, *1, 2 Thessalonians*, vol. 33, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 212–214.

1:9 Such people (the “they” of v. 9 is qualitative) who reject God and the gospel “will be punished.” Paul used a construction here that is common in classical texts but does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It means to “pay a penalty” and implies the just imposing of punishment for a person's misdeeds. An example of such a “penalty” (*dike*) as the ancients understood it may be observed in Acts 28:4. Paul lived through a shipwreck only to be bitten by a viper on the shore. The people of the island decided that Paul had to be a notable murderer if the goddess “Justice” (*dikē*) was so determined that he should not live.[33]

The just penalty that must be paid by those identified in v. 8 is a terrible one: “everlasting destruction” (*olethron aiōnion*). The phrase probably should be seen in contrast to the fate of the believer: everlasting life (*zōē aiōnion*), with “everlasting” indicating something that exists without end. “Destruction” (*olethron*) translates a word that is not frequent in the New Testament. Paul used the same term in 1 Thess 5:3, where he asserted that the “destruction” of those in darkness on the day of the Lord will be unexpected

(by unbelievers) and unavoidable. Here the destruction is described as everlasting and as banishment “from the presence of the Lord.” In 1 Cor 5:5 and 1 Tim 6:9 *olethron* refers to physical death or some temporal disaster. Though the term could be used of total destruction, the New Testament concept of the fate of the wicked is not that of annihilation but of everlasting punishment as enduring as the everlasting life anticipated by the saved (Matt 25:46).**[34]**

In addition, the subsequent phrases descriptive of this “destruction” imply continued existence but exclusion “from” (*apo* implying spatial separation) the “presence of the Lord” and the “majesty of his power.”**[35]** Thus the word should be understood as depicting extreme and disastrous punishment, but not the obliteration of the person punished. A similar fate is depicted in Matt 25:41, where the “cursed” are sent away from the presence of the Lord and banished to the “eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”**[36]** It is ironic that those who would reject God receive as punishment God’s rejection.**[37]** It implies that the so-called freedom from God’s influence that the rebellious desire is not freedom but condemnation. It is a hellish banishment from the true and only source of goodness and blessing.

NOTES

[33] Unlike Paul’s use here, “justice” sometimes was personified as a goddess. See BAGD, s.v. “δικη.”

[34] For a critique of annihilationism see L. Dixon, *The Other Side of the Good News* (Wheaton: Victor, 1992), and the discussion of the “dark side” of judgment by S. Grenz in *Theology for the Community of God* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 826–39. For proannihilation arguments see J. Wenham, *The Goodness of God* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1974), and E. Fudge, *The Fire That Consumes* (UK: Paternoster, 1994).

[35] These two phrases are synonymous, indicating the majestic and terrifying presence of God on the day of judgment; cf. the LXX text of Isa 2:10, 19, 21. Continued existence may also be suggested by the active voice of the verb. The phrase is literally, “And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction” (cf. NASB).

[36] If “in flaming fire” is understood as part of v. 8, then fire is also part of the punishment in this passage.

[37] Contrast this with the fate of the believer who will be “with the Lord forever” (1 Thess 4:17), sharing the indescribable and eternal glory of the Lord (2 Cor 4:16–18).

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- *GOT QUESTIONS* ([online](#))

The phrase “day of the Lord” usually identifies events that take place at the end of history ([Isaiah 7:18-25](#)) and is often closely associated with the phrase “that day.” One key to understanding these phrases is to note that they always identify a span of time during which God personally intervenes in history, directly or indirectly, to accomplish some specific aspect of His plan.

Most people associate the day of the Lord with a period of time or a special day that will occur when God’s will and purpose for His world and for mankind will be fulfilled. Some scholars believe that the day of the Lord will be a longer period of time than a single day—a period of time when Christ will reign throughout the world before He cleanses heaven and earth in preparation for the eternal state of all mankind. Other

scholars believe the day of the Lord will be an instantaneous event when Christ returns to earth to redeem His faithful believers and send unbelievers to eternal damnation.

The phrase “the day of the Lord” is used often in the Old Testament (e.g. [Isaiah 2:12](#); [13:6, 9](#); [Ezekiel 13:5](#), [30:3](#); [Joel 1:15](#), [2:1,11,31](#); [3:14](#); [Amos 5:18,20](#); [Obadiah 15](#); [Zephaniah 1:7,14](#); [Zechariah 14:1](#); [Malachi 4:5](#)) and several times in the New Testament (e.g. [Acts 2:20](#); [1 Corinthians 5:5](#); [2 Corinthians 1:14](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:2](#); [2 Thessalonians 2:2](#); [2 Peter 3:10](#)). It is also alluded to in other passages ([Revelation 6:17](#); [16:14](#)).

The Old Testament passages dealing with the day of the Lord often convey a sense of imminence, nearness, and expectation: “Wail, for the day of the Lord is near!” ([Isaiah 13:6](#)); “For the day is near, even the day of the Lord is near” ([Ezekiel 30:3](#)); “Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming. It is close at hand” ([Joel 2:1](#)); “Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision” ([Joel 3:14](#)); “Be silent before the Lord God! For the day of the Lord is near” ([Zephaniah 1:7](#)). This is because the Old Testament passages referring to the day of the Lord often speak of both a near and a far fulfillment, as does much of Old Testament prophecy. Some Old Testament passages that refer to the day of the Lord describe historical judgments that have already been fulfilled in some sense ([Isaiah 13:6-22](#); [Ezekiel 30:2-19](#); [Joel 1:15](#), [3:14](#); [Amos 5:18-20](#); [Zephaniah 1:14-18](#)), while others refers to divine judgments that will take place toward the end of the age ([Joel 2:30-32](#); [Zechariah 14:1](#); [Malachi 4:1, 5](#)).

The New Testament calls it a day of “wrath,” a day of “visitation,” and the “great day of God Almighty” ([Revelation 16:14](#)) and refers to a still future fulfillment when God’s wrath is poured out on unbelieving Israel ([Isaiah 22](#); [Jeremiah 30:1-17](#); [Joel 1-2](#); [Amos 5](#); [Zephaniah 1](#)) and on the unbelieving world ([Ezekiel 38-39](#); [Zechariah 14](#)). The Scriptures indicate that “the day of the Lord” will come quickly, like a thief in the night ([Zephaniah 1:14-15](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:2](#)), and therefore Christians must be watchful and ready for the coming of Christ at any moment.

Besides being a time of judgment, it will also be a time of salvation as God will deliver the remnant of Israel, fulfilling His promise that “all of Israel will be saved” ([Romans 11:26](#)), forgiving their sins and restoring His chosen people to the land He promised to Abraham ([Isaiah 10:27](#); [Jeremiah 30:19-31](#), [40](#); [Micah 4](#); [Zechariah 13](#)). The final outcome of the day of the Lord will be that “the arrogance of man will be brought low and the pride of men humbled; the Lord alone will be exalted in that day” ([Isaiah 2:17](#)). The ultimate or final fulfillment of the prophecies concerning the day of the Lord will come at the end of history when God, with wondrous power, will punish evil and fulfill all His promises

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- Ernest Best, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, Black’s New Testament Commentary (London: Continuum, 1986), 257–264.

7b–8a The judgement of God (v. 5) will take place **at the** (ἐν is temporal but may also be instrumental if it is by means of the parousia that judgement takes place) time when Jesus re-appears: this is his **revelation** (ἀποκάλυψις; cf. A. Oepke, *T.D.N.T. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* [a translation of *T.W.N.T. I–VI* by G. W. Bromiley] III, pp. 556–92; Rigaux, pp. 204–6). Elsewhere in these letters Paul uses the term ‘parousia’ and only at 1 Cor. 1:7 the present word (we find it later in 1 Pet. 1:7, 13 and the cognate verb in Lk. 17:30). Basically it carries the idea of the uncovering of a secret and so is used by Paul of the disclosure

of the nature of God and of his activity in accordance with the root's use in the LXX (The Septuagint). It is not then a simple equivalent of *parousia* but implies the appearance of one who has been hidden since his earthly life. (The root has strong eschatological connections elsewhere, e.g. Rom. 2:5; 1 Cor. 3:13; 2 Th. 2:3, 6, 8.) There is no record of its employment in our present connection prior to Paul though the concept may go back (so Frame) to that of the hidden Son of Man who will appear (1 En. 48.6; 62.7; 4 Ezra 13:32; 2 Bar. 39.7; cf. 29.3). At the moment **the Lord** (the appropriate title in an eschatological context: cf. 1 Th. 3:13; 4:15, 16, 17; 5:2; etc.; cf. 'day of the Lord') **Jesus** is in **heaven** with God; **from** there (cf. 1 Th. 1:10; 4:16) he will come in judgement just as God himself is depicted as coming in the O.T. (Isa. 64:1; Ps. 18:9). In his descent he will be accompanied by **the angels of his power**. This is a difficult phrase: **his** by position probably qualifies **power** only but may also qualify **angels** ('his angels of power') though this is unlikely if **power** is the major concept; the phrase does not mean 'his powerful angels' (a genitive of quality) or 'the angels of his host' (implying a play on the Hebrew word לְיָדָא which can mean both 'power' and 'army'; cf. English 'force') or 'the angels by which he exercises power' (genitive of the object), but probably 'the angels which belong to his power' (possessive genitive). Frame argues, without much supporting evidence, that a particular class of angels is intended (cf. 1 En. 61.10; T. Jud. 3.10). The **revelation** of the Lord will thus be one of **power** (cf. 1 Th. 1:5 for **power** and Mk. 9:1 for the *parousia* as in power) in which he will be accompanied by **angels**; these are a constant feature of the End in apocalyptic literature (e.g. Zech. 14:5; 1 QM) and the N.T. (*Novum Testamentum*) (Mt. 13:39, 41, 49; 24:31; 25:31; Mk. 8:38; 13:27; Lk. 12:8f; see notes on 1 Th. 4:16); their presence emphasizes the majesty and might of God (or Christ).

8a Equally in the O.T. theophanies regularly take place amid **fire** (Exod. 3:2; 19:18; Deut. 5:4; Dan. 7:9f; Isa. 66:15). **a flaming fire** is literally 'a fire of flame'; we would expect 'a flame of fire', and this is indeed found in some MSS (B D Ψ G) but is to be rejected as a correction probably under the influence of Isa. 66:15; 29:6; Dan. 7:9; etc.; there is adequate support for our reading (ⲛ A P K L; cf. Acts 7:30 for a similar variation). In Exod. 3:2 the LXX B-text has our phrase (cf. Sir. 8:10; on the whole textual tradition see P. Katz, 'Ἐν πυρὶ φλογός', *Z.N.W. Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 46 (1955) 133–8). The **flaming fire** emphasizes the glory of the appearance of the Lord, an appearance like that of a theophany. A few commentators take the reference to **fire** with the following reference to judgement (the verse division of Greek texts is badly placed here and ought to follow **fire**) and think of fire as a purificatory agent, in which way it is certainly used elsewhere (Mt. 25:41; Mk 9:43, 48; 1 Cor. 3:13–15; 1 Pet. 1:7; 4:12), but here the structure of the sentence makes it much easier to take it with what precedes. A greater number of commentators (e.g. Lightfoot, von Dobschütz) give it both references, but **fire** has no place in the subsequent description of the judgement and 'of flame' would be unusual in this connection: we would expect something like 'of purification'; if moreover the phrase depends on Exod. 3:2 the **fire** is not there purificatory but is descriptive of a theophany. Other LXX passages have influenced Paul's words, in particular Isa. 66:15 where we find the idea of 'repayment' (cf. v. 6) and of **vengeance** (v. 8b) in association with 'a fiery flame'.

8b For simplicity we have commenced a new sentence here though the Greek continues with a participle διδόντος (**inflict**) agreeing with **the Lord Jesus** (v. 7). In v. 5 God was judge; now it is Jesus (cf. 1 Th. 4:6; 2 Th. 2:8; 2 Cor. 5:10); Paul moves easily between the one and the other often attributing to Jesus as Lord what in the O.T. is the activity of God. Jesus' judgement exacts **vengeance**; the word (ἐκδίκησις) can take the simpler meaning 'punishment' (2 Cor. 7:11; 1 Pet. 2:14) but: (i) it has the sense **vengeance** in Rom. 12:19 (= Deut. 32:35); Lk. 18:3, 7; Acts 7:24; Heb. 10:30; (ii) in Scripture God's punishment is regularly viewed as retributory; (iii) the idea of recompense is already found in our passage (cf. 'repay', v. 6); (iv)

where the phrase **inflict vengeance** appears in the LXX it has this meaning (Ezek. 25:14, 17; 2 Kgdms. 4:8; 22:48; Ps. 17(18):48). If Jesus inflicts **vengeance** Paul does not think of this as vindictive; it is 'repayment' (v. 6) to those who have sinned because of their sin; otherwise God's judgement would not be righteous (v. 5).

Before describing the nature of God's retribution Paul specifies those on whom it will fall: **those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus**. Many commentators distinguish two groups here: the first member, drawn from Jer. 10:25, describes Gentiles, for Jews cannot be said not to **know God** and elsewhere Gentiles are described in this way (Jer. 10:25; Ps. 79(78):6; 1 Th. 4:5; cf. Rom. 1:28); the second member then describes Jews, for disobedience is the characteristic of the chosen people (Rom. 10:16, 21; 11:30–2), or Jews and Gentiles because the latter also can be described as disobedient (Rom. 11:30–2). This latter possibility is very difficult since it destroys any sense of balance in the total phrase and nothing in the context suggests that we interpret it in this way; the former is more natural since Paul does regularly parallel, or contrast, Jews and Gentiles. If it is to be accepted Gentiles will be seen as the actual persecutors and Jews as those who instigate them; however 1 Th. 2:14 does not suggest that the Jews had any share in the persecutions other than those of the initial period of the community's foundation. More generally there are no real grounds for dividing the phrase into two groups of people for: (i) Jews can be described as those who do **not know God**: Jer. 9:6 (LXX v. 5); Jn. 8:55; (ii) when Paul quotes Jer. 10:25 at 1 Th. 4:5 he makes the reference to Gentiles explicit by retaining the word in the quotation; here he drops it; (iii) because of this very omission it may be doubted if Paul is in fact quoting Jer. 10:25; this runs 'the Gentiles who do not know you (God) and the generations which do not call upon your name'; the second member here would have served his purpose as well as the second member he has supplied. Paul is therefore probably forming the complete phrase *ab initio*, though using O.T. words, and does not intend to categorize two classes of people (the repetition of the article does not imply two categories) but rather to emphasize the enormity of their action. It is not only that men, whether Jews or Gentiles, have persecuted Christians but in doing so they have shown what kind of people they really are: they **do not know** (though οἶδα is used, knowledge here is much more than intellectual apprehension; cf. Mk. 14:71; 2 Cor. 5:16; Tit. 1:16; Jn. 7:28; it implies faith and acceptance and so the reference is not to the 'ignorant' heathen who have never heard of the true God) **God** and they **do not obey** (obedience is the basic attitude of the Christian to God growing out of his faith; cf. Rom. 1:5; 6:16ff and can be used in places where we might expect 'faith', e.g. Rom. 15:18; 16:19) **the gospel** (obedience is offered through the gospel to God; cf. Rom. 10:16; 2 Th. 3:14; Rom. 6:17; for **gospel** see notes on 1 Th. 2:2ff) **of our Lord Jesus** (Paul normally speaks of the 'gospel of Christ'; the choice here is probably dictated by the eschatological context in which **Lord** and **Jesus** have been echoing throughout the two letters). Paul is not describing how God deals with pagans as such but only with those who by their desire to persecute have shown their fundamental rejection of God; thus this passage cannot be used to argue about the ultimate fate of all non-Christians. But can persecutors really be described as those who **do not know God** and **do not obey the gospel**? Does the gospel become so apparent to them in the lives of those they persecute that they can be said to reject it? May not persecutors act in ignorance of what they are really doing? To these questions Paul would presumably have answered 'No!', but we cannot be so sure that this is the correct answer. And is not the word **vengeance** over strong? Even if we set aside any idea that God is motivated by vindictiveness does not Paul appear to suggest here that it is only when God is rejected that he takes vengeance; the persecutors are punished, not because they have persecuted (repaid by God the evil they have done), but because they have rejected God? Do such people require from God an 'eternal

destruction' (v. 9)? Yet the whole N.T. (*Novum Testamentum*) as stresses that ultimate issues hang on men's decision for or against God in Jesus Christ.

9 Paul now turns from those on whom God will take vengeance to the nature of the vengeance itself: **who** (οἵτινες, generic, 'such people'; cf. Rom. 1:25; 1 Cor. 3:17; Gal. 4:24, 26; Phil. 4:3; see Bl.-Deb [*A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 1961.] §293; Moulton-Turner, pp. 47f; Moule, pp. 123f) will **pay the penalty** (a frequent idiom in classical Greek but found only here in the N.T. (*Novum Testamentum*) as Masson remarks, it is strange to find it in the middle of so much apocalyptic and O.T. language) **of eternal destruction**. These last two words have given offence to many sensitive souls: Does Paul actually mean that the wicked will be annihilated once and for all? Does he believe that they will suffer everlasting punishment? The word **destruction** (ὄλεθρος) has already appeared in 1 Th. 5:3 (= 'disaster'); here unlike that passage it is used as a theological term. It is found also in 1 Cor. 5:5 where it refers to physical illness and death (cf. Acts 5:1ff) and implies a literal destruction of the flesh following on excommunication, and in 1 Tim. 6:9 where it is put in parallel with ἀπώλεια but where we cannot be sure that it refers to the fate of the wicked hereafter and not just their present fate. In none of these passages (including v. 9) is annihilation suggested; instead the idea is that of 'punishment' as something which takes place in an active way. This is true also of the use of the word in the LXX, e.g. Jer. 31(48):3, 8, 32; Ezek. 6:14; 14:16; the idea of annihilation may however be present in Wisd. 1:14 (cf. 2:1ff). How is this affected by the qualification **eternal** (cf. H. Sasse, *T.D.N.T. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament [a translation of T.W.N.T. I–VI by G. W. Bromiley]* I, pp. 197–209)? This adjective can mean 'characteristic of the age (to come)' (αἰών is used in the LXX to render Δῆλον 'age'), or 'everlasting', and carry the nuances (a) 'of a different quality' (so in Jn. 'eternal life' can be life partaking of the quality of the age to come, in which case it approximates to the first meaning); (b) 'final, ultimate' (for the coming age is the last age); in this case the sense of infinite duration may be lost. Is Paul then referring to ultimate or everlasting annihilation? Almost certainly not, for: (i) The following phrase suggests that Paul sees the punishment of persecutors as consisting in separation from the Lord; for this to mean anything they would have to continue to exist. (ii) In many other parts of the N.T. (*Novum Testamentum*) this separation is regarded as one of suffering continuous punishment (Mt. 18:8f; 25:41; Jude 7) and nowhere is annihilation implied. (iii) Equivalent expressions to our phrase are found in 1 QS 2:15; 5:13, and in these passages the wicked are not considered to be annihilated (cf. 2.7, 8, 17; 4.12–14), and in Ps. Sol. 2:35; 15:12f (cf. 3:11), where again 2:34f; 15:10 do not suggest annihilation (cf. also 4 Macc. 10:15A). The Jew could speak of **destruction** without implying annihilation because in such a punishment 'all that makes life worth living is destroyed' (H. A. A. Kennedy, *op. cit.*, pp. 123f, cf. pp. 121ff, 314ff; cf. also Vos, *op. cit.*, pp. 294ff.) For Paul 'there would probably always remain in the background the notion of a dreary, wretched existence, removed by the whole infinitude of God from that which he designated "Life" ' (*ibid.*, p. 315), and this indeed is what is implied by separation from God. It is probably wrong to speculate too much on the meaning of **eternal**; the Jew was not interested in metaphysical infinitude; so long as existence continues in the age to come persecutors will be separated from God. (In 1 En. 10.10 eternity is defined as 500 years, and the word is even used in secular Hellenistic Greek of the duration of an emperor's reign; see M & M [Moulton and G. Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament.*] s.v.) If we allow the adjective to carry also its nuance of 'ultimate' it implies that the persecutors need not expect a change from **destruction** to salvation at some distant point in time. We cannot go on from here to the moral lesson that decision about Christ bears eternal consequences. Paul is not referring to all men but only to persecutors and he is not even addressing and warning them but describing to his readers what actually happens. The sense 'everlasting, of infinite

duration’ is to be rejected but the meaning ‘characteristic of the age to come’ may well be present; the punishment of persecutors belongs to the next and not to this age.

Persecutors will be separated **out from the presence** (cf. 1 Th. 2:17) **of the Lord** (i.e. Jesus) ... Unlike later Christian apocalypses, contemporary Jewish apocalypses and even parts of the N.T. (*Novum Testamentum*) (Mt. 25:41, 46; Mk. 9:48f; Lk. 12:5; Rev. 14:6ff; 20:9f, 14f; 21:8; Jude 13; these passages are all very restrained compared with the detailed descriptions of later Christian writing) Paul nowhere describes the fate of the wicked as one of active torture and punishment; with him the emphasis is negative, viz. separation from the Lord. ἀπό, **out from**, has been taken in other ways: (i) As causal; cf. Mt. 13:44; Lk. 12:57; the Lord effects destruction by his presence and glory. (ii) As denoting origin (ἀπό and ἐκ are interchangeable in Hellenistic Greek; cf. Jn. 1:44–6); destruction comes from the Lord; **presence** would then seem otiose. (iii) As temporal; cf. Rom. 1:20; but when the temporal use of ἀπό is intended this is normally made clear by the immediate context and to state it now would add nothing to ‘at the revelation’ (v. 7). Against these alternative senses we may argue: (i) separation from the Lord as punishment balances Paul’s description of the fate of Christians who are to be with the Lord (1 Th. 4:17); (ii) banishment from the Lord as punishment is also found in Mt. 7:23; (iii) our phrase is a quotation from Isa. 2:10, 19, 21 where it has our meaning; this is not affected by the omission of ‘fear’ from the quotation; (iv) the spatial sense is normal with the preposition (for the fuller phrase cf. Acts 5:41; Rev. 12:14; 20:11) and in the spatial the causal is included for Paul would undoubtedly hold that the Lord is the cause of the separation of persecutors from himself (the destructive effect of the presence of the Lord is seen in Ps. 34:16; Jer. 4:26). To be separated from the Lord is to be deprived of him, and therefore of all hope; the victims are abandoned completely to themselves (cf. Sartre’s play *Huts Clos = In Camera*). This is a more terrible punishment than everlasting torture. Yet even allowing for the negative nature of the punishment there is a quite different atmosphere here from that of Rom. 11:25ff; we earlier noticed a similar change between 1 Th. 2:16c and Rom. 9–11; in later letters Paul modified his eschatology to a less harsh position. By the omission of ‘fear’ from the Isaianic refrain (2:10, 19, 21) Paul has not only removed a possible active element in the punishment (‘fear’ would suggest torture etc.) but has also made the parallelism of the two phrases much stronger, as indeed it is in the Hebrew but not in the LXX. God’s glory is there wherever he is present and it is the same with the **glory** of Jesus; this glory is not mere show but proceeds from his **might** (genitive of origin) and is accordingly powerful. This **glory** will only be fully revealed in its **might** at the last and it is from this glory that the persecutors will be expelled, just as it is this **glory** which the persecuted will enjoy (1 Th. 2:12; and see notes on **glory** there).

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- Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans Pub.; Apollos, 2002), 289–294.

8 In v. 8 Paul explains the purpose of the Lord Jesus’ powerful judicial revelation: *He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus*. The language of the verse is taken from Isaiah 66:15 in the Greek version (“he will return vengeance in wrath”) in combination with Isaiah 66:4 (“Because I called them and they did not obey me”), which describe the wrath Yahweh visits on the disobedient. The expression translated *he will punish* (*didontos ekdikēsín*) may refer either to divine punishment (2 Cor. 7:11; 1 Pet. 2:14) or, as here in 1:8, to divine vengeance or retribution (Luke 18:3, 5; 21:22; Acts 7:24; Rom. 12:19; Heb. 10:30 [Deut. 32:35]; and *1 Enoch* 25.4). This “vengeance” is the result of a judicial decision and disposition against those who have rejected God and his gospel. The nature of

God's vengeance is described more fully in the following verse. Those who have rejected God and his message will not escape judgment—God is the Avenger (1 Thess. 4:6 and commentary). This vengeance is not simple retaliation nor an irrational outburst of anger but an execution of God's just judgment (vv. 5–6).

The ancients understood that the coherence of society was in part due to the promise of rewards and the threats of punishment. In these societies, where reciprocity was at the heart of both private and public social intercourse, the notion of retribution and reward was deeply embedded in their ideas of justice. The frustration of the Thessalonian believers would have been to suffer such injustices without any hope of recourse or vindication. But the promise held before them is that those who are presently under no threat of human justice will not escape the just vengeance of God, because the root cause of the believers' suffering is the unbelievers' rejection of God himself. The issues at stake go well beyond the personal.

Those who are the objects of divine vengeance are described as *those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus*. Marshall and others have suggested that two groups are in mind: the Gentiles (*those who do not know God*) and the Jews (*those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus*). Although Marshall is correct in pointing out that sometimes the Gentiles are described as those who are ignorant of God (see 1 Thess. 4:5; and Ps. 79:6 [78:6]; Jer. 10:25) and the Jews as those who are disobedient (Isa. 66:4; Acts 7:39; Rom. 10:16), Paul also accuses both groups of being disobedient (Rom. 11:30–32). Also, both the OT and the NT occasionally describe the Jews as those who are ignorant of the true God (Jer. 4:22; 9:3, 6; Hos. 5:4; John 8:55). A preferable reading of the second part of v. 8 would be to understand the statement as a two-part description of those who are subjects of divine vengeance. They are, in the first place, *those who do not know God*. In the OT, God declares his judgment on those who do not know him (Jer. 10:25; Ps. 79:6 [78:6]). This ignorance is not merely failing to recognize his existence but rather the rejection of his person as he is revealed to both nations and individuals (see 1 Thess. 4:5 and commentary; Rom. 1:18–32). As the knowledge of God is linked with obedience to his law (Ps. 36:10 [35:11]), so also the ignorance of God is understood as disobedience to his call. What follows is therefore closely parallel to the preceding thought. Those who suffer divine vengeance are, secondly, those who *do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus* (cf. Rom. 2:8; 1 Pet. 4:17). The NT frequently describes the act of conversion as obedience to the *gospel* (Acts 6:7; Rom. 1:5; 6:17; 10:16; 15:18; 16:26; Heb. 5:9; 1 Pet. 1:2, 14, 22). Such a description of the event cues us to the fact that the *gospel* is both the promise and offer of salvation and the demand of obedience to its call. It calls humans to respond to the good news of God, but if the divine initiative is rejected, the very same gospel becomes the criteria by which God will judge the person (Rom. 2:16). In fact, in the judicial sphere the word *obey* (*hypakouousin*) means “strict obedience to an order or a law.” God calls humans through his gospel (2:14), and those who do not respond can only hope for judgment. In the divine scheme, disobedience to the gospel is elevated to the status of a criminal offense, a thought quite different from the modern notion that the gospel should be received simply for personal benefit. Those in Thessalonica who had rejected the gospel were like those of Isaiah 66:4 (LXX), “Because I called them and they did not obey me, I spoke and they did not hear.”

9 Paul continues with a description of the character of the Lord's vengeance against those who have rejected God and the gospel of the Lord Jesus: *They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power*. The words translated *they will be punished* (NRSV, “These will suffer the punishment,” *hoitines dikēn tisousin*) come from the world of jurisprudence and mean “to pay the consequences” for some action. This is the “punishment” that the guilty suffer for the evil they have done. Jude speaks of “those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire”

(Jude 7); in the present passage the apostle understands the execution of the final judgment in a similar way (v. 7b). He further describes this as *everlasting destruction*. The term *destruction* (*olethron*, the same word encountered in 1 Thess. 5:3) frequently appears in those texts that speak of eschatological ruin or destruction (1 Tim. 6:9; Jer. 25:31 [32:31]; 48:3 [31:3]; Hag. 2:22; Wis. 1:14–15; 4 Macc. 10:15 [in combination with “eternal”]; and see Jer. 22:7; Ezek. 6:14). The duration of this *destruction* is *everlasting* or “eternal,” a terrible reality that is highlighted in other NT texts (cf. Matt. 18:8; 25:41 [“eternal fire”], 46 [“eternal punishment”]; Jude 7 [“the punishment of eternal fire”]). The apostle by no means implies that those who have rejected God will be annihilated eternally, a notion that appears to take the edge off the severity of divine judgment. Rather, the punishment will endure and will not end.[21] While the gospel brings the promise of “eternal encouragement” (2:16) to those who receive it, rejection of God’s initiative will bring eternal perdition. This state to which the judged are assigned is variously described in the NT as a place of “unquenchable fire” (Matt. 3:12), a “fiery furnace” (Matt. 13:42, 50), the “blackest darkness” that “has been reserved forever” (Jude 13), and a “fiery lake of burning sulfur” (Rev. 21:8). The graphic language appears inadequate at each point to describe the horrid nature of this state. No hope is held out for a second opportunity to escape or obtain salvation. The verdict, as its execution, will be final.

This punishment *with everlasting destruction*, beyond being permanent and irrevocable, also means being *shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power*. While the preposition that begins this clause in the Greek text (*apo*) is construed in the *NIV* as signaling that the judged will be excluded from the *presence of the Lord*, the thought is rather that the *presence of the Lord* is the source from which the judgment proceeds. This part of the verse is a nearly exact citation of Isaiah 2:10, 19, and 21 from the Septuagint (“And now go into the rocks, hide in the ground, from the presence of the terror of the Lord and from the glory of his strength”). The *Lord* in the Isaiah texts is Yahweh, who executes his judgment in the “day of Yahweh” against those who worship idols instead of the Lord himself: “Their land is full of idols; they bow down to the work of their hands, to what their fingers have made. So man will be brought low and mankind humbled—do not forgive them” (Isa. 2:8–9). The pride and arrogance of those who have rejected Yahweh is the cause of this horrible judgment (2:11–12, 17). They did not exalt Yahweh, but “the Lord alone will be exalted in that day, and the idols will totally disappear” (2:17b–18). In no way will anyone escape that judgment (Isa. 2:10, 19–21). The apostle presents the terrible promise that those who disobey the call of the gospel, the persecutors of the Thessalonian Christians, will by no means escape. Their hubris and pride, linked to their adherence to false worship, will in the end cause their demise.

As in 1:9, *the presence of the Lord* is associated in a number of texts in the OT and the book of Revelation with the judgment of God (Num. 16:46; Judg. 5:5; Pss. 34:16 [33:17]; 96:13 [95:13]; Jer. 4:26; Ezek. 38:20; Rev. 6:16; 20:11), and, as Isaiah notes, his presence is fearful. John was given a glimpse of the final judgment and exclaimed, “Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them” (Rev. 20:11). The idea that 1:9 conveys is not merely that the disobedient will be excluded from the Lord’s *presence* but that from this *presence* the *everlasting destruction* comes forth. Moreover, the *destruction* they suffer will be *from the majesty of his power*. This *majesty* is the visible “glory” (*doxēs*) of God and is synonymous with his *presence* (Rom. 1:23; Jude 24). Christ is himself called the “Lord of glory” (1 Cor. 2:8), while on the other hand “glory” at times describes God’s power (Rom. 6:4; Col. 1:11). The present verse highlights precisely this idea (*ischyos*, *power*, speaks of the power of God in Eph. 1:19; 6:10). The *Lord* Jesus comes in the divine *power* and is able to execute judgment. *The majesty of his power* is both the measure and the source of this judgment.

Paul gears this long discussion about the final judgment (vv. 5–10) to encourage the Thessalonian believers in their suffering for the faith (v. 4) and to assure them that justice will truly be done. But the passage also takes a side in the debate that was boiling during that era concerning the inevitability of divine judgment. The Epicureans questioned any notion of future divine judgment, and they were not alone in such speculation. The argument against divine retribution revolved around the apparent tardiness of its execution. The fictive debate Plutarch sets up around the issue begins with the comments of Patrocleas, who says, “The delay and procrastination of the Deity in punishing the wicked appears to me the most telling argument by far.... Yet that feeling dates from long ago, when it would chafe me to hear Euripides say: ‘Apollo lags; such is the way of Heaven’ ” (*Moralia* 548C-D and 549B-D; and cf. 1 Pet. 3:3–13). So popularized was the Epicurean notion that Plutarch, a priest of Apollo at Delphi at the end of the first century, felt compelled to write a whole tractate to defend the traditional view (*De Sera Numinis Vindicta*). In this climate, the sufferings of the Thessalonians and the lack of any apparent intervention by God to bring an end to their undeserved suffering would be enough reason for the apostles to have presented such lengthy and detailed reassurances of the certainty of future judgment. This church suffered an enormous amount of confusion regarding eschatological subjects (see 1 Thess. 4:13–5:11; 2 Thess. 2:1–12), and their concerns do not surprise us given the diverse body of public opinion that circulated at that time about these topics. The apostle lays down an argument revolving around the character of God and his justice (vv. 5–6) and the promise of the coming of the Lord as Avenger who has all power to execute the verdict (vv. 7b–9). Judgment is certain, and it will be supremely powerful.

[21] Marshall’s observation is instructive, “In favour of everlasting punishment it can be argued: (1). Jesus believed in it, and Paul will have shared his outlook (Matt. 5:29–30; 12:32; 18:8–9; 25:41, 46; Lk. 16:23–25); (2). Jewish teaching of the time accepted the fact of eternal punishment (1QS 2:15; 5.13; *Pss. Sol.* 2:35; 15:11; 4 Macc. 10:15); (3). In the present context the reference to separation from the Lord is of little significance if those punished are not conscious of their separation.” (*1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 179).

BIBLE DICTIONARIES

- Leon Morris, “Judgment, Day Of,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, electronic ed., Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996), 437–439.

Judgment, Day of. Throughout the Bible it is accepted that people are accountable to God. Good deeds are commended and evil deeds are blamed. The day of judgment is the culmination of the whole process. At the end of this world order God will judge all people and all deeds. Nothing will be excepted; every secret thing, good or bad, will be brought into judgment (Eccles. 12:14). Sometimes, of course, judgment is seen as a present activity (Ezek. 7:7–8), but there is also strong emphasis on final judgment, the judgment at the end of this world system as we know it, a judgment that ushers in the final state of affairs. This will be a judgment of all the nations and all the people, for the Lord “comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness, and the peoples in his truth” (Ps. 96:13). There will be judgment on Israel (Ps. 50:4) and there will also be judgment on the whole Gentile world (Ps. 9:8; Rom. 14:10; compare the magnificent picture of the final judgment in Rev. 20:11–15).

Judgment day may be referred to in any one of a number of ways. It may be spoken of strictly as “the day of judgment” (Matt. 10:15; 1 John 4:17), or with reference to its chronological place as “the last day” (John 6:39). Mostly John’s references to this day refer to Jesus’ raising of people but he also tells us that Jesus

said that the word that he spoke would on the last day judge anyone who despised him and refused to hear his words (John 12:48). The most common way of referring to it appears to be simply “that day” (Luke 21:34); the day of judgment was so outstanding that nothing more was needed to draw attention to it. Indeed, it may be called “the great Day” (Jude 6), or simply “the Day” (Heb. 10:25; 2 Peter 1:19).

Sometimes the day is characterized by the outcome of it all. Thus it is “the day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30). In one sense redemption is accomplished here and now when the sinner comes to trust Christ, but in another sense the Day of Judgment seals it all. And, of course, for the finally impenitent sinner it is “the great day of his wrath” (Rev. 6:17), “the day of God’s wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed” (Rom. 2:5).

There are other ways of putting it; this list is not exhaustive. The point of it all is that the day in question is the decisive day. What happens then is the culmination of the history of the world. A judgment will take place from which there is no appeal.

The Teaching of Jesus. Jesus emphasized the importance of final judgment. He told the Twelve that they were to warn their hearers that it would be “more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah” on the day of judgment than for them (Matt. 10:15). He himself had a similar message for the people of Chorazin and Bethsaida: It will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon on judgment day than for them (Matt. 11:22; Luke 10:14). On both occasions he warned that the people of Capernaum should not think of heaven as their final destination; that would rather be Hades. “The men of Nineveh” and “The Queen of the South” will stand up and condemn Jesus’ hearers at the day of judgment because they responded to the wisdom of Solomon and the preaching of Jonah and those hearers did not (Matt. 12:41–42). We should be clear that Jesus unhesitatingly spoke of judgment day and of what would happen on it.

Jesus also related the words uttered by his hearers to what will happen at the day of judgment. It is what goes on in our hearts that determines what we say and thus our words are important; our words reveal what we are. On the day of judgment we will be called on to give account of “every careless word” we have spoken and it is this that will determine our acquittal or our condemnation (Matt. 12:34–37).

Faith and Works. When we think of the reality and the seriousness of judgment day we must be on our guard against holding that our final salvation is to be decided on the basis of merit. The New Testament makes it abundantly clear that salvation is not the reward of the good deeds that people do. It is emphasized as strongly as it could possibly be that Christ came to this world to save sinners and that he saved them by laying down his perfect life on Calvary’s cross. Salvation comes through what Christ has done and it is applied to the individual by his or her faith. It is not any merit we may have but our faith that is the channel whereby Christ’s salvation reaches us. That must be given the strongest emphasis. And that has its consequences. There is “no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1). To put our trust in Christ is to pass from death to life and among other things to know that we will receive a favorable verdict on judgment day.

But to trust in Christ is to undergo a transformation. Justification leads to sanctification as believers are transformed by the power of God. While believers can look forward to the day of judgment with calm rather than fear they do so because of what God has done in them and not on account of any merit of their own.

The believer and the nonbeliever are both accountable and judgment day is the occasion when that account is rendered. It is not then a question of whether we are saved or not. It is the issuing of a verdict on what we have done; it is the answer to the question of what believers have done with their salvation and what unbelievers have done with their unbelieving lives. All will be required to give account of themselves to God.

There are those who see judgment day as pointing to salvation by works. The verdicts on the sheep and the goats on the basis of what they have done or failed to do to “the least” of Christ’s brothers (Matt. 25:31–46) are said to mean that the verdict is given for those who have done good works. But this overlooks a number of facts. First whether they are “sheep” or “goats” has already been determined. Then we should notice that the good deeds are done to Christ’s “brothers.” We are saved not by acts of kindness but only by Christ (Acts 4:12). Good deeds may be done by unbelievers, but this is due to “common grace” at work in our fallen society, not a reason for salvation.

Salvation is by grace alone, but judgment day registers the verdict on what we have done or failed to do with God’s grace. Jesus is not saying that there are some people whose good deeds merit salvation, but that there are some whose good deeds are evidence of their salvation. Scripture sees the whole race as under condemnation (Rom. 3:22–23). Unbelievers are under condemnation even before they hear the gospel for their lives do not measure up; they are sinners. We are not to think that it is only when they explicitly reject the gospel that they are condemned.

Judgment Day Is More than Present Judgment. That there will be a “judgment day” is significant for an understanding of a good deal of Scripture. In these days there are many who are ready to accept the thought of accountability but who reject the idea of judgment day. They see this as no more than a needless piece of imagery and hold that what the Bible really means is that God is constantly at work judging his people. There is, of course, a truth here. God does watch over his people and in the happenings of every day he disciplines them. This is scriptural, but it is not the whole of the teaching of the Bible. In addition to any earlier judgments Scripture looks forward to God’s judgment at the end of time.

Paul tells the Romans that what the law says is written on the hearts of the Gentiles and that their response to this will determine what will happen to them on judgment day (Rom. 2:15–16). It is what God has done in them and not what they have decided for themselves that forms the standard. For an understanding of judgment day it is important to bear in mind that God knows what goes on in the hearts of all people and he knows accordingly whether they are responding as they should to the leading he has given them.

The Judge. Very often the day is related to God or to Christ. Thus it is “the great day of God Almighty” (Rev. 16:14); it is “the day of God” (2 Peter 3:12). The earliest use of this imagery is when Amos pronounces a woe on “you who long for the day of the Lord” (5:18). Clearly the Israelites expected that day to be a day of deliverance and blessing, but Amos goes on to assure them that “That day will be darkness, not light.” “The day he (God visits us)” (1 Peter 2:12) means of course “the day when God visits” so it belongs here. It reminds us that God’s “visitation” on judgment day will be a serious affair. So is it when we read of “the great and glorious day of the Lord” (Acts 2:20). This occurs in a quotation from Joel, so “the Lord” is clearly Yahweh.

In other places however “Lord” may refer to the Lord Jesus Christ (e.g., 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10), and this is beyond doubt when we read of “the day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 1:8; 5:5). Judgment day is the day of Christ (Phil. 1:10) or the day of the Son of Man (Luke 17:24). Jesus taught that the Father does not

judge people, but that “he has entrusted all judgment to the Son” (John 5:22; cf. v. 27). This is distinctively Christian teaching, for the Jews do not seem to have thought of the Messiah as the Judge. He would bring deliverance to the people, but it was God the Father who would be the judge.

The point of all such references is that in the end it will be a great divine act, whether we emphasize the Father or the Son, that distinguishes the day of judgment. Paul tells us that on judgment day the Father will judge all people through Christ Jesus (Rom. 2:16) and this perhaps clears up the references which link either of the two with final judgment.

For many modern theologians the doctrine of final judgment is a relic of the past and they put no emphasis on it. This is curious in view of the facts that in modern times there has been a great upsurge of interest in eschatology and that the final judgment is at the very heart of biblical eschatology. The witness of Scripture in both Old and New Testaments is clear: We are all accountable and at the end of time we will be called on to give account of ourselves before God.

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- J. S. Wright, “Day of the Lord,” in *New Bible Dictionary*, ed. D. R. W. Wood et al. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 261.

DAY OF THE LORD. This expression forms part of the *eschatology of the Bible. It has various equivalents, such as ‘the day’, ‘in that day’.

In this article we consider the uses of the actual phrase. Am. 5:18–20, the earliest use, shows that the phrase was already a standard one in popular phraseology. To the people it meant the day when Yahweh would intervene to put Israel at the head of the nations, irrespective of Israel’s faithfulness to him. Amos declares that the Day means judgment for Israel. So also in Is. 2:12f.; Ezk. 13:5; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11; Zp. 1:7, 14; Zc. 14:1.

Other prophets, conscious of the sins of other nations as well as of Israel, declare that the Day will come on individual nations as a punishment for their brutalities, e.g. Babylon, Is. 13:6, 9; Egypt, Je. 46:10; Edom, Ob. 15; many nations, Joel 2:31; 3:14; Ob. 15.

The Day of the Lord is thus the occasion when Yahweh actively intervenes to punish sin that has come to a climax. This punishment may come through an invasion (Am. 5–6; Is. 13; Ezk. 13:5), or through some natural disaster, such as a locust invasion (Joel 1–2). All lesser interventions come to a head in the actual coming of the Lord himself. At this Day there are truly repentant believers who are saved (Joel 2:28–32), while those who remain enemies of the Lord, whether Jews or Gentiles, are punished. There are also physical effects on the world of nature (Is. 2).

In the NT the Day of the Lord (as in 2 Thes. 2:2) is the second coming of Christ, and the phrase ‘the day of Jesus Christ’, or an equivalent, occurs in 1 Cor. 1:8; 5:5; Phil. 1:6, 10; 2:16; 2 Thes. 2:2 (Authorized Version King James’, 1611). The coming is unexpected (1 Thes. 5:2; 2 Pet. 3:10), yet certain signs must occur first, and these should be discerned by Christians (2 Thes. 2:2f.). Physical effects on the world of nature accompany the Day (2 Pet. 3:12f.).

- Greg A. King, "Day of the Lord," in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers, and Astrid B. Beck (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 324–325.

Day of the Lord

The time of the decisive visitation of Yahweh, when he intervenes to punish the wicked, deliver and exalt the faithful remnant who worship him, and establish his own rule. Both judgment and salvation are especially prominent aspects. The Day of the Lord is a significant concept in biblical eschatology, especially in the OT prophetic books. Though the precise term appears only 16 times in the OT, other temporal phrases are clearly relevant (e.g., "on that day," Zeph. 1:9–10; Amos 8:9; "the day of the Lord's sacrifice," Zeph. 1:8; "the day of the wrath of the Lord," Ezek. 7:19; compare. Isa. 2:12). Some scholars consider this to be the central theme of the entire prophetic message; the books of Joel and Zephaniah are completely devoted to proclaiming the Day of the Lord and its attendant events. Indeed, preoccupation with the putative origin of the Day (e.g., the holy war traditions, an ancient enthronement festival) is not necessarily determinative of its later meaning.

The Day of the Lord brings the outpouring of Yahweh's punishment on Israel and Judah. Amos 5:18–20, probably the earliest reference, proclaims judgment on Israel and implies that the prophet overturns the people's expectations of what will happen. The covenant people, who expect God to intervene to defeat their enemies, are instead lurching towards judgment. According to the prophets, this divine judgment is not arbitrary but is prompted by idolatry (Isa. 2:8, 20; Zeph. 1:4–6), pride and arrogance (Isa. 2:11, 17), and a lack of social justice (Amos 2:6–7; Zeph. 3:1–3). It is a purging judgment, which cleanses the blot of wickedness from among God's chosen nation. Unrelenting and inescapable (Amos 5:18–19; Zeph. 1:12), it specifically targets the nation's leaders (Isa. 3:1–3; Zeph. 3:2–3). Although the punishment will come in the form of a military defeat (Amos 2:13–16; Zeph. 1:16), it is clear that Yahweh is the driving force behind it (note the 1st person verbs in Amos 8:9–11; Zeph. 1:8, 9, 11; compare. Joel 2:11).

Judgment is not limited to the covenant people, but includes certain neighboring nations (Amos 1:13–15; Zeph. 2:4–15; compare. also Joel 3:11–12 [Masoretic Text 4:11–12]) who are destined to reap the consequences of their heinous acts (Amos 1:13; Zeph. 2:8, 10). Several prophets depict it as of worldwide proportions (Isa. 13:9; Zeph. 3:8; Zech. 14:1–3, 9). According to Zephaniah, it is none other than the reversal of creation, a destruction more vast than even that brought about by the Flood (compare. the fish in 1:2–3). This prophetic expectation of a final, climactic event which is cosmic in scope is not inconsistent with the fact that biblical writers sometimes applied "Day of the Lord" to past events, such as the destruction of Jerusalem (Lam. 2:22) and the defeat of Egypt (Jer. 46:10). In biblical thought, these past events represent the future and tend to merge into it, foreshadowing the time when all human wickedness will be judged, human pride and arrogance will be exposed, and any power opposed to God will be deposed, preparing the way for establishment of God's own kingdom (Isa. 2:6–22).

Unfortunately, the salvific aspect has often been thought less important than or even incongruent with the judgment aspect. However, the Day is neither solely a time of judgment nor of salvation. It is a time of salvation through judgment, purification and blessing through purging. The prophets announce that a group from the covenant nation will emerge from the judgment and receive divine blessings. This group of survivors, called the remnant (Mic. 4:6–7; Zeph. 3:11–13), will be composed of people who seek Yahweh intently (Amos 5:4–6), manifest humility (Isa. 2:11–12; Zeph. 3:11–12), and live ethically (Amos 5:14–15). They will be gathered by Yahweh, restored to their own land, and enjoy Yahweh's presence in their midst (Amos 9:14–15; Zeph. 3:15, 20).

As with judgment, not only Israel but also the nations will experience future blessing. Transformed by Yahweh, foreigners will express their devotion and allegiance (Isa. 19:18; Zeph. 3:9), both making pilgrimages to Jerusalem to worship (Isa. 2:2–4; Mic. 4:1–4; Zech. 14:16–17) and venerating Yahweh while in their own countries (Isa. 19:19; Zeph. 2:11). In fact, every remaining object will be dedicated to Yahweh at that time (Zech. 14:20).

In the NT the Day of the Lord is identified with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:10–13; 1 Thess. 5:2; compare. 4:13–18) and is also called “the day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 1:8; compare. 5:5; 2 Cor. 1:14), “the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6), and other similar phrases. Since it is portrayed as a time of universal accountability, when final judgment is meted out and final rewards assigned, it includes the same basic range of events as the OT concept.

As for the timing of the Day, though certain events must transpire first (2 Thess. 2:1–3; compare. Mal. 4:5 [3:23]), the Apostle Paul echoes the OT prophets in proclaiming that it is near (Rom. 13:11–12; compare. Isa. 13:6; Joel 1:15; Zeph. 1:7–14). This Day, the time of final vindication of the godly remnant and complete defeat of the wicked, the world still awaits.

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- Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, “Day of the Lord,” in *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 588–589.

Day of the Lord. Expression used by O.T. prophets (as early as the eighth-century B.C. prophet Amos) to signify a time in which God actively intervenes in history, primarily for judgment. Thus “the day of the Lord” is also called “the day of the Lord’s anger” (Zep 2:2 KJV).

Sometimes “the day of the Lord” is used in the O.T. to speak of a past judgment (Lam 2:22). More often an impending future judgment is in view (Joel 2:1–11). Ultimately, though, the term refers to climactic future judgment of the world (Joel 3:14–21; Mal 4:5). Often prophecy of a near-future event and an end-time prophecy are merged, the immediate judgment being a preview of the final day of the Lord. The prophecy of Isaiah against Babylon is an example (Is 13:5–10). Jesus combined events described there with other prophecies to explain his second coming (Mk 13:24–37). Another example is Joel’s prophecy of the day of the Lord (Joel 1:15–2:11). Though the prophet initially spoke of God’s judgment on Israel by a locust plague, that judgment prompted further pronouncements about a final day of the Lord far beyond Joel’s time (Joel 2:31; 3:14–17). That day of the Lord extended even beyond the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost predicted by Joel’s prophecy (Joel 2:28–32; Acts 2:16–21; Rv 6:12, 13). The N.T. uses the term exclusively to mean the end time.

The final day of the Lord is characterized in the Bible as a day of gloom, darkness, and judgment. Associated with God’s judgment is language depicting changes in nature, especially a darkening of the sun, moon, and stars (Is 13:10; Joel 2:31; 3:15; Mt 24:29; Rv 6:12). Nations will be judged for their rebellion against God’s anointed people and king (Joel 3:19; compare Ps 2). Israel is counseled not to be eager for that day, because it will also include judgment on the chosen nation (Am 5:18–20). But the prophets promise that a believing “remnant” will be saved by looking to the Messiah they once rejected (Joel 2:32; Zec 12:10).

Following the judgment, the future day of the Lord will be a time of prosperity, restoration, and blessing for Israel (Joel 3:18–21).

The more explicit N.T. expressions—“the day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 1:8), “the day of the Lord Jesus” (1 Cor 5:5; 2 Cor 1:14), and “the day of Christ” (Phil 1:10; 2:16)—are more personal and more positive. They point to final events related to Christian believers, who will not experience the wrath of God (1 Thes 5:9).

When the day of the Lord comes, the earth will be renewed and purified through a judgment of fire (2 Pt 3:10–13). In the Book of Revelation the final purging seems to come after the millennium—that is, the 1,000-year reign of Christ (Rv 21:1).

Evangelical scholars differ about the beginning point of the day of the Lord in relation to other prophesied future events. Various views suggest it will start: (1) at the beginning of a seven-year period preceding Christ’s coming to earth, when a “man of lawlessness” is to be revealed and make a covenant with Israel (2 Thes 2:3; compare Dn 9:27); (2) following an “abomination of desolation,” in which the “man of lawlessness” will pose as God (Mt 24:15 KJV; 2 Thes 2:4) at the middle of the seven-year period; or (3) later in the seven years at the outpouring of God’s wrath (Rv 16:1).

Concerning the future day of the Lord as it is prophesied in the Scriptures, one should note: (1) biblical passages mentioning the impressive celestial signs of that day (Is 13:10; Jl 2:31; 3:15; Mt 24:29; Rv 6:12); (2) the sequence of the judgments that focus on seals, trumpets, and bowls in the Book of Revelation; (3) the relationship of the wrath of Revelation 6:16 to the series of “seal” judgments; and (4) the revelation of the “man of lawlessness” in 2 Thessalonians 2:3.

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- Jeffrey E. Miller, “Day of Judgment,” in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

Day of Judgment Also called the “Day of the Lord” or “Day of Yahweh.” A day anticipated primarily in prophetic and apocalyptic literature when God will actively judge the people for their sins. The Bible includes many warnings about the coming of the day of judgment, along with grave descriptions of its imminence, wrath, and terror. Scripture also says there will be repeated pleas for repentance preceding God’s judgment, after which righteousness and prosperity will be restored for the faithful to enjoy.

Day of Judgment in the Old Testament

The day of judgment has various implications and Hebrew names throughout the Old Testament. The Old Testament refers to this day as:

- “The Day of the Lord”
- “The Day of the Lord’s Judgment”
- “The Day of the Lord’s anger” (Lam 2:22; Zeph 2:2–3)
- “The Day of the Lord’s wrath” (Zeph 1:18)
- “The great and terrible Day of the Lord” (Mal 4:5)

The Old Testament day of judgment involves punishment on God’s chosen nation (Zeph 1:4), other specified nations (e.g., Egypt in Jer 46:10), or humanity in general (Zeph 1:18). God will “visit” the world in a military attack that will result in the world’s complete and irreversible disruption. He will serve as judge over humanity on an individual and national scale during this fearful day of terror (Isa 2:10–21; Zeph 1:14–

15). The resurrection and judgment of the dead alongside the living is a later Old Testament development (Dan 7:9–10; 12:1–3).

“Days” of Judgment

Often classified under eschatology, the day of judgment indicates the final, ultimate measure of justice, after which God’s righteous standards will prevail. Nevertheless, the Bible indicates several “days” of judgment will have taken place before the final judgment arrives.

For example, in Amos 3:9–11 the prophet warns the northern kingdom of Israel that they will be defeated by a foreign power if they do not return to the Lord. Their day of judgment seemingly takes place when the Assyrians attacked and destroyed Israel in 722 bc. God later sends a string of prophets to the southern kingdom of Judah, threatening a similar fate if they persist in their covenant disloyalty (Deut 28:63; see Isa 2:12; Joel 1:15; Zeph 1:4–18). These prophets repeatedly invite Judah to repent and come to God on His terms so that they will be rescued from His coming wrath (Joel 2:12–17; Zeph 2:2–3). However, Judah’s persistent rebellion results in the Lord’s judgment, culminating in the Babylonian captivity and the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in 586 bc.

Imagery

The Old Testament refers to the day of judgment using a variety of terms and images. Common imagery associated with the day of judgment includes:

- Darkness (Joel 2:2; Amos 5:18–20; Zeph 1:15).
- Fire (Joel 2:3; Zeph 1:18; Mal 4:1; see also 2 Pet 3:10).
- War (Joel 2:7; Zeph 1:14–16)
- The Lord of Hosts (armies) (Isa 13:4; Amos 3:13; Zeph 2:9–10).
- Imminence (Isa 13:6; Ezek 7:7; 30:3; Joel 1:15; Zeph 1:7, 14; Obad 1:15).
- Renewal (Isa 35:1–10; Joel 3:18–20; Amos 9:11–12; Zeph 3:12–20; see also 2 Pet 3:13).

Day of Judgment in the New Testament

In the New Testament, the day of judgment accompanies the return of Jesus:

- He has been appointed to judge the living and the dead (Acts 10:42; 2 Tim 4:1; 1 Pet 4:5; John 5:22).
- The Day of the Lord is referred to as the Day of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor 1:8; 5:5; 2 Cor 1:14; Phil 1:6, 10; 2:16).
- In Matthew, Jesus threatens His predominantly Jewish audience with this day of judgment (Matt 10:15; 11:22, 24; 12:36),
- Jesus compares the day of judgment to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Matt 10:15; 11:24; see also Isa 13:19; Jer 49:18; 50:40; Amos 4:11; Zeph 2:9).

As with the old Testament, repentance is called for. Paul assures his readers that this day has not already come and gone (2 Thess 2:1–2) but rather, according to Peter, it was announced in advance so the hearers could change their ways (2 Peter 3:11). Whereas the Old Testament shows judgment based on national affiliations, the New Testament portrays judgment as rendered against individuals who must answer for their own sins (2 Pet 2:9–16; 3:7). This is especially true at the Great White Throne judgment, when the unrighteous will be sentenced to spend eternity in the lake of fire (Rev 20:11–15). On the other hand,

those who confess Jesus is Lord and walk in love need not fear of the coming day of judgment (1 John 4:17).

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- Richard H. Hiers, “Day of the Lord,” in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 82–83.

DAY OF THE LORD. “The Day of the Lord” (= “the Day of Yahweh”) is a central feature of the prophets’ message to their contemporaries. This phrase and such closely related expressions as “the day of the anger of Yahweh,” or “Yahweh has a day,” occur over two dozen times in prophetic books (most frequently in Isaiah, Joel, and Zephaniah), and once in Lamentations (2:22). Similar terms, particularly “that day,” “the day of,” and “the day when,” appear nearly 200 times in the prophets, occasionally in Lamentations, and twice in Psalms (Pss 110:5; 137:7). These terms often are used interchangeably with the fuller expressions or in contexts that refer specifically to one or the other of them, e.g., Isa 2:12–22 (see vv 12, 17, 20); Jer 46:10; Ezek 7:5–27 (see vv 7, 10, 12, 19); and Ezek 30:2–3. In most instances, the same ranges of meaning are suggested.

A. Yahweh’s Judgment against Foreign Nations

B. Yahweh’s Judgment against Israel, Judah, or the Jewish People

C. Future Deliverance or Blessing for Israel, Judah, Other Nations, and All Creation

D. Day of the Lord in the NT

E. Scholarly Literature

A. Yahweh’s Judgment against Foreign Nations

A few scattered passages seem to refer to Yahweh’s previous acts of judgment against foreign nations. “The day of Midian” (Isa 9:4) refers to the Midianites’ earlier defeat. Most other such expressions refer to Yahweh’s future punishment of various nations, e.g., Jer 50:31 (to Babylon, “your day has come”); Ezek 21:29 (the “day of the Ammonites”); Ezek 26:18; 27:27 (“day of the fall” or “ruin” of Tyre); Ezek 32:10 (to Egypt, “the day of your downfall”).

Most of the prophetic books contain oracles against foreign nations. The “Day of Yahweh” and similar expressions frequently appear in these oracles. Commentators generally agree that in Amos’ time “the Day of Yahweh” popularly was thought to mean the time when Yahweh would vindicate Israel by defeating its enemies. See the expressions “day of battle” and “day of the whirlwind” in Amos’ denunciation of the Ammonites (1:14). In contrast, Amos warns his Israelite hearers that “the Day of Yahweh” will not be what they wanted (Amos 5:18, 20. See part B, below.). Several later prophets declared that the Day of Yahweh would be one of disaster for certain other nations, namely, Egypt (Isa 19:16; 20:6; Jer 46:10, 21; Ezek 30:9, 18), Edom (Isa 34:8; 63:4; Jer 49:22), Ethiopia (Ezek 30:9), Babylon (Isa 47:9; Jer 50:27, 30, 31; 51:2), the Ammonites (Ezek 21:29), Damascus (Jer 49:26), Moab (Jer 48:41), the Philistines (Jer 47:4), and Tyre (Isa 23:15). A few prophetic texts suggest that “that day” will be one of judgment against many or even all nations: Isa 24:21 (“the kings of the earth”; cf. Ps 110:5–6), Jer 25:33 (see 25:30–32 for context), Ezek 30:2–5 (particularly Arabia, Egypt, and other African nations), Joel 3:14 (see 3:11–12 for context), and Obadiah 15–16. The Ezekiel and Obadiah passages warned that the day was “near.” Zechariah declared

that “on that day” Yahweh would destroy all the nations opposed to Jerusalem (Zech 12:3–9; 14:12–13). See also Ezek 38:17–39:8 as to the fate in store for Gog and Magog.

Zephaniah proclaimed more broadly that YHWH would destroy “all the inhabitants of the earth” on the day of his wrath (Zeph 1:7–18). According to Isa 2:12–17 Yahweh’s “day” will be a time of judgment not only against the pride of men, but against “all that is proud and lofty.” The author of Isa 13:6–13 declared that the whole world would be punished for its evil on the Day of Yahweh which was then “near.” The Isaiah Apocalypse announced that “on that day” Yahweh would even punish the cosmic powers (Isa 24:21–22), and the quasi-cosmic sea monsters (Isa 27:1).

B. Yahweh’s Judgment against Israel, Judah, or the Jewish People

Yahweh’s past judgment (on “the day of his anger”) is emphasized in Lamentations, with reference to the events marking the end of the southern kingdom of Judah and the beginning of the Exile (Lam 1:12; 2:1, 21–22). Compare Obad 11–14 and Ps 137:7, where “the day” of Judah or Jerusalem signifies the same events, which, however, are not viewed as Yahweh’s judgment, but only as evil deeds perpetrated by their enemies. Isaiah 22:1–14 may also refer to an already experienced “day” of Yahweh’s judgment. Ezekiel 21:25 states that “the day” of a prince of Israel “has come,” but the context suggests that his punishment had yet to occur.

Characteristically, the classical prophets warned their contemporaries in Israel and Judah that “the Day of Yahweh” would soon come upon them in the form of cosmic or meteorological catastrophes or of powerful enemy armies which would bring Yahweh’s judgment against them for breaking the covenant requirements of the law. Thus Amos warned Israel that the day of Yahweh would be “darkness, and not light” (Amos 5:18, 20; cf. Joel 2:1–2). The prophets point to Yahweh as the one who will ultimately cause the coming disasters as judgment against his people; most of them refer to “the Day of Yahweh” (or equivalent terms) in this connection. Examples include Amos 2:13–16; 3:14; 8:3, 9; Hos 1:4–5; 5:9; Isa 3:18–4:1; 7:18–20, 23; 10:3; 22:5; Mic 2:4; Jer 17:16–18 (“the day of disaster,” “the day of evil”); 18:17 (“the day of their calamity”); 39:16; Ezek 7:7–12, 19; 13:5; 24:25–27; 38:14–19; Zeph 1:7–18; 2:1–3; Joel 1:15; 2:1–2, 11, 31; Mal 4:1, 5. Second Isaiah, Obadiah, Jonah, and Nahum, which looked only for Yahweh’s blessings on Israel or Judah or for disaster for other nations, do not include this usage.

In general, the preexilic prophets proclaimed that God would punish Israel or Judah through oppression by other nations; e.g., Hos 11:5; Amos 3:9–11; Isa 5:26–30. After the Exile, when the nations Israel and Judah had ceased to exist, prophets looked for Yahweh’s judgment against the Jewish people in one of two forms: “natural” disasters, such as plagues, drought, and crop failure, or “supernatural” demonic hordes, as in Hag 1:5–6; 2:14–19; Mal 3:9–12; Joel 2:1–11.

Some texts indicate belief that the Day of Yahweh was near: Ezek 7:7, 12; 22:4; Joel 2:1; 3:14; Zeph 1:7. A few others state that the day “comes” or “is coming,” implicitly in the near future—e.g., Ezek 7:10; 39:8 and Mal 4:1. Malachi 3:1–2 warns that Yahweh’s “messenger” is coming and warns of “the day of his coming,” when he would cause the priests to offer right offerings. None of the prophetic texts, however, that look for the “Day of Yahweh” as a time of judgment against Israel, Judah, or the Jewish people refers to the “coming” of a messiah or of Yahweh himself in connection with it.

C. Future Deliverance or Blessing for Israel, Judah, Other Nations and All Creation

Some 60 occurrences of “the Day of Yahweh” and similar expressions refer to the future time when Yahweh would reestablish the fortunes of Israel/Judah or the Jewish people. A few, particularly in Isaiah, look for the redemption of other nations as well: Isa 2:2–4 (= Mic 4:1–3); 11:10; 19:18–25; 25:6–9; Zech 2:11.

Relatively few of these texts explicitly mention a future messiah or Davidic king: Isa 11:10; Jer 23:5–6; 30:8–9; 33:15–16; Hag 2:23; Zech 3:8–10; Amos 9:11; cf. Hos 2:2. (Some messianic passages do not refer to the Day of Yahweh or related terms, e.g., Isa 9:6–7; Ezek 34:23–24; 37:24–25; Zech 6:9–13; 9:9–10.) More typical are texts that look for Yahweh himself to act (Mal 3:17; 4:3), manifest his glory (Isa 2:11, 17, 19; Ezek 39:13), and rule as king over a restored Israel (Mic 4:6–7) or over all the earth (Isa 2:2–4 = Mic 4:1–3; Obad 21; Zech 2:11; 14:9) on that day.

On or in anticipation of that new day, according to Isaiah, those who had been sick or disabled would be restored to full health: Isa 29:18–19; 30:26; cf. Mic 4:6–7. Then all will enjoy the preternatural abundance of milk, honey, fruit, and produce (Isa 4:2; 7:21–22; 25:6–9; 30:23–24; Joel 3:18; Amos 9:13–15). Every man shall sit with his neighbor under his own vine and fig tree (Mic 4:4; Zech 3:10); peace will obtain throughout all creation (Hos 2:18; Isa 11:1–10; cf. Ezek 34:25–28); and all Israel (Isa 10:20; 52:6; Ezek 39:22), if not all nations (Isa 19:19–25; cf. Ezek 38:23), will know that Yahweh is God. In that day exiled Jews will return (Isa 11:11–12; 27:12–13; Jer 27:22), and Jerusalem and the Jewish people will experience God’s special favor (Isa 12:1–4; 28:5–6; 30:26; Jer 31:1–6; Ezek 36:33–36; Zeph 3:11–20; Zech 9:16–17; 14:1; Mal 3:17).

D. Day of the Lord in the NT

This and similar terms often occur in NT contexts referring to the future appearance of Jesus. In reading the Greek OT (or LXX - Septuagint), Jews and early Christians very likely rendered the OT expression “Day of Yahweh” as “Day of the Lord.” Early Christian leaders likely took over the OT expression but now understood it to refer to Jesus’ return as their Lord, as the Christ, or as the supernatural Son of Man. See DAY OF CHRIST and DAY OF JUDGMENT.

E. Scholarly Literature

For many years OT scholars have accepted the view that Israelites up to the time of Amos regarded the Day of Yahweh as that time when Yahweh would deliver Israel by punishing foreign nations and that Amos radically altered this understanding by proclaiming that on that day Yahweh would also punish Israel for all her offenses (Amos 1:1–3:2). See Bright (1955: 60–70).

Not all agree as to the nature of Israelite beliefs concerning the Day of Yahweh before the time of Amos, and at least two books (Nahum and Obadiah) attributed to prophets well after the time of Amos consist entirely of oracles against foreign nations. There is wide agreement, however, that for most of the prophets, the Day of Yahweh meant that time in the relatively near future when Yahweh would punish not only his people’s enemies, but also his people (Israel, Judah, or the Jewish people) for breaking the covenant. Then, either through a new Davidic king or messiah or by acting directly, Yahweh would establish his own rule or kingdom over all the earth. See Robinson (1946: 135–47); Baab (1949: 156–97); and Jacob (1958: 319–21). See, generally, Muilenburg (1961: 128–50); Heschel (1962: 159–94); and Hiers (1988).

There have been a variety of other suggestions, however, particularly as to the origins of biblical traditions concerning the Day of Yahweh. Mowinckel (1956: 143–54) urged that the prophetic expectation of a

coming Day of Yahweh derived from a cultic New Year Festival which celebrated Yahweh's enthronement as king and gave expression to hope for the beginning of a new era of blessing. Others, following von Rad (1959), have concluded that the Day of Yahweh represented Yahweh as "Holy Warrior" who had overwhelmed Israel's enemies in battle in the past, and would do so again. Thus Hanson (1975: 354–401) interprets Zechariah 12–14 as the work of a visionary group which looked for Yahweh to punish particularly the Jerusalem temple hierarchy, deliver the faithful from foreign hordes, and renew the order of nature. Everson (1974), on the other hand, finds that the Day of Yahweh passages do not justify any of the theories as to the origin of the expression. He observes that several of these passages refer to different historical events. On that basis he concludes that the prophets likewise looked for separate future events of divine judgment or deliverance and that interpreters therefore should refer to the prophets' beliefs concerning the Days rather than to a single Day of Yahweh.