

## The Day of the Lord

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

2 weeks ago I spoke about the day of the Lord in connection to the rapture of the church.

However, if you check the Old Testament for the phrase “the Day of the Lord” you’ll find out that out of the 25 times this phrase refers to judgement and punishment 24 times and 1 time to the Sabbath day.

So, today we’ll look more at the judgement aspect of the Day of the Lord.

Besides the Scriptures from 1 Thessalonians we will look at several Scriptures from the Gospel according to Matthew and specifically what the Lord Jesus said about these things.

## 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3

- But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you.
- For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.
- For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

Just as a reminder: none of us does know when this day will be. Our Lord Jesus Christ indeed stated, as we also will see later, that only the Father knows when this day will come.

As we went through these Scriptures already 2 weeks ago, I'll not comment too much upon them.

Instead we'll spent quite some time looking at what the Lord Jesus Christ is teaching us about it and some serious warnings He gives.

### 1 Thessalonians 5:4-7

- But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.
- You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.
- Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober.
- For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.

Remember that we should look for developments in this world that could indicate that the day of the Lord is indeed near.

As disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ we have a tremendous teacher in the Holy Spirit to make us aware of what is going on in the world.

### 1Thessalonians 5:8-11

- But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and *as* a helmet the hope of salvation.
- For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.
- Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

All disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ can still look forward to the Day of the Lord in expectation, as God has a wonderful plan for them.

But as we see in the following sheets, the Day of the Lord is also a time of judgement for the nations and for those who have refused to submit to the authority of God.

As such it is mentioned in the Bible in the following Scriptures:

### References to the Day of the Lord as a day of judgement

- Isa: 2:12, 13:6, 13:9, 34:8
- Jer: 46:10
- La: 2:22
- Eze: 13:5, 30:3
- Joel: 1:15, 2:11, 2:11, 2:31, 3:14
- Am: 5:18, 5:20
- Ob: 1:13
- Zep: 1:7-8, 1:18, 2:2-3
- Zec: 14:1
- Mal: 4:5
- Ac: 2:20
- 1Co: 5:5
- 1Th: 5:2-3
- 2Pe: 3:10

Quite an impressive list, isn't it?

Recently I did a study about the book of the prophet Zechariah and especially chapter 14 of that book is quite interesting when you want to know more about the Day of the Lord.

Besides in these references you'll find the phrase The Day of the Lord, still in a few other verses but then with a different meaning.

But let's now go to various Scriptures in Matthew to see what our Lord Jesus Christ says about the Day of the Lord as a Day of Judgement.

### Matthew 24:3-5

- Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"
- And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you.
- "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.

Prior to these verses our Lord Jesus Christ told the apostles that all the great buildings within Jerusalem would totally be destroyed.

So here they came to him with some questions about that and about the end of times and His second coming.

And our Lord Jesus starts by warning them about people who will try to deceive them.

We must be careful also and not just accept everything, but we always must check things against the Scriptures.

### Matthew 24:6-8

- “And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet.
- “For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.
- “All these *are* the beginning of sorrows.

Does this ring a bell for you?

Isn't this what we see in the newspapers so often?

We need to realize that these things are not a sign of a quick, almost immediate appearance of the Day of the Lord.

Our Lord is quite clear about that.

But let's continue.

### Matthew 24:9-14

- “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake.
- “And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.
- “Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.
- “And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.
- “But he who endures to the end shall be saved.
- “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

The persecution of Christians has increased a lot during the last century. In many countries our brothers and sisters are suffering for their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

At the same time has in many countries the population turned away from Christianity as it is proclaimed in the Bible. As far as there is still some Christian influence in countries often it has been watered down and many persons claiming to be a Christian can be categorized as nominal Christians.

Truly holding on the Christian values, especially in the area of marriage and sexual relationships, can bring you in serious trouble even in so called Christian countries.

### Matthew 24:15-18

- “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.
- “Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house.
- “And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.

The term abomination of desolation most likely refers to statues of idols/false gods being placed in the temple.

This happened already again during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, a Syrian king.

Theos Epiphanes, the words he added to his name Antiochus IV, means: the god who reveals himself.

This helps us to understand what we need to look for with regards to the term abomination of desolation.

With regards to this term we can think of the two beasts that are mentioned in Revelation chapter 13.

They definitely would fit in this description.

But let's go on.

### Matthew 24:19-22

- “And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.
- “But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!
- “And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.
- “For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.
- “And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.

These are serious warnings from our Lord Jesus Christ. Especially to those in Judea He says: when you see these things happening, run for safety, go to a hiding place.

Those days will be the days of the most severe persecution we can think of. And for the sake of the elected they will be shortened.

But let's continue.

### Matthew 24:23-25

- “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here *is* the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ do not believe *it*.”
- “For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.”
- “See, I have told you beforehand.”

In those days Satan will use all possible ways you can think of to turn people away from the one true God.

And see what it says in verse 24! What a warning we see here! Would anyone of us ever had expected that false christs and false prophets would be able to do such great and deceiving things?

Be aware, spectacular things are not necessarily a sign of God being at work. Satan can pull off some tricks also. We see that for instance in Ex. 7:8-8:19 and Rev. chapter 13.

Christ warns us therefore ahead of time regarding these things.

### Matthew 24:26-28

- “Therefore if they say to you, ‘Look, He is in the desert!’ do not go out; *or* ‘Look, *He is* in the inner rooms!’ do not believe *it*.
- “For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.
- “For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

When Christ returns nobody will have to tell anyone that it is happening! Everybody will know.

We see that also in the following verses.

### Matthew 24:29-31

- “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.
- “Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.
- “And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

This is indeed our hope, this is what we are waiting for.  
This is what Paul writes about to the church in Thessalonica in this letter.

Let’s go to the following verses.

### Matthew 24:32-36

- “Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer *is* near.
- “So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near — at the doors!
- “Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.
- “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.
- “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.

We can surely say that we have not yet seen these things, isn't it? Could it be that first there has to be again a temple on the temple mount in Jerusalem?

We don't know everything about it and it's no use to start guessing about things.

Now let's look at some more Scriptures from Matthew that deal more specifically with the judgement.

### Matthew 25:31-33

- “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.
- “All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats.
- “And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.

In these verses we see that all nations will be gathered before the throne of our Lord.

And He then divides them into two groups.

In the following verses we will see how He addresses each of those two groups.

### Matthew 25:34-36

- “Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ‘for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; ‘I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’

This first group is welcomed by our Lord in the kingdom of heaven.

But look at the reason why they are welcomed into it!  
Those aren't really that big things, isn't it?

Still those are the things that Christ wants to see in us.  
Even in the Old Testament God gave specific laws to the Jews with regards to taking care of the poor people among them. You'll find them in Deuteronomy 15:1-18. It would be good if you would look at them while discussing these things during the weekly Bible studies.

Let's look at the reaction of this group.

### Matthew 25:37-40

- “Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed *You*, or thirsty and give *You* drink?’
- ‘When did we see You a stranger and take *You* in, or naked and clothe *You*?’
- ‘Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’
- “And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me.’

They are completely surprised!

Especially with the aspect of doing these things to our Lord they have no clue at all.

But Christ makes it clear when they did do these things to Him.

Why are these things so important? Remember, one time our Lord was asked what the first and great commandment was (Mathew 22:35-40). He answered: you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all you mind.

And then He added the second to it, saying that it was like it:

You shall love you neighbor as yourself.

According to our Lord Jesus Christ all the Law and the prophets hang on these two commandments.

In taking care of the needy these people had been fulfilling very specifically this second commandment.

### Matthew 25:41-43

- “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: ‘for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; ‘I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’

In these verses the Lord addresses the second group, sending them into the eternal fire where also the devil and his angels will go.

Again, Christ talks about the same issues as He mentioned to the first groep, but now stating that they didn’t do those things for Him.

On the next sheet we see the reaction of this group.

### Matthew 25:44-46

- “Then they also will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’
- “Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do *it* to one of the least of these, you did not do *it* to Me.’
- “And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

The answer is quite clear, isn't it?

But you might think, is this punishment not far too heavy for this kind of things? After all, we're not talking about murder, rape, robbery or something like that.

We already saw that these things are related to the commandment to love our neighbor as ourselves.

1 John 4:20-21 says the following about it:

1 John 4:20-21

- If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?
- And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God *must* love his brother also.

I believe that these verses are very clear, isn't it?

We cannot separate the two great commandments from one another, they belong together.

To love our brother and our neighbor is a natural result from loving God with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our mind.

When we become a new creation in Christ both these elementary commandments will be put in our heart by the Holy Spirit and He will continue to develop them.

But let's continue.

### Matthew 7:21-23

- “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.
- “Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’
- “And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’

Listen to what our Lord Jesus Christ says in Matthew 15:8-9, quoting from Isaiah 29:13

‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from Me.

And in vain they worship Me, Teaching *as* doctrines the commandments of men.’

Trusting God and our love for God should lead us to obedience to God and His commandments.

We cannot claim to trust and love God while ignoring His commandments. That is impossible.

Let’s go to the last sheet for today.

### Matthew 7:24-27

- “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: “and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.
- “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: “and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”

Again we see here the aspect of obedience, not being hearers of the Word but doers (James 1:22).

And that’s what a true disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ is: a doer of the Word of God.

Shall we pray?