

# Reading the Bible Forwards and Backwards

Session 8: The Day of the LORD

## Table Discussion

- ▶ What is the value of knowing there will be a final day to history? What changes in your view of God and the world if you believe that life runs in a cycle rather than having an end point?



# 1. Pervasive Theme

- ▶ “Day of the LORD,” “that day,” “the day of,” and “the day when” at least 200 times in prophets
- ▶ Sacred Time and Sacred Space: The Day of the Lord is a time in the future when God is present.
  - ▶ God has always been omnipresent, yet the Bible distinguishes his ongoing providential presence with his special presence to act.
  - ▶ Similarly, one could say that every day is sacred because God is always active, yet there is a time when God does something new.

## Imagery of Day of the Lord in OT Prophets

### Joel 2:1-3

[1] Blow a trumpet in Zion; sound an alarm on my holy mountain!

Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming; it is near,

[2] a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness there is spread upon the mountains a great and powerful people; their like has never been before, nor will be again after them through the years of all generations.

[3] Fire devours before them, and behind them a flame burns. The land is like the garden of Eden before them, but behind them a desolate wilderness, and nothing escapes them.



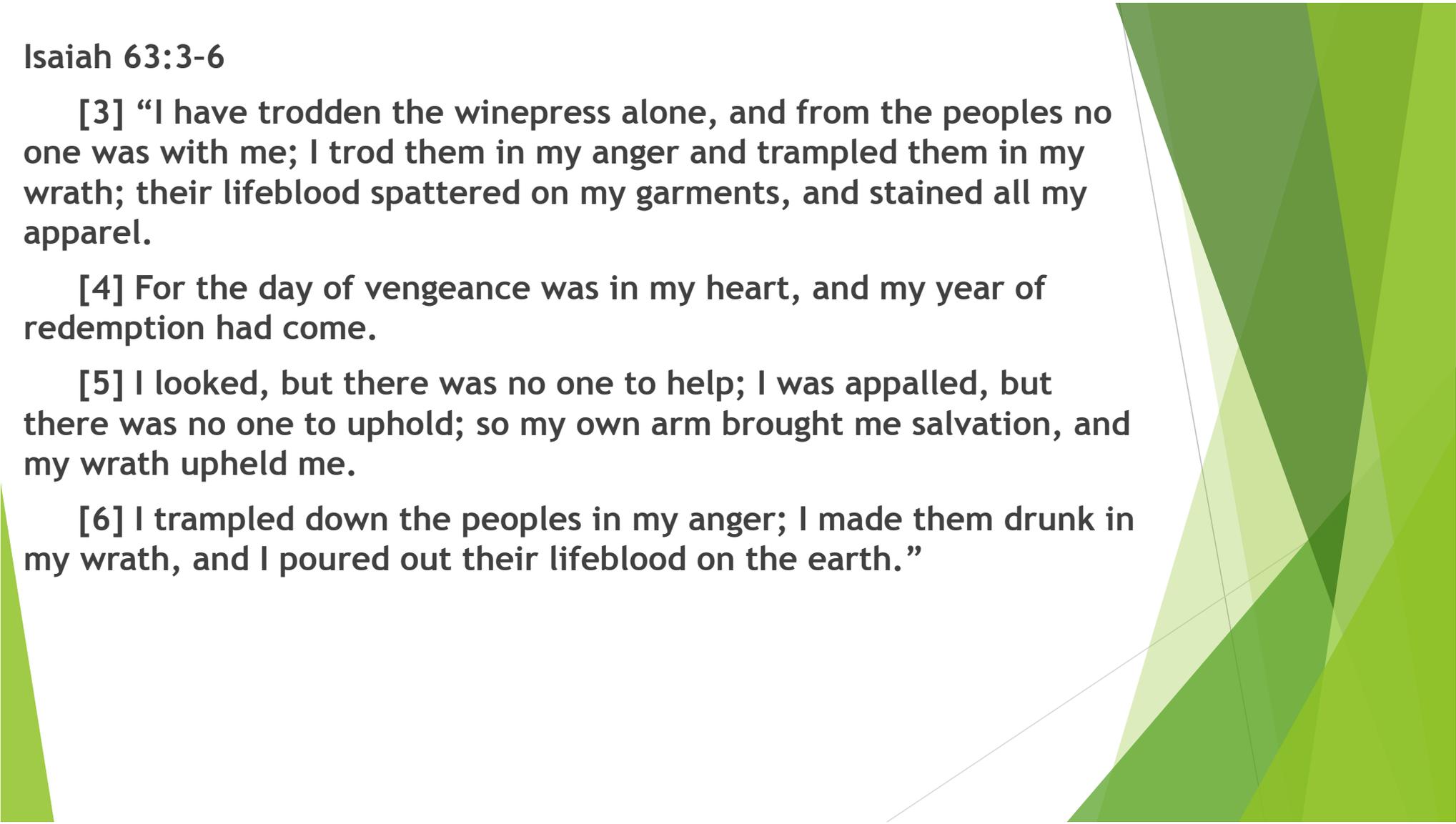
## Isaiah 63:3-6

[3] “I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with me; I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath; their lifeblood spattered on my garments, and stained all my apparel.

[4] For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and my year of redemption had come.

[5] I looked, but there was no one to help; I was appalled, but there was no one to uphold; so my own arm brought me salvation, and my wrath upheld me.

[6] I trampled down the peoples in my anger; I made them drunk in my wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth.”



# Imagery of Day of the Lord

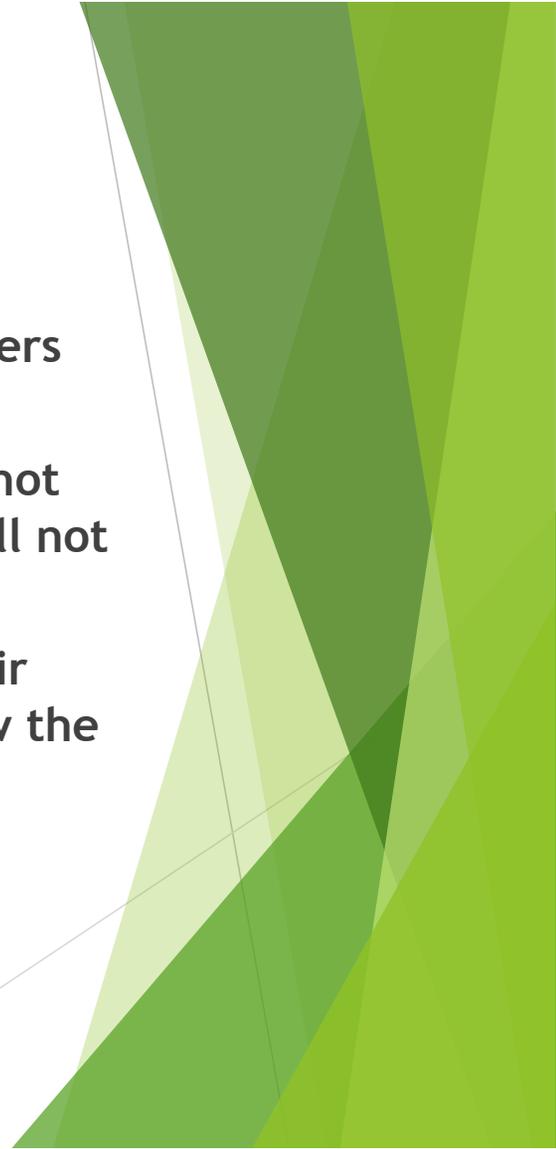
Isaiah 13:9-11

[9] Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the land a desolation and to destroy its sinners from it.

[10] For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be dark at its rising, and the moon will not shed its light.

[11] I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will put an end to the pomp of the arrogant, and lay low the pompous pride of the ruthless.

\*What imagery do you notice? Sights, sounds, feel?



## Summary from OT Prophets

- ▶ God is Present
  - ▶ Not Natural Disaster
  - ▶ Not Human Warfare
- ▶ A day or days: future period of time
- ▶ Darkness and Fire
- ▶ Death and destruction
- ▶ War imagery, blood
- ▶ Trumpet/Loud Voice/Battle cry
- ▶ Weeping/Mourning
- ▶ End of world imagery: earthquakes, mountains crumble, sun blotted out

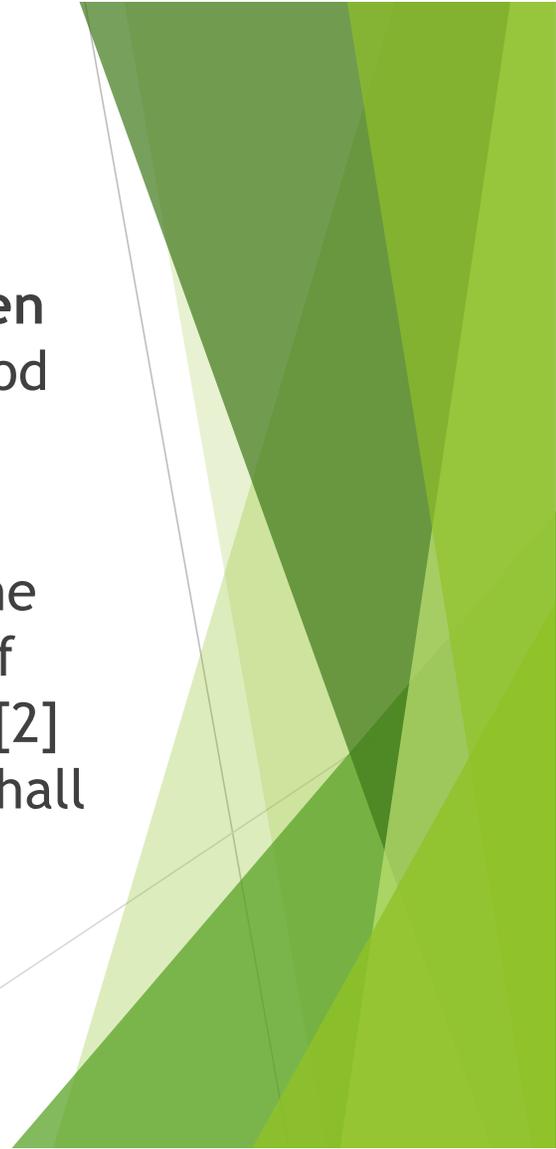


# Day of Division: Righteous and Wicked

## ► Malachi 3:18-4:2

[18] Then once more you shall see the **distinction between** the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him.

[1] “For behold, the **day is coming**, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. [2] But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall.



# Origins of Day of the Lord- Gen 1

- ▶ Creation days of Gen 1 depict this pattern of God seeing and pronouncing judgment.
  - ▶ “And God saw that the light was good.” 1:4
  - ▶ Day 1-5 “it was good”
  - ▶ Completion of Day 6 “very good”
- ▶ God rested on the seventh day; this Sabbath of God is a royal resting, an enthronement on the judgment seat.



# A. Royal Vocation

- ▶ Drama of Creation Depicts Our Purpose (Gen. 1)
  - ▶ Notice the movement forward 

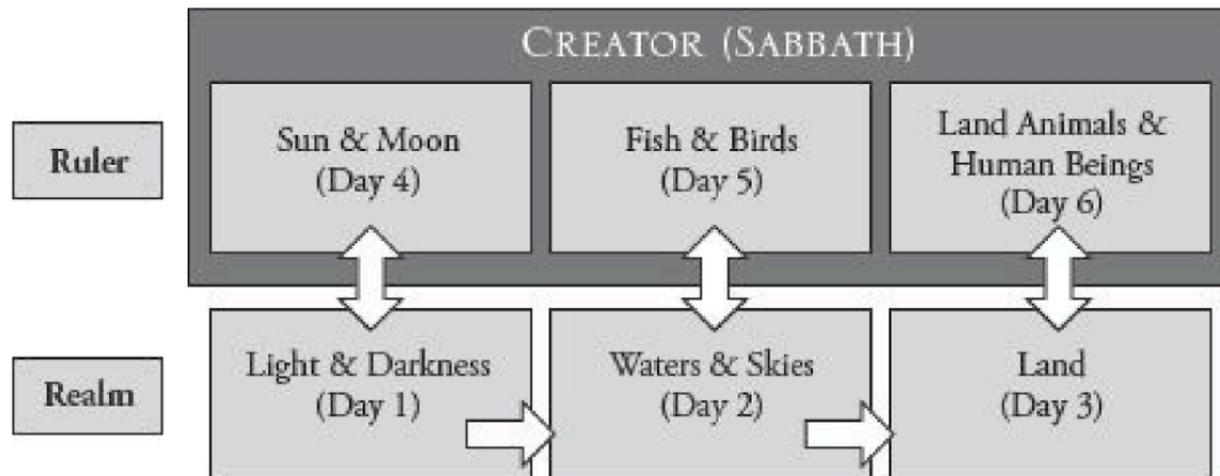


Chart h/t Horton

## Origins of Day of the Lord- Gen 1

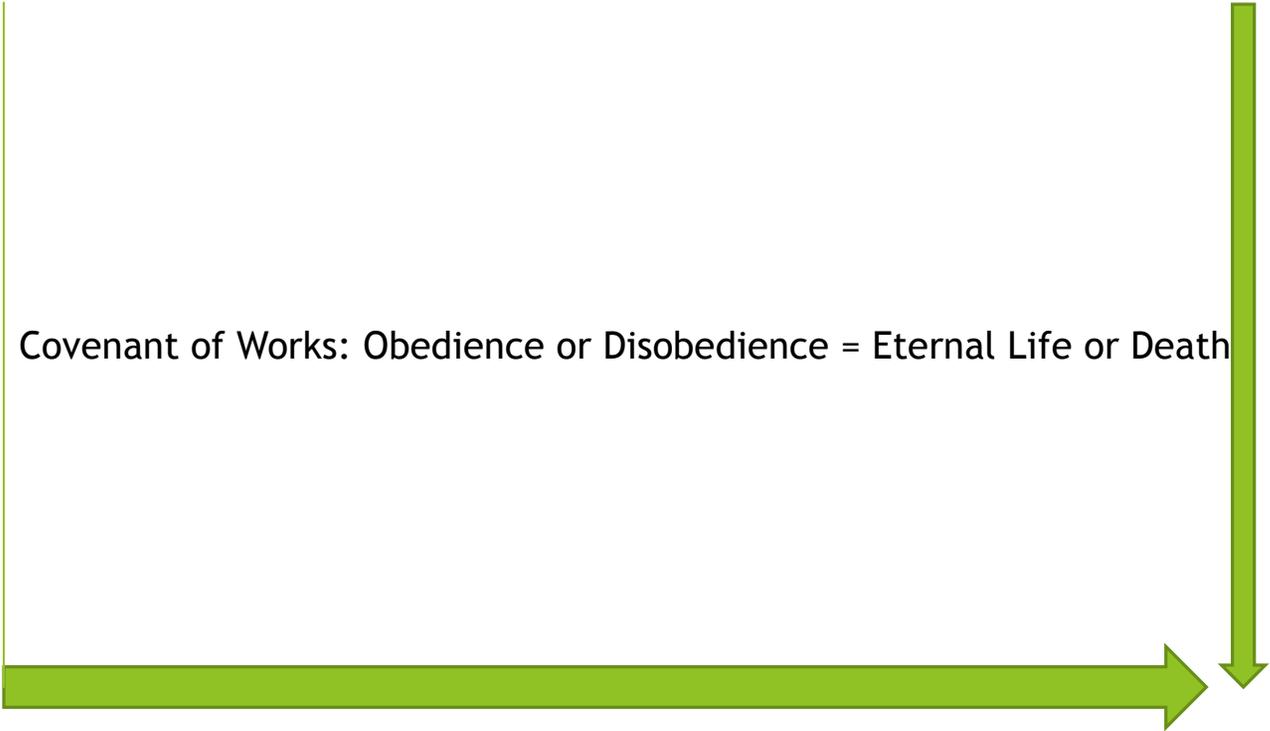
- ▶ The Sabbath is the consummation where God pronounces his verdict.
- ▶ Adam and Eve entered the week looking toward the consummation day when the Lord would pronounce their work “good” and they would enter into his glory.



Covenant of Works: Obedience or Disobedience = Eternal Life or Death

Creation

Consummation/ Judgment

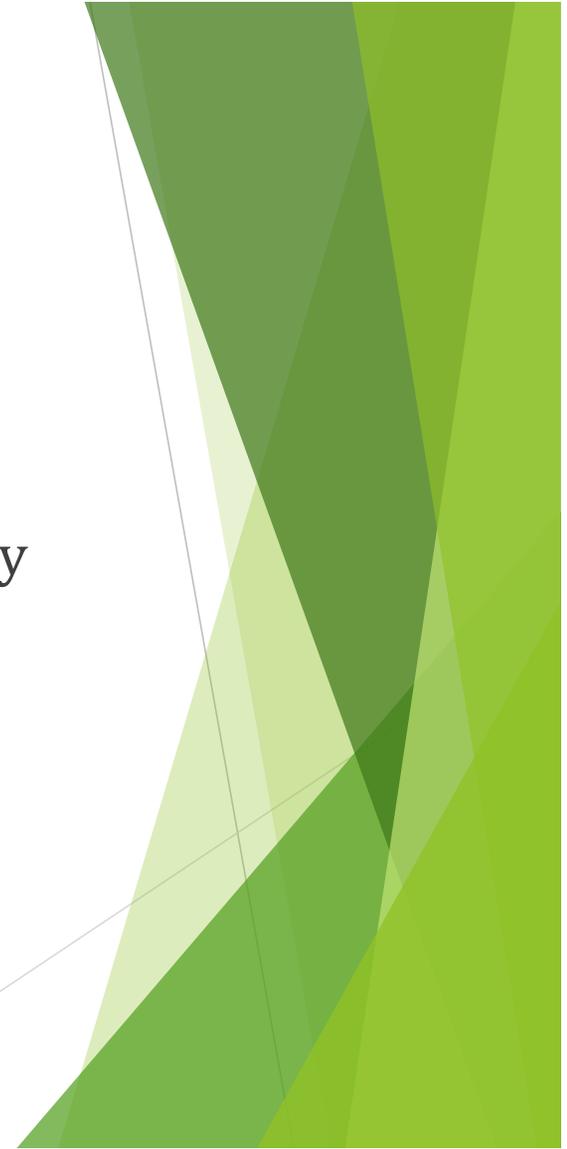


# Adam's Fall and the Day of the Spirit

- ▶ Humanity fails to keep/guard the sanctuary of the Garden. Genesis 3:8 God approaches them in the “cool of the day”.
- ▶ Genesis 3:8
- ▶ *[8] And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.*
  - ▶ The translation “cool” (also word for wind or Spirit) makes little sense in the context. The passage depicts the trial and sentencing of Adam and Eve.
- ▶ Instead, the “Spirit of the Day” or the “Spirit’s Day” fits with the coming Judgment day that the Day of the Lord invokes. The Lord comes in judgment to prosecute Adam who defiled the sanctuary instead of guarding it.
- ▶ He did not exile the serpent, so he will be exiled.

## Final Judgment Delayed

- ▶ The fall might have been followed at once by a consummation of the curse but God held off on bringing Judgment Day
- ▶ The delay was due to divine compassion. In the delay God introduced a new way of arriving at the consummation with the plan of redemption.



## Sabbath Pattern in Israel

- ▶ Sabbath remains for Israel as a weekly pattern of hope. It is human history in miniature with Day of Rest standing at the end holding out the promise.
- ▶ Year of Jubilee (Lev 25, Isa 61) is an extension of that Sabbath hope. Every 50<sup>th</sup> year: debts forgiven, slaves set free, land left to heal.



# Israel & the Search for Rest OT

## Historical Books

- ▶ God calls Israel out of Egypt and into the Promised Land
- ▶ The Land symbolized the consummation rest hoped for.
- ▶ But to enter the Land, Israel as the new Adam must drive the serpent from God's Temple.
- ▶ Israel's Holy Wars are echoes from the past failure of Adam to cleanse God's garden.
- ▶ And, they are echoes from the future anticipating the "day of the Lord" when the Lord will drive out all sin and evil.

## OT Holy War: Preview of Day of Lord

- ▶ **Intrusion:** At various points in redemptive history, God's heavenly kingdom has descended to earth. Under these conditions, God himself brings Holy War (herem) through his people.
- ▶ Intrusions are previews of the Last Judgment and the age to come.
- ▶ The Lord through Israel brings a judicial verdict on nations living in Canaan/Promised Land.
- ▶ **Important:** Violence and war that only serves Israel's purpose is condemned (2 Sam 21:1). Holy War was a limited intrusion of Day of the Lord.

## Entered the Land but Not Arrived

- ▶ Even when Israel enters the land under the leadership of Joshua, Israel still observes the weekly sign, because, as the author of Hebrews points out, Joshua did not really give them rest (Heb. 4:8), only a typological, shadowy rest that pointed beyond itself to the ultimate rest given through the greater Joshua.
- ▶ They still looked forward to a final Day of the Lord where God would judge the nations and vindicate them.

# Judgment and Deliverance

- ▶ Day of Lord was seen as a time of both Judgment for nations and deliverance for God's people: Both things happening at the same time, often mentioned in the same passage.
- ▶ God's people vindicated, healed, blessed
- ▶ Wicked nations/enemies of God's people destroyed
- ▶ Nations subdued and brought into the kingdom of God. Nations bring tribute to Israel's God.
  - ▶ Isa 2:2-4
  - ▶ Micah 4:1-3
  - ▶ Isa 11:10, 19:18-25



# Day of the Lord Blessing Israel

Joel 3:18

[18] “And in that day  
the mountains shall drip sweet wine,  
and the hills shall flow with milk,  
and all the streambeds of Judah  
shall flow with water;  
and a fountain shall come forth from the house of the LORD  
and water the Valley of Shittim.



# Day of the Lord Blessing Israel

- ▶ Key on that day will be that the dead will be brought back to life: Resurrection of all of God's people is a sign of that day!

Isaiah 26:19

[19] Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise.

You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy!

For your dew is a dew of light,

and the earth will give birth to the dead.

See also: Ezek. 37, Dan 12:2



# Day of the Lord Judging All Nations

Isaiah 13:11

[11] I will punish the world for its evil,  
and the wicked for their iniquity;  
I will put an end to the pomp of the arrogant,  
and lay low the pompous pride of the ruthless.

Judgment against foreign nations

- ▶ Jer 50:31 to Babylon
- ▶ Ezek 21:29 to Ammonites
- ▶ Ezek 26:18 to Tyre
- ▶ Ezek 32:10 to Egypt



# Day of the Lord Judging Israel

Amos 5:18-24

[18] Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! Why would you have the day of the LORD? It is darkness, and not light,

[19] as if a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him, or went into the house and leaned his hand against the wall, and a serpent bit him.

[20] Is not the day of the LORD darkness, and not light, and gloom with no brightness in it?

[21] “I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.

[22] Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the peace offerings of your fattened animals, I will not look upon them.

[23] Take away from me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen.

[24] But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.



## Day of the Lord Judging Israel

- ▶ Crisis happens when prophets start to indicate that Israel will face condemnation on the Day of the Lord.
- ▶ Exile from the Land reinforces that. God is not cleansing Israel from his Temple.
- ▶ John the Baptist (last OT prophet) preaches repentance and warns Israel to “flee from the wrath to come” Matt. 3:7



## Coming of Jesus: Day of Lord in NT

▶ Jesus' first sermon: Luke 4. His text is from Isaiah 61: future Jubilee/Sabbath

▶ Luke 4:18-21

[18] “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives  
and recovering of sight to the blind,  
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,

[19] to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”

[20] And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. [21] And he began to say to them,  
“Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

# Coming of Jesus

- ▶ Why didn't Jesus preach the whole text?

Isaiah 61:1-2

[1] The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,  
because the LORD has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor;  
he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;  
[2] to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,  
and the day of vengeance of our God;



## Coming of Jesus

- ▶ Instead of calling down God's judgment and driving out the gentile nations, Jesus commands us to pray for our enemies.
- ▶ This is not the time to judge our neighbors but to love them (Mat. 5:43f). Instead they are called to take the plank out of their own eye.
- ▶ Jesus rebukes disciples who want to call down fire from heaven (Luke 9:51-56).



## Delay in Judgment

- ▶ These are the “last days” (1 Pt 1:20, Heb 1:2, 9:26, Act 2:17)
- ▶ But not everything predicted about the last days are present now.





Judgement  
&  
Blessing





Blessing



Judgement



# Resurrection Begins

- ▶ Sign of the Day of the Lord happens, but only to Jesus and not at the end of time but in the middle of time
- ▶ Christ first fruits of the new creation
- ▶ Jesus is the first human to enter into consummation rest.
- ▶ Christ appeared to his disciples on the first day of the week (Lk 24:13, 24:36 John 20:19, 26)
  
- ▶ Seventh Day Sabbath moves to First Day Lord's Day
  - ▶ *What is significant about the change from*
    - ▶ 6 days of work to enter into the Sabbath Rest to...
    - ▶ Rest on first day that leads you into the week?



## Day of the Lord & The Lord's Day

### ▶ Revelation 1:10

[10] I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet

- ▶ Presence and Spirit
- ▶ Trumpet, Voice
- ▶ The eternal rest of the new heavens and the new earth has intruded into the midst of history every Sunday.



## Day of the Lord & The Lord's Day

- ▶ The uninterrupted rest of the age to come has already begun. By faith we lay hold of Christ's rest and enter into the enjoyment of it (Heb. 4:1-11). We have put aside our own righteousness and now serve the living God with a clear conscience as the fruit of that rest, not in order to earn it by our sinful works (Heb. 6:1; 9:14). Thus every day is a Sabbath rest in Christ.
- ▶ However, there is also a not-yet aspect of our rest. We still live in mortal bodies that are weary from earthly toil and labor. We have not yet entered into the final rest that will be given to us when our bodies are raised incorruptible and we behold the Lamb in Immanuel's land.
  - ▶ Lee Irons

## Day of the Lord & The Lord's Day

- ▶ We now celebrate a weekly Day of the Lord
- ▶ **The Sabbath is a weekly "rest stop" on our journey to heaven, a foretaste of the eternal rest that awaits us at the end. It is the lamp that lights our path to heaven. It is the downpayment of the future possession.**
  - ▶ Lee Irons
- ▶ Elements of Day of the Lord in worship
  - ▶ Presence
  - ▶ God's voice
  - ▶ Rest (albeit temporary) from burdens
  - ▶ Judgment: Declared righteous
  - ▶ Jubilee: sins forgiven



# Now and Not Yet

## ▶ Now

- ▶ Verdict for God's People: Vindication!
- ▶ Blessing of Holy Spirit
- ▶ New Creation Begins in Us (2 Cor 5:17)
- ▶ Nations come to worship God

## ▶ Not Yet

- ▶ Final Verdict for Godless: Condemnation
- ▶ New Creation Fulfilled: all resurrected
- ▶ God's Presence Forever



# Delay will not last forever

2 Peter 3:8-13

[8] But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. [9] The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. [10] But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

[11] Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, [12] waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! [13] But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.



# Day of Christ to Come

- ▶ Jesus describes a day in the future when he will return.
  - ▶ It will be with authority, imagery from Daniel 7 “riding clouds”
  - ▶ Judgment will be swift and without warning
    - ▶ (Mt 24:43-44, Luke 12:39-40)
  - ▶ Jesus will sit on the throne and judge sheep and goats
    - ▶ Matt 25-26
    - ▶ 1 Thess 5:1-3; 2 Thess 1:7-10

# Day of Christ to Come

1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11

[13] But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. [14] For since we believe **that Jesus died and rose again**, even so, through Jesus, God will **bring with him those who have fallen asleep**. [15] For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. [16] For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the **voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God**. And the **dead in Christ will rise first**. [17] Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. [18] Therefore encourage one another with these words.

## Day of Christ to Come

[1] Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. [2] For you yourselves are fully aware that the **day of the Lord** will come like a thief in the night. [3] While people are saying, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. [4] But **you are not in darkness**, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. [5] For you are all **children of light**, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. [6] So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. [7] For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. [8] But since **we belong to the day**, let us be sober, having put on the **breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation**. [9] For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, [10] who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. [11] Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

## Conclusion: Is the Day of the Lord good news?

*“...there must be such a thing as judgment. Judgment—the sovereign declaration that this is good and to be upheld and vindicated, and that is evil and to be condemned—is the only alternative to chaos. There are some things, quite a lot of them in fact, that one must not tolerate lest one merely collude with wickedness.”*

N.T. Wright Surprised by Hope

## Conclusion: Is the Day of the Lord good news?

- ▶ *“If God were not angry at injustice and deception and did not make a final end to violence—that God would not be worthy of worship...The only means of prohibiting all recourse to violence by ourselves is to insist that violence is legitimate only when it comes from God...My thesis that the practice of non-violence requires a belief in divine vengeance will be unpopular with many...in the West...[But] it takes the quiet of a suburban home for the birth of the thesis that human non-violence [results from the belief in] God’s refusal to judge. In a sun-scorched land, soaked in the blood of the innocent, it will invariably die...[with] other pleasant captivities of the liberal mind.” Volf Exclusion and Embrace*
- ▶ *“Can our passion for justice be honored in a way that does not nurture our desire for blood vengeance? Volf says the best resource for this is belief in the concept of God’s divine justice.” Keller 75*

# Conclusion: Is the Day of the Lord good news?

## *Motivation for Proclaiming the Gospel*

**C.H. Spurgeon:** “If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to hell over our bodies. And if they perish with our arms about their knees, imploring them to stay. If hell must be filled, at least let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let not one person go there unwarned and unprayed for.” In pamphlet 33

**Jonathan Edwards:** “Some talk of it as an unreasonable thing to fright persons to heaven, but I think it is a reasonable thing to endeavor to fright persons away from hell. They stand upon its brink and are just ready to fall into it, and are senseless of their danger. Is it not a reasonable thing to fright a person out of a house on fire?”