

Messianic Prophecies in Isaiah #15: The Day of the LORD

Isa. 61:1-2 – “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;”

This is the scripture that Jesus read to open his ministry (Lk. 4:17-21), yet it is significant that he stopped with the words “acceptable day of the Lord”. Why did he not continue with the next phrase, “and the day of vengeance of our God”? It is because his first coming was not for vengeance, but for the preaching of the kingdom, and for his sufferings, death, and resurrection, for our salvation. The vengeance will eventually come, at his second coming.

This is not a popular message, because it is so sobering and fearful, but that doesn’t mean it is not true, and that we should not preach it. The “day of the LORD” (to be abbreviated as DOTL), as it is frequently called in the OT prophets, is a day of fearsome destruction to God’s enemies, but a day of deliverance for his people. For us there should be awe and a sobering expectation of that day, but we should not be fearing for our own safety, unless we really are none of his.

What does Isaiah say about the messiah’s involvement with the day of the LORD?

1. First, it is a day of vengeance on the enemies of him and his people

Isa. 35:4 – “Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you.”

Isa. 59:16-20 – “And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him. For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak. ...”

Isa. 63:1-6 – Talks about treading the winepress alone, in fury and anger, staining his garments with their blood in the day of God’s vengeance, and the year of his redeemed.

The DOTL as a day of destruction is seen in many places of the OT (e.g.. Jer. 25:30-33 and 46:10, Joel 1:15, 2:1-11, and 2:30 – 3:2, Zeph. 1:14 – 2:3, and Zech. 14), specifically as a time when God gathers the enemies of Israel against Jerusalem and then roars down upon them in battle, **but is it also in the NT?**

Certainly we see that Jesus will preside over a great judgment at his coming (Mt. 25 - all nations, like sheep and goats, going away either to everlasting punishment or to life eternal). Also in Lk. 19 he likens himself to a nobleman who goes into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom. His citizens hate him, but then he returns, “having received the kingdom”. He deals with his own servants (parable of talents), but concludes, “But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.”

But later in the NT it becomes much more explicit that his return will be one of awful vengeance and destruction.

2 Thess. 1:7-9 – “... when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power”

Jude 14-15 – “And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”

2 P. 3:3-15 – “Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. ... The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should

come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless, And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation”

Rev. 6:15-17 – “And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?”

Rev. 19:11-21 – Jesus comes on a white horse to judge and make war, followed by the armies of heaven. He smites the nations with the sword of his mouth, rules with a rod of iron, and “treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God”.

2. But second, it is a day of comfort, and salvation, and deliverance for his own redeemed people

Isa. 35:4 – “Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you.”

Isa. 40:9-11 – “O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold, your God! Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.”

3. So how should we respond to this?

a. Watch and be sober.

We know what is coming, we just don't know when, so we need to live ready. 1 Thess. 4:14-18 talks about the Lord descending from heaven with a shout, bringing the resurrection of the saints, and concludes “Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” Then 5:1-9 continues, that even though we know the day of the Lord is coming like a thief in the night, “ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. ... Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. ... For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.”

b. Live in a knowledge of God, and in obedience

2 Thess. 1:7-9 says that vengeance will come on “them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ”.

c. Live holy and godly lives, in peace, without spot, and blameless

(2 P. 3, highlighted above).

d. Do not fear

Isa. 35:4 – “Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you.”