



Serious Hiccups in Simple Hermeneutics

Number 2

The DAY
of the LORD

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THE DAY OF THE LORD

by JvH

This expression, including very similar ones, like Day of God, Lord's Day, Day of the Lord's anger, etc., I found to be mentioned 38 times in 36 Bible verses, mostly in the Old Testament, but with nine in the New.

The great majority speak prophetically of the Day of Judgment, though not necessarily differentiating between the several aspects and phases of that great "Day". These include the Great Tribulation, the Battle of Armageddon, the Lord's triumphant and visible Return, the Judgment of the Nations, the Millennial Kingdom, the Judgment of the Great White Throne, and the ushering in of the new heavens and the new earth.

All of these together, spanning the 'thousand years' that Revelation 20 repeatedly speaks of, are part of the Day of the Lord. In this context we may remember what Psalm 90 says about the 'thousand years', referred to by Peter in this way: **"with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day"** (2 P. 3:8).

It has occurred to many, and it seems to me now, that if Creationist science is, indeed, on the right track in understanding the earth to be only some 6.000 years 'young' - which concurs exactly with the Biblical record - that we, in our time, are thus on the very threshold of the 7th millennium. Peter's assertion that to God "a thousand years are as one day", could then be understood as, all of 'time' (history: past, present and future) being to God no more than one week.

In other words 7x1.000 years are to Him no more than a week of 7x24 hours... The 7-year-weeks spoken of in Leviticus and Daniel give us the same idea, and in Daniel 9 these have a clear prophetic dimension. Only here, at this moment, we are considering one single "7-millennium-week", while Leviticus and Daniel speak of many "7-year-weeks".

In the original creation week of seven (literal) days, the last one was reserved for God. It would not be strange then that these original seven are a foretaste of the seven millennia, with the last "millennium-day" being truly presided over by the Creator Himself, i.e. the Lord Jesus reigning over the whole world, from the Throne of David in Jerusalem, as King of kings (Is. 9:6-7):

"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder. And his name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over his kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

In one verse, the Sabbath (the 7th day of the week) is called "the holy day of the LORD". From the time of Moses to the time of Messiah, Israel looked back to Creation and celebrated "the Lord's day" on the last day of the week. However, they went on to reject their promised Messiah, and judgment is reserved for them, which is part of that future Day of the Lord - specifically at the outset when Israel passes through the 'Great Tribulation'. Nine prophets have their say about that Day. It is described as: destruction, cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, vengeance, recompense, clouds, darkness, reprisal, sacrifice, bitter noise, great and very terrible, great and dreadful, great and awesome!

No looking back to Creation or to Moses - as they keep their Sabbaths - will now do them any good. They have only the Great and Very Terrible Day of the Lord to look forward to. All nine prophets are unanimous as they describe these future horrors. Chronologically, Joel is the first one of them. In his first chapter he says: **"Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as destruction from the Almighty."** Among his other pronouncements about it, he writes: **"I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD"** (2:31). Of course, this immediately rings a bell with us, because on the day of Pentecost, it is Peter's end-of-quote.

In other words, the New Testament signals, not only to Jews, but to Gentiles also, that **"the great and awesome day of the LORD"** is right there in the offing. It cannot be evaded, either by Jews or Gentiles, i.e. if God's grace in Jesus Christ is not taken to heart, and taken hold of and received by true faith. But then Zechariah describes wonderfully how **all Israel**, as it cries out in the midst of its crucible (i.e. all of Israel's remnant), finally repents and is solidly converted to its Messiah. Later the apostle Paul confirms the prophecy of that incredible day (Zech. 12; Ro. 11).

But there is still another mention of the term "Day of the Lord", and it should have our full attention. The very first one, in our list of 38, says this:

"The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day the LORD has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Ps. 118:22-24). The fact that the rejected 'stone' becomes the chief 'cornerstone', is quoted four times in the New Testament, showing how the rejected Messiah - wonderfully vindicated - attained complete victory through Calvary and the Resurrection. The day He rose victoriously from among the dead, *that* was **"the Day the Lord has made"**.

The seventh day was **not** in focus anymore. He made a completely 'new day', the 'first day of the New Creation', being also the first day of the week, the very day in which our Lord started to gather with his own, **not** now on the Sabbath. The first day of the week had become **"the Lord's Day"**!

Furthermore, seven weeks later, the promised Comforter, the Holy Spirit, made his entrance in spectacular fashion on the Day of Pentecost; again it was the first day of the week, 'the Lord's Day'. Significantly, it became the day of the first Christian sermon (by Peter), of the first Christian conversions (some 3.000), and of the first Christian baptisms (Acts 2).

It is only logical that the disciples and the early church started to refer to the first day of the week as '**the Lord's Day**' - no longer as "Day of the Sun", or 'Sunday', as was the pagan custom, and as it is still called in most countries! No longer did they, or do we, if we belong to the same risen Lord, have to frantically hold on to the law of the seventh day of the week, keeping it as the Lord's Day, while at the same time dreading all that the prophets had declared so dramatically about the coming "Day of the Lord", terrible and awesome - the Day that is now dawning... And why not?

Because there is Good News, the risen Savior has born the awful judgment of the terrible DAY of the LORD *for* us! It could be likened to the "lightening rod" that bears the full brunt of the electrical discharge. So wonderful is that Good News of Psalm 118's prophecy, that we are told to "**rejoice and be glad**" in it!

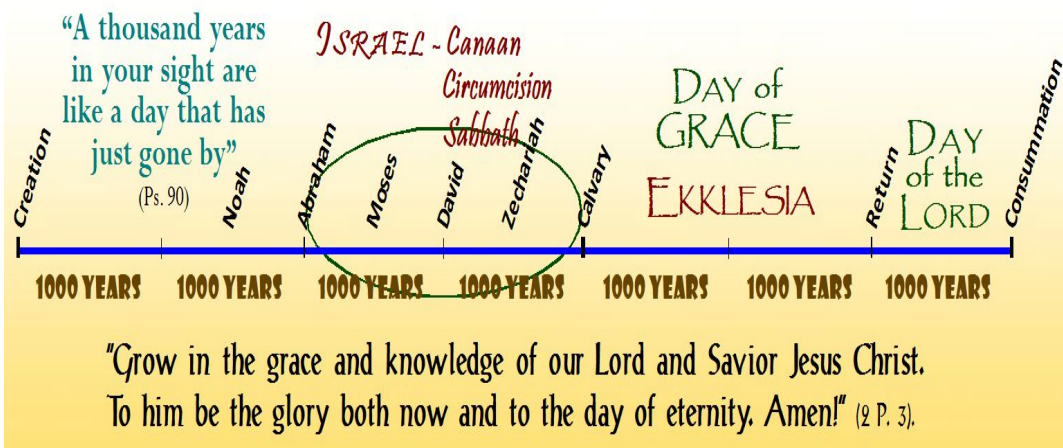
At the same time, it is very important to remember that the 'Sabbath' of the 'seventh day' had been explicitly, and exclusively, given to the people of Israel as the sign of God's Covenant with **them**. It was **not** given to the Gentiles or to the Church (Exodus 31:12-17; Ezekiel 20:12-20)!

When the apostle John was exiled on the Isle of Patmos, he didn't exactly languish there. No, he would very often "be in the spirit", and so in his first chapter of Revelation he uses the term that had come into common use among the Christians: he was in the spirit on 'the Lord's Day'. On that very day, the first day of the week, John started to receive all the great and wonderful revelations that the Lord had in store for us. In these revelations the prophecies about the future 'Day of the Lord' are bound to show their terror. But, as they pass again before the Christians' eyes, the sting has been taken out for them - yet how important that they are fully aware of so much that is about to fall on this world!

In fact, they now gather (normally), on every Lord's Day, just like their Lord did, *with* the Lord's People, and *as* the Lord's People, around the 'Lord's Table' (Mt. 18:20; Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Co. 10:16-17, 21; 11:23-32; 14:26-32), in order to remember and celebrate their Lord's Victory - the victory of his cross and resurrection! And hadn't the apostle said that "**as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death TILL HE COMES!**"?

What rejoicing there is in many a heart at the imminence of that great Rapture, when all of God's people will launch into their great celebration around their Great Redeemer, first in heaven (Jn. 14:2-3; 1 Thess. 4:13-18), and then on earth, as their Lord returns to reign in Jerusalem over all of this old world (Col. 3:3-4; Rv. 19:11-14; 20:1-4)!





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