

# SEED & BREAD

FOR THE SOWER    ISA.55:10    FOR THE EATER  
BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

## THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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### BEFORE THE DAY OF THE LORD

As background material for this study I would like for all to read once again Issue No. **SB054**, "Four Great Days," and Issue No. **SB110**, "The Lord's Day in Rev. 1:10."

Those who follow the *Darby-Scofield* system of prophetic interpretation, also known as the dispensational-premillennial school, put great emphasis on the coming of the day of the Lord in their written and spoken messages, especially so in the popular fast-selling books on prophecy which are so ubiquitous today. They, as a rule, begin the day of the Lord with the second coming of Jesus Christ, although many start it seven years before with what they call "the rapture." They put great emphasis upon the terrors of this seven-year period, seldom failing to quote Isa. 13 :9-11: "**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. For the stars of the heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.**"

This is a very popular passage with many self-styled "evangelical" preachers today, who believe it is their duty to scare people into making a decision for Christ. They find such passages to be very useful tools, especially when elaborated with accompanying dramatics, histrionics, and the dogmatic matching of Biblical prophecies with current events. Part of the orchestration of evangelistic services is to time the invitation for people to "come to Christ" at the same moment they have been seized by a paroxysm of fear concerning the terrors of the day of the Lord. This opportunistic exploiting of people's anxieties merits the severest condemnation.

However, one thing that is apparent concerning these heralds of coming doom, these proclaimers of "Armageddon Now", is that they ignore altogether that the glorious day

of Christ (Phil. 1:6,10; 2:16) precedes the day of the Lord, and none of them have anything to say about those marvelous divine activities which God's Word explicitly says will take place before the great and notable day of the Lord comes. These are ignored, disdained, and passed over as if they were unworthy of any consideration. And it is quite plain that this is done because the recognition of them would throw the proverbial monkey wrench into almost all prophetic schemes and time tables.

No certain event is revealed in Scripture that will mark the beginning of the day of the Lord. It comes "**as a thief in the night**" (2 Peter 3: 10). Its time period will be a reality the moment that God removes the last of the restraints that He placed upon mankind during the time period of His government. Once again all nations are permitted to walk after their own ways, and this will make possible the divine testing of all who have lived under and enjoyed the rich blessings of the kingdom of God. In the day of the Lord we find such events as:

- the emergence of the man of sin (2 Thess. 2:3),
- the final week of Israel's seventy weeks (seven years) as prophesied by Daniel (9:27),
- the desecration of the temple of God (Matt. 24:15),
- the great tribulation,
- the short time of God's vengeance,
- the second coming of Jesus Christ,
- His 1000 year parousia (personal presence),
- the binding of Satan for a thousand years,
- the "little season,"
- the great white throne judgment, and the purging of the earth by fire to make way for the day of God.

However, certain great events must precede all events that are related to the day of the Lord.

The first of these is the appearance and the successful ministry of Elijah the Prophet. This is expressly declared in Mal. 4:5-6: "**Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.**"

The meaning of certain statements in this great promise are admittedly obscure, but its primary message is quite plain. We are told that before "the great and dreadful day of the Lord" comes, Elijah the prophet will be sent to the people of Israel, and he will do a work of vast importance and of such nature that it will remove any need for the Lord smiting the earth with a curse. Our Lord enlarged upon and further explained this

great work when He said to His disciples: **"Elias (Elijah) truly shall first come and restore all things"** (Matt. 17: 11).

There is great consolation in the fact that before the first vision in the book of Revelation is fulfilled, Elijah the prophet will have appeared, and he will restore man's lost understanding of the divine idioms, signs, and figures used throughout this prophecy. The world will know what every word in Revelation means before any man is called upon to face the things revealed in it. We thank God for this.

If the man of faith will take God at His word and think in harmony with the truth declared in Mal. 4:5,6 and Matt. 17:11, no belief will be possible than that there is to be a period of beneficent and benevolent divine activity before the day of the Lord, and this will be achieved by God working through Elijah the prophet. All this will be in the day of Christ and under the kingdom of God. This is enough in itself to demonstrate that there will be a period of divine government before the second coming and the personal presence of Jesus Christ. Having dealt with "The Mission of Elijah" in Issue No. **SB091**, the foregoing comments should be sufficient for this study.

Another positive statement of things that must take place before the great and notable day of the Lord comes is so immense and magnificent that it serves well as a challenge to all who do take God at His word and think accordingly. It is a real test of submission and faith.

**"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men (*presbuteros-elders*) shall dream dreams: And on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit, and they shall prophesy: And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come."** Acts 2: 17-20.

In this passage we find two definite time elements that enclose the promises made in it. "It shall come to pass in the last days. . . before the great and notable day of the Lord come." To find out what "the last days" are, we will need to read Isa. 2:2-4 and Micah 4:1-8. In these passages we will find that the conditions described are those that will characterize the earth when God governs. The Acts passage is quoted from Joel and is Hebrew in character which explains why "last" here means "resultant," or as *The Cambridge Bible* declares its literal meaning to be "in the sequel of the days." There are at least ten specific prophecies, each one a promise of good, listed in Acts 2: 17 -20, all of which will be fulfilled to the letter in the last days, and before the great

and notable (*epiphane-manifest*) day of the Lord comes. No more positive words could be used to describe a time of divine activity before the fulfillment of the prophecies in Revelation begin.

One can only be amused at the vain struggles of those who try to stultify this passage, to make it say less than what it does, or to make it mean something different from what the Spirit has said. Since these words were spoken to "Ye men of Judea," we are told that this limits "all flesh" to Israel. Preposterous! One may as well say that since Gen. 6: 13 was spoken to Noah, that "all flesh" meant only him.

Then we are told that verses 19 and 20 describe the great tribulation. If this is so, then the great tribulation is something that comes before the scenes of Revelation. And this would create two "great tribulations;" one before the day of the Lord and one in the day of the Lord. They link these two verses with Rev. 6:12, never stopping to think that one of these events precedes the day of the Lord, and the other happens in it. They cannot be the same event.

Such struggles against God's truth reveal a lack of submission to His Word. May we meet the test of believing what God has said here and recognize in this passage a description of divine activity, benevolent and beneficent in its character that comes before the day of the Lord and precedes all events described in Revelation. This will call for a new concept of the last book of the Bible, and could make obsolete every commentary on this oracle of God. But, may we be equal to this also!

God's future program for Israel and for the nations is first blessing followed by testing. The first great testing will come only after God has governed long. (See Issue No. 40). When God sees fit to remove all restraints and permits men again to walk after their own way, the true righteousness of the majority will be demonstrated and the hypocrisy of a minority will be revealed. This will result in an uprising against God on the part of some, and this is the revolt that must come before the day of the Lord (not the day of Christ as in KJV). We read of this rebellion in 2 Thess. 2:1-3, which I will literally translate as follows:

**Now we request you, brethren, in view of the personal presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him, that you be not quickly shaken from your mind nor be alarmed, either by spirit, or by word, or by a letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord is present. Let no one deceive you by any means: for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs, and the man of lawlessness be unveiled, the son of destruction.**

The word translated "falling away" (KJV) here, and which I have translated "rebellion" is *apostasia*, which Septuagint usage demonstrates means a revolt. A record of this revolt is found in Psalms 2 and 83, and is spoken of as *the* rebellion in this passage.

Thus, the Word of God sets forth positive facts that indicate a period of divine activity that is no part of God's present administration of grace, but must precede the day of the Lord. All prophetic systems leave no time for this. The question we now face is whether we will preserve our traditions or come to grips with the Word of God.

**End Issue No. SB111**