

One Last Glimpse at the New Covenant Treasury.

Extreme Servanthood

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 4:1, Colossians 1:25-29

The most common New Testament word for servant is the Greek *doulos*, meaning slave or bondsman. However, there are two other kinds of servants which are both mentioned in the first verse of 1 Corinthians 4: "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God."

The first designation is in the word *minister*. It is the Greek *huperetes* and is in reference to the lowest class of slave, the galley rower. When we think of ourselves as common galley rowers it removes any idea that we would act as lords over God's heritage, or seek to elevate ourselves above our brethren in any way. We share a common bond. Now, the plot thickens.

In the second half of the verse we see the steward, the steward of the mysteries of Christ. The steward (oy-kon-om'-os), is the *household administrator*. This steward represented the highest order of slavery. Stewards were often true professionals who vested and invested, supervised children, hired, fired, did the banking, and provided a host of other family services. They were fully empowered as estate administrators. The Bible's unjust steward was likely such an administrator. As New Covenant stewards we want to be sure we know exactly what we are to administer.

The New Covenant steward administers the mysteries of God. We do not need to wonder what they are. The New Covenant names seven of these mysteries specifically. These mysteries are not mysterious. These are simply "hitherto unrevealed secrets" that were not known to Old Covenant believers. They are what separate us from the ways of the Old Covenant and help us understand exactly who we are and what we are doing in this age. One cannot know where he is in God's program without knowing them! Herein lies the tragedy, the average Christian does not know these mysteries exist, much less can he name even a few of them!

If I *am* a highly vested steward of the mysteries of Christ and I will be held personally accountable one day for how I administered them, it only makes sense that I know *what* they are, and the core truths they represent. In the final analysis, a Dispensationalist is simply one who believes these mysteries and applies them literally. Do you know them?

How these facts change the way I think and act.

I will share the common bond of the galley rower with all my brethren in Christ. I will also assume my cherished high position as a steward of the mysteries of Christ by learning them and teaching them to others.

Things I want to reflect upon or remember....

A Dispensational View of The Day of the Lord

We will be showcasing an important concept in Bible interpretation while we study this truth

Our starter text is 1 Thess. 5:1-9 and this is a good time to read it. There was then, and always has been a group of believers (and cultists) who have insisted they are in the Day of the Lord. You are probably well aware, for example, that Jehovah's Witnesses have been insisting that we are in the Day of the Lord since at least 1914! That's one long 7 year stretch! To avoid being *deceived* by this error (2 Thess. 2:3) we need to understand what the Day of the Lord is really about. We will be taking a definitive look, an interpretive look, a chronological look, and a spiritual look at the Day of the Lord.

A _____ Look at the Day of the Lord.

We find a very good definition of the Day of the Lord in the Scofield Study Bible (cf. Notes on Joel 1:15 or Rev. 19:19). In this instructor's opinion, the very best contemporary book on the subject is Renald Showers' Maranatha, Our Lord Come! published by Friends of Israel. This book is an absolute must for the library of true literal interpreters. Showers says:

“The Day of the Lord refers to God's special intervention into the course of world events to judge His enemies, accomplish His purpose for history, and thereby demonstrate who He is - the sovereign God of the universe (Isa. 2:10-22, Ezek. 13:5,9,14,21,23,30:3,8,19,25-16).” - Renald Showers

By now, you should also know that chapters 4-19 of the book of Revelation supply rich *details* about the events of this time period. We base our chronology for the events surrounding the coming Day of the Lord on the book of Daniel, especially chapter 9. *Advanced note:* Because the Day of the Lord is interventional (it is phenomenal interrupting the laws of God in nature) its terminology is generally both military and apocalyptic.

An I _____ Look at the Day of the Lord

A. The Thematic P_____.

As with all prophecy, the Day of the Lord first represents a *theme*. Then it represents an *event*. This is a very important matter for interpretation. Seasoned Bible students inside dispensational circles have heard a variety of terms tossed around in order to help us understand scripture. These include terms such as *near and far fulfillment*, *multiple fulfillment*, and *partial fulfillment*, and what I personally like to call *cameo fulfillment*. These terms are less confusing when we understand a little bit about biblical themes.

Before tackling any prophecy we need to step back far enough to see its *underlying theme*. This Bible interpreter is not only a literal interpreter, he is a *thematic* interpreter. In practice, this means he always looks at the broad context first. He considers all passages on a given subject before analyzing any particular passage. But this is just the starting point in thematic interpretation.

Thematic interpretation begins with the understanding that God is a person, not a computer. As a person, He has personality and mood as He reveals Himself. He is not bound by time as we are, and sees beginning, end, and all that is in-between as a single event. He is not bound to reveal Himself from our perspective of time. This can be challenging to the New Testament Gentile whose first principles stem more from Greek philosophy than Jewish history. The Jews had less difficulty with this because they themselves are sign and mood oriented. Perhaps we could say that the Jew moves from mood (emotion and pathos) to detail, while the Gentile examines details (definitions and chronology) and moves toward mood. Regardless, God reveals His truth *thematically*. Just keep in mind that mood and theme generally precede detail in the Bible.

1. The Thematic Principle _____.

- a. When is Christmas? As Gentiles we would say Christmas is on December 25. But that is really Christmas day. Christmas would include 12 days for some. For others Advent season includes the whole month. For Walmart, even longer! Christmas is both a theme *and* an event. We might say that Christmas is a single *event* which occurs in phases and finally consummates in a single *day*.
- b. Consider the resurrection. The resurrection unto life is first a theme. As an event descending from this theme, it has multiple expressions before it comes to completion or fulfillment. At the time of Christ's resurrection we had a small pre-fulfillment of the resurrection in Jerusalem, we will yet experience the rapture (a resurrection in its own right), and ultimately, all saints will be resurrected unto life. To be absolutely correct, we would say the resurrection is a theme from which we see a single event which results in phases.
- c. Consider the Advent (or coming) of Christ. It has multiple expressions. He *came* at the incarnation, He is actually in the *process of coming* in the flesh at this very moment (1 John 4:3). He will *come* for His own at the rapture and He will *come* in power and great glory at the end of the tribulation (Mat. 24:30). The theme is the fact that God *comes to man*. The event itself occurs in *phases*. It may seem ever so technical, but there is actually one second coming which occurs in two phases, the rapture and return of Christ. There are not two second comings.

Our point is this: In each of these cases, the event descends from a theme and the event is realized in phases. The Day of the Lord is a prime example of this.

2. The Thematic Principle _____ by Peter.

The Day of the Lord is both a theme and an event. We begin with an easy example in Acts 2:15 where Peter provides an explanation for the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost. [Read Acts 2:15-21 at this time.](#)

How has Peter *interpreted* Pentecost? He sees it as part of a much larger theme. He has gone right to Joel 2 and lifted these six verses right out of Joel's prophecy regarding the Day of the Lord, boldly declaring "this is that." He is arguing that these folks have seen the mighty intervention of God in the affairs of men as He moves His program forward. The theme and the mood of the Day of the Lord were being fulfilled right before their eyes.

B. The T_____ Principle. We do not want to miss what God is showing us about Himself:

1. **His intention.** God has an exquisite plan and program for the history of the world. He purposed this event.
2. **His intervention.** First, last, and always, this term indicates those times when God *intervenes* in the events of mankind. Just as we see miracles as interventions in the natural laws of the universe, the Day of the Lord is always an intervention in the natural outworking of history.
3. **His compassion.** God uses two _____ analogies or metaphors to lovingly warn us and assure us that this will happen.
 - a. **The analogy of night and day.** It is Day which begins with night and ends in light. It is gloomy and dark (at least during the night, or tribulation period.) It will ultimately burst into the millennial light. Amos 5:18-20, Joel 2:1-3.
 - b. **The analogy of travailing and birthing.** There could be no better analogy to describe the events of the Day of the Lord. The ideas of gestation, birth pangs, and ultimate (sudden birth) help us understand the mood, purpose, and progress of this event. As dark and painful as labor is, it opens the way for a

grand and glorious future. The travail itself speaks of the unspeakable pain the world in general will experience, and Israel in particular will experience. It will be abrupt and unstoppable. Zephaniah 1:14-18

A C _____ Look at the Day of the Lord

The Day of the Lord is an event which descends from the general theme of God's purposeful intervention in the affairs of men. As an event the Day of the Lord has multiple expressions before it comes to fulfillment or completion. **Now, please see our chart for this discussion.**

A S _____ Look at the Day of the Lord.

Attitudes toward the Day of the Lord are as wide and varied as the churches which pepper our streets.

1. *The future Day of the Lord is a Jewish event.* It is Israel's travail. The Bible says it is the time of Jacob's trouble (Jere. 30:7). The holocaust, real as it was, represented nothing more than Braxton Hicks contractions. While many of the world's religions embrace a future apocalypse, only Dispensationalists understand the engine which will drive this event.

2. *We are not in this Day.* We may comfort ourselves with this fact and avoid being deceived. We must never think we can locate this day on our calendars. The man of sin has not had his *unveiling*.

3. *We should be watching for the approach of this Day.* Do not use Acts 1:6-8 as an excuse to ignore 1 Thess. 5:1. We are *expected* to be aware of the times and seasons, just not the ones the Father has kept under His own administration.

While we will not go through this Day, it is a mistake to think that we cannot see the day approaching. In particular the more we see the spirit of antichrist and his "lie" manifested, the more gripped we should be with a sense of *urgency* (not obsession).

4. *We are NOT of the night.* I Thess. 5:4-9. We should behave as children of the light.

5. *"By all means" learn to use this truth in your witness.* To do this, we must be equipped to teach it and discuss it. Today is not the Day of the Lord, but it is the day of salvation! 2 Cor. 6:1-2.

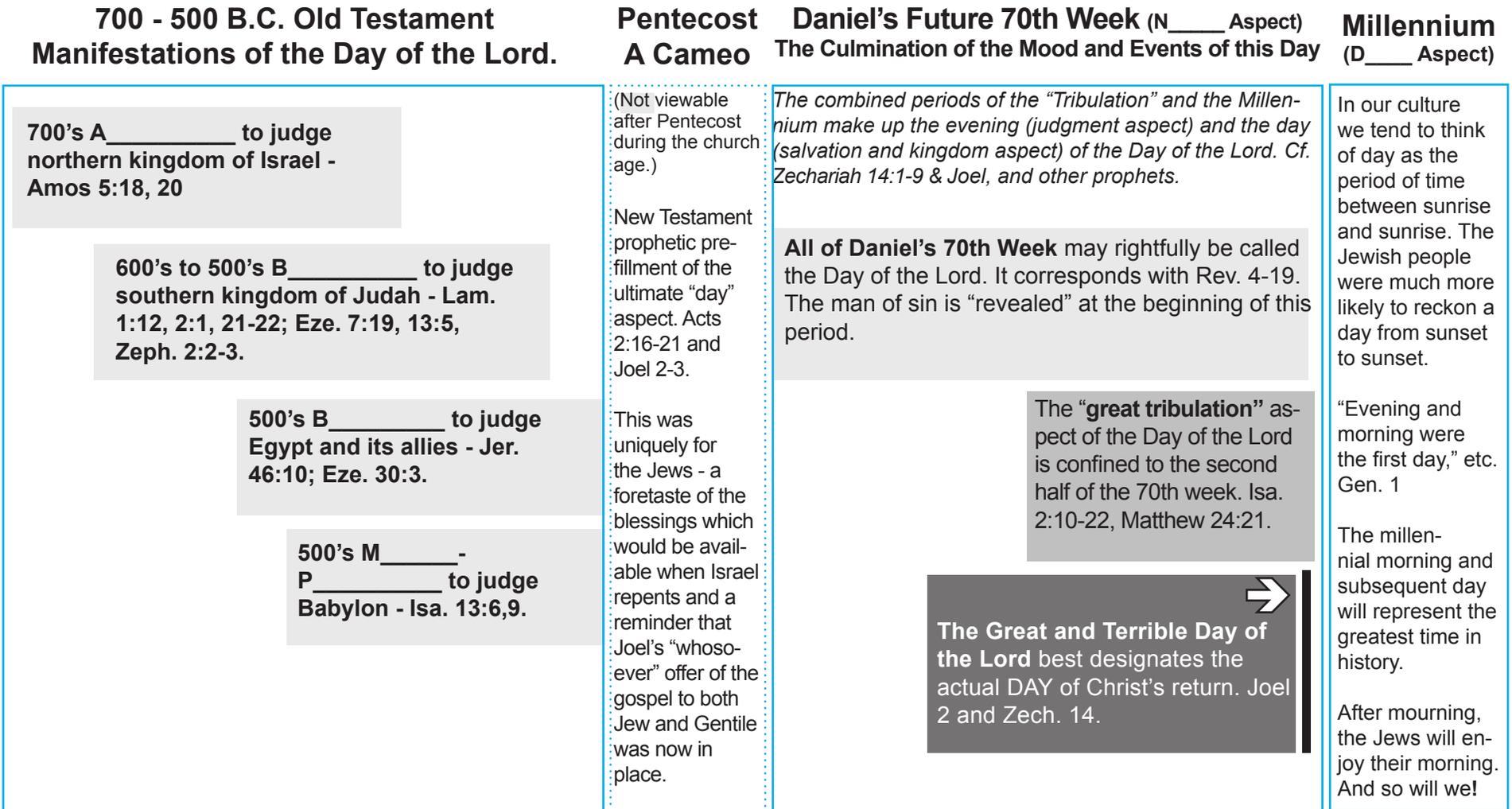
6. *Ask: Have I been overtaken by the spirit of antichrist?*

Can you list any current events which seem to be posturing the world for antichrist?

The Day of the Lord

In the most general sense, the Day of the Lord includes all of the _____ of God in the affairs of man in order to effect His program. These interventions combine and *culminate* under this theme. The “night” aspects of this Day are negative, military, and apocalyptic in character.

Our timeline below is obviously not to scale. The shaded boxes represent the relative intensivity of the night aspect of the Day of the Lord.



The short of it: In a word, the Day of the Lord is about *redemption*. We may rightfully say that the Day of the Lord, in general, is a measured response to all the sins of mankind which have defiled the land or the earth. It is also a response for the mistreatment of Israel in particular. For Israel, it is the travailing which will birth the new and glorious millennial Day. It consummates the doctrine of the *Kinsman Redeemer* (Rev. 4 & 5).

For a thorough treatment of the Day of the Lord, read Maranatha! Our Lord Cometh, by Renald Showers. It is published by Friends of Israel.