

The Conclusion

This Was Just the Prologue

“The Day of the Lord” is a Hebrew phrase the New Testament writers used to describe the final day of the world, when God would judge all things and make everything right.¹ Many people wonder when that day will come. In the early Church there were rumors that Jesus had already returned in some mystical sense, but the apostles (early Christian leaders) rejected this false teaching.² Others doubted if Jesus would ever come back. But the apostle Peter reminded Jesus followers that God is outside of time and that he is patiently waiting for people to turn to him.³

Jesus taught that only God knows exactly when that final day will be.⁴ But the Bible hints that the final days will be difficult for the earth. It uses extravagant language to describe people, nations, and spiritual forces that rise up to cause confusion at the end. Many people will be deceived by lies. Christians and others have debated what these signs point to and when they will take place. Jesus gave this advice about the end, “Be prepared!”⁵ The exact dates and details about our final days are less important than our current relationship with God. If we are filled with God’s Spirit and walking in his ways it is relatively unimportant how the events of the future unfold. Our ultimate destiny is sealed with Jesus.

The story goes that at the end of time God will do away with the current world and will transform everything. The Creator will make a new heaven and new earth, a place for the people of God to live with him forever. The final book of the Bible uses the image of a city, the city of God, coming down from heaven. It says, “God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away” (Revelation 21:3-4).

¹See Zephaniah 1:14, Joel 2:31, & Malachi 4:5, for a taste of Old Testament references. In the Old Testament, the day of the Lord often referred to a more immediate judgment that foreshadowed the ultimate judgment at the end of history.

²See 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2 & 2 Timothy 2:17-18 as examples.

³See 2 Peter 3:3-13.

⁴Mark 13:32.

⁵Mark 13:33-37.

Everything and anyone that is not aligned with the Spirit of Jesus will be destroyed in what is called “the second death” (Revelation 21:8).⁶ Both the enemy of man, Satan, and death itself will be destroyed in the second death. Judgment will take place, and God will bring everything evil to justice. But those who have received God’s grace through Jesus have been forgiven of all sin.

In the end, the transformed heaven and earth will be one and this is where God’s people will live. We will experience God’s love, not from a distance, but face to face. The Bible says that knowing the Father is eternal life.⁷ Those with God in the end will begin this forever life. What heaven will be like is another mystery. We know that all the evil we experience now will be gone. We know that the Creator who loves us has planned for us to thrive there. In fact, as the author C.S. Lewis implies at the end of his fictional work The Last Battle, the entire existence of this world has been but a prologue to that story. And the Day of the Lord will only be the first page of the greatest story ever told. And we are a part of it.

⁶Christians dispute the exact nature of the second death, who will experience it, and its length of time (or lack thereof). Most people don’t really want to think about it even though we are thankful God is bringing evil to justice.

⁷John 17:3.