

## **Naked Bible Podcast Transcript**

### **Episode 252**

### **The Day of the Lord**

**December 22, 2018**

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### **Episode Summary**

What is the Day of the Lord? Most Bible students would associate it with a time of judgment. The reality, however, is that judgment is only one aspect. The Day of the Lord concept concerns things like the reclaiming of the nations, the general resurrection, and the “fullness of the Gentiles.” And since Jesus is Lord in the New Testament, the Old Testament of the Day of the Lord is married to the return of Jesus. This episode discusses all these facets of the Day of the Lord and how the full concept should prompt us to think well about end times.

### **Transcript**

**TS:** Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 252: The Day of the Lord. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike, how are you doing?

**MH:** Pretty good, even though I'm a little sad.

**TS:** Because of Fantasy? You've joined me in the losing ranks?

**MH:** Yes.

**TS:** I've noticed that. How does it feel?

**MH:** It feels terrible. [laughter] My quarterback only got half the amount of points he's gotten every game up to this point. So he laid an egg, and I lost by six points as a result. So [sigh] you just can't count on anything anymore.

**TS:** I hear you. I'm not really shedding a tear, but I guess there's always next year.

**MH:** The guy I lost to I went to high school with and I hated to lose to him in anything back then, and I'm not liking it now, either. [laughter]

**TS:** Yeah, it's not fun to have Fantasy play-offs around Christmas time, because it's just a downer.

**MH:** Yep.

**TS:** I hear you. Well, did you at least get all of your Christmas shopping done?

**MH:** Yes, we are done. One small victory for morale there. [laughs]

**TS:** But do you actually do the shopping? Do you put any thought into your gifts?

**MH:** Oh, yeah. My wife will get everybody gifts, but I always get my kids at least one thing they don't know about. So I'm like the gift hero every Christmas. I always think of something really cool. I don't expect this year will be an exception, either, so I'm looking forward to it.

**TS:** That's fun. Well, Mike, our poll of which topic we're going to cover is live right now. It's been up a week. We've got one more week to go. It's going to end at midnight December 31<sup>st</sup>. Can you give us a sneak peek of what you were thinking about, covering the "History of Israel?" Are we talking about modern Israel, since World War II, or are we talking about biblical Israel?

**MH:** This is biblical Israel.

**TS:** Okay. And "How to Think About End Times," can you give us what...?

**MH:** Yeah, it's basically a topical approach, in part, based on the blog series I did, "Why an Obsession with Eschatology is a Waste of Time." So I've taken three or four of those things, and I'm adding at least five or six other things that are essential to thinking about End Times well. So it's a topical approach. If anybody has read through that series ("Why an Obsession with Eschatology is a Waste of Time"), that'll at least give you a flavor.

**TS:** Gotcha. That sounds good. Well, this week is the Day of the Lord. I'm excited.

**MH:** Yeah, and this actually might be illustrative of the End Times thing. So if we do the End Times thing and we ever package it (in terms of a dedicated page for all of the episodes), I would throw this one in because there's something about this topic that really matters for thinking about End Times. So this might be a little bit of a taste.

**TS:** I'm ready. Let's do it.

**MH:** Alright. Let's jump into it. I'm going to warn the audience that it might be on the longer side because there's just a lot to cover here. There are specific

reasons that I'll wrap up the episode with as to why I bothered. The Day of the Lord is a really, really important theme in major and minor prophets. (In the Old Testament, the major prophets are the long books; the minor prophets are the shorter ones.) But it's also an important topic in the New Testament because Jesus and New Testament writers interpret and repurpose the Old Testament Day of the Lord with respect to the return of Jesus. So there's your End Times hook in there. It'll take a little bit to get to that point, but we will get to the New Testament. I'm going to quote extensively at a given point from a couple of authors because I think they say things well, and I also want to recommend at least one book to the general audience in this regard.

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But let's just start in the Old Testament. The Day of the Lord: *Yahweh Yom Adonai* (the *yom YHWH* in Hebrew). This occurs in 15 verses—Day of Yahweh. Just a little taste: Isaiah 13:6, Isaiah 13:9, Ezekiel 13:5, Joel 1:15, Joel 2:1, so on and so forth. It's important to realize that you can't just stick to that specific phrase and get a full, orb'd theology of this event (or this period, or this concept). Generally, the Day of the Lord is describing a dramatic earthly intervention by Yahweh (and we'll get into more specifics in a moment). There are, as I hinted, a range of other phrases that invoke the context of *a day* (that day when Yahweh intervenes in a powerful way), and we need to account for those other phrases.

So there *are* other phrases that invoke this same thing (this same concept or context) beyond those 15 passages that you have this explicit phrase. Examples would be things like “the day of Yahweh's anger,” or “the day of Yahweh's wrath,” or “the day of Yahweh's vengeance.” For instance, Isaiah 34:8 says:

**For the LORD has a day of vengeance, a year of recompense for the cause of Zion.**

Both the reference to the day and year are pointing to a specific time when Yahweh will take revenge on his enemies. Isaiah 61:2 (this is more well-known because Jesus quotes this passage when he goes into the synagogue of Nazareth to start his ministry):

**To proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God.**

So there you don't have the phrase “Day of the Lord,” but you have the “day of vengeance of our God.” Very similar phrasing.

**Jeremiah 46:10**

**That day is the day of the LORD God of hosts, a day of vengeance, to avenge himself on his foes.**

So you get phrases like that, that refer to anger or wrath or judgment. You also have phrases like “on that day,” or “that day,” or “in the last days” (something like

that). To get a full-orbed idea of what the Day of the Lord is, you have to include these kinds of phrases along with the explicit “day of Yahweh” (the Day of the Lord) phrase.

In terms of characteristics, there are certain things that characterize the Day of the Lord. If we looked up that phrase and all these associated phrases, we would see certain themes or characteristics arise out of the text. In no particular order, the Day of the Lord is often associated with a battle, where Yahweh himself is a combatant. He’s not just an observer; he is a participant. And this battle results in destruction. A few sample verses:

**Ezekiel 13:5**

**You have not gone up into the breaches or built up a wall for the house of Israel, that it might stand in battle in the Day of the Lord.**

There’s a reference generally to a battle.

**Joel 2:11**

**The Lord utters his voice before his army, for his camp is exceedingly great. He who executes his word is powerful. For the Day of the Lord is great and very awesome. Who can endure it?**

By the way, Joel 2:11 is Joel 3:14 in the Masoretic text. There is some differentiation between the Masoretic text and your English Bibles. Just be aware of that. I’m not going to keep mentioning Masoretic Text differences. We’ll just go with English citations for the rest of the way.

**Isaiah 13:6**

**A wail, for the Day of the Lord is near, as destruction from the Almighty, it will come.**

**Joel 1:15**

**Alas, for the day, for the Day of the Lord is near, and as destruction from the Almighty, it comes.**

**Zephaniah 1:8**

**Neither then, silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them on the day of the wrath of the LORD. In the fire of his jealousy, all the earth shall be consumed. For a full and sudden end he will make of the inhabitants of the earth.**

So there's some battle going on, some conflict. Yahweh is a participant. He is said to be rendering judgment. Some of these passages will have the theophany of the divine warrior in view as well.

Second characteristic: in the oracles against the nations, you will often pick up these Day of the Lord (or "in that day") references. When it comes to the nations, the time orientation could be near time to when the prophet is uttering this, or it could be a distant future time. We'll get to time in a moment. Often in these passages, you'll see a gathering of nations against Jerusalem—a battle at which God will intervene and crush Jerusalem's enemies. Zechariah 14:1-5 is the classic passage here:

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**Behold, the day is coming for the LORD, when the spoil taken from you [the released captives] will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle. And the city shall be taken, and the houses plundered, and the women raped. Half of the city shall go out into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city.**

That's historical. Then, we see in verse 3:

**Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. On that day, his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west, a very wide valley, so that one half of the mount shall move northward, and the other half southward.**

So there's this prospective thing. And the passage ends with the LORD calling down (or bringing down) his heavenly warriors with him. The notion... Let me just read a couple of others.

**Isaiah 25:9**

**It will be said on that day, 'Behold, this is our God. We have waited for him that he might save us. This is the LORD. We have waited for him. Let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.'**

Ezekiel 38:39 is well-known. We went through these passages when we did our Ezekiel series. But there we have this gathering of nations against Jerusalem and Jerusalem is delivered. They are saved. Zechariah 12:3-11, the same thing. So I'm belaboring this point a little bit because we'll often see it claimed in prophecy talk that all these passages (and all their elements) are already fulfilled. And you can't really use a 70 A.D. reference point for these because the people of God were *not* delivered. They just weren't. So the Romans weren't crushed by

a divine intervention. They just weren't. So we're going to get to... I'm seeding the conversation here already with points that, when we look at the Day of the Lord, we need to honor the language for what it is and not interpret it away in either direction (either all this stuff is fulfilled, or the notion that everything that is said about the Day of the Lord is future). You're actually going to see a division. You're going to see things that are referenced in the Gospels and the book of Acts as fulfillment of some of these passages, but then you're going to have other things that very clearly didn't happen in 70 A.D. So that's going to become important.

Another characteristic would be astronomical portents (signs in the sky, celestial events).

**Joel 2:31**

**The sun shall be turned to darkness, the moon to blood, before the great and awesome Day of the Lord comes.**

**Amos 8:9**

**And on that day, declares the LORD, I will make the sun go down at noon, and darken the earth in broad daylight.**

**Zechariah 14:6**

**On that day, there shall be no light, cold or frost.**

There's a little bit of a different flavoring there because some of that would be good; some of that would certainly be disastrous. Now these passages may or may not be symbolic for the punishment of supernatural evil. Remember celestial objects in ancient thinking were associated with divine beings. There might be some of that going on. Isaiah 24:21 is probably indicative of that:

**On that day, the LORD will punish the host of heaven in heaven, and the kings of the earth on the earth.**

The idea of, there *might* be... that when the Day of the Lord happens, there's going to be a house cleaning in the heavenly realms and in the earthly realms. So I understand that the language may be talking about supernatural evil. But the language here may also describe a complete overhaul of the world— hitting the reset button on the heavens and the earth. Why? Because we're transitioning to the new heaven and the new earth. And the old is judged and passed away and refashioned and the new heaven and earth come. So the writer... There are certain passages where the Day of the Lord is analogous (and analogized with) the flood. It's a total reset button, if you will.

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Now, the major resource here (and I'm going to reference this title)... Do not buy this in hardback, if you go out and buy it. This is available in paperback for about a third of the cost you'd see in hardback. Edward Adams, *The Stars Will Fall From Heaven: 'Cosmic Catastrophe' in the New Testament and its World*. Now, his take on this sort of language is that all this celestial language about the heavens burning up and the elements burning up and the stars falling and all of this, is not that it refers to the judgment of supernatural beings. Rather, he argues in this book (and he argues it well)... I'm not completely satisfied with everything he says. For instance, he doesn't really get into Isaiah 24:21. He's focused on a few other passages. His take is that this language is the language of resetting the heavens and the earth to transform them back into an Edenic state. Now this is part of the Day of the Lord language. You either have literal celestial portents (stars falling, meteors, whatever that might be, eclipses)—that's one element, one possibility. Or it's the final judgment because it's the Day of the Lord, when evil is dealt with finally and the righteous are vindicated—judgment of supernatural evil. Or it's this reset button idea, where creation is made new. Those things didn't happen in 70 A.D. I don't see all evil judged, and there are other characteristics that go with the Day of the Lord that we're going to get into (especially as how the New Testament repurposes it) that didn't happen in 70 A.D.

Now the sun being darkened and all that, Peter quotes that in his sermon in Acts 2, so maybe that refers to an actual eclipse. Maybe we have a partial fulfillment there, maybe it is something literally happening in the sky, but we certainly know that evil beings (*a la* Psalm 82 and Isaiah 34) were not eradicated. Their authority was taken away but they were not destroyed. And we certainly know that we're not in the new heaven and the new earth right now. So it wasn't reset in 70 A.D.

We have to be thinking about all of the different ways that the Day of the Lord could be understood and the fact that it's probably working in all three of those directions at any given point. In other words, we can't just cherry pick the concept and say, "Oh, it always means this, because now my system works." That's cheating. That's just not legitimate. Another theme of the Day of the Lord is that there is punishment of evildoers in general, even within God's own people. The wicked are punished.

**Zephaniah 1:7-14.**

**Be silent before the LORD God, for the Day of the Lord is near. The LORD has prepared a sacrifice and consecrated his guests, and on the Day of the Lord's sacrifice, I will punish the officials and the king's sons, and all who array themselves in foreign attire. On that day, I will punish everyone who leaps over the threshold, and those who fill their master's house with violence and fraud.**

As it goes on, it's the judgment of Jerusalem. So here we have Day of the Lord language in association (in this case, something historical) with Jerusalem and so even God's own people... if they're doing wickedness, they're going to be judged. That's just part and parcel of the concept.

**Jeremiah 25:3**

**Those pierced by the Lord on that day shall extend from one end of the earth to the other. They shall not be lamented or gathered or buried. They shall be dung on the surface of the ground.**

It's more general.

**Malachi 3:5**

**Then I will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker for his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts.**

That's actually drawing some language from Psalm 82 and that passage is also repurposed in Revelation 21:8. So we have a number of things going on here about the judgment of evildoers. It's not just a few of them. The language is comprehensive in those passages and many other passages. People don't get away with anything. The Day of the Lord isn't when God gets *most* of evil dealt with. He deals with *all* of it, both on an earthly and a cosmic scale.

Another characteristic: the Day of the Lord results in Yahweh being king over all the earth, over all nations. And you get this idyllic, Edenic (these conditions—this kind of language) in some of these passages. Zechariah 14 again, but this time, verses 7-11:

**<sup>7</sup> And there shall be a unique day, which is known to the LORD, neither day nor night, but at evening time there shall be light. [There is always light.]**

**<sup>8</sup> On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea. It shall continue in summer as in winter.**

**<sup>9</sup> And the LORD will be king over all the earth. On that day the LORD will be one and his name one.**



**<sup>10</sup> The whole land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. But Jerusalem shall remain aloft on its site from the Gate of Benjamin to the place of the former gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's winepresses. <sup>11</sup> And it shall be inhabited, for there shall never again be a decree of utter destruction. Jerusalem shall dwell in security.**

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These are idyllic conditions. That didn't happen in 70 A.D. The people of God were not delivered. We don't have Yahweh as king over all the nations. You say, "Well, Jesus is enthroned now." Yes, he is. He is enthroned, but he gave us the Great Commission to advance and grow the kingdom of God. It is progressing toward the day (the Day of the Lord) when that will become a present reality, and we will hit this reset button and go back to the original conditions of Eden and the way things were. No rebellion. No evil. One family of God blended with God's supernatural family, on earth. It's a reset. Again, that didn't happen in 70 A.D.

Another observation: the Day of the Lord is related in some way to holy war—the holy war traditions of the Torah and the book of Joshua and the early historical books—the *herem* (devote to destruction) traditions, where Yahweh is a divine warrior. Remember Joshua 5 and the captain of the Lord's host. Yahweh is a divine warrior who gains victory over the nations and over his rivals (the rival gods). Now I say "in some way," because there's often not a direct or exclusive overlap between the *herem* idea and the Day of the Lord. There's some overlap, so there's some relationship there. But it's not point-for-point, and it's not exhaustive. *The Dictionary of the Old Testament*, the "Prophets" Volume, says this. The writer is referencing another writer named Weiss:

Weiss directly challenges von Rad's identification of holy war as the origin of the Day of the Lord, citing the existence of numerous prophetic texts that employ the vocabulary of holy war that are not part of the corpus of passages that invoke the Day of the Lord.

So I quote that to make the point. There's really no one-to-one correspondence. There is overlap, but it's not exhaustive.

Essentially, this indicates that the Day of the Lord is sufficiently complex that it cannot be perfectly conflated with the idea of holy war.

Now if there's a holy war connection—if there's a "Yahweh as divine warrior" connection (Yahweh and the heavenly host, his army)—there's certainly a Divine Council connection. And that is important. It's connected to the holy war idea, but let's just think about some Divine Council imagery here. I'm going to quote here from Patrick Miller's article, "The Divine Council and the Prophetic Call to War." Now, you can find this in the book, *Israelite Religion and Biblical Theology*. We

have that in Logos, but it's a physical volume as well. It's a republication of an original article in *Vetus Testament*, Volume 18, 1968, seven pages long. And here's Miller's quote:

There is still another element that needs to be taken into account in this discussion about the Day of Yahweh as well as the more general discussion of the form and content of the prophetic oracles [MH: Think of the oracles against the nations especially here.]. In a few places in the prophets—and further investigation may suggest still more than are put forth here—there are indications that the divine council participates as a cosmic or heavenly army in the eschatological wars of Yahweh, those military activities associated with the Day of Yahweh, and that these conflicts (or this conflict?) involved a joint participation of human or earthly forces and divine or heavenly armies. Such a situation is not unexpected inasmuch as the later heavily apocalyptic warfare such as we find in the Qumran War Scroll depicts just such a synergism. Even more important, however, is the fact that these prophetic oracles provide a further tie to the ancient traditions and conceptions of warfare in Israel. For from earliest times on Israel viewed its battles as under the aegis of Yahweh and with the participation of the various cosmic forces which he commanded as the divine warrior, general of the heavenly armies. This theological or mythological conception of holy war which existed in Israel is preserved in numerous places, particularly the early poetry, where we see a common or traditional picture of the march from Sinai and the south into the land of Canaan as a great march of conquest with Yahweh going forth at the head of the armies of heaven and Israel (e.g. Deuteronomy 33:2–5, 26–29; Judges 5; Psalms 68, esp. vv. 8–13 and 18; Habakkuk 3; cf. Joshua 5:13–15, a most important reference).

Miller goes on to unpack this. He discuss several passages. I'm going to allude to two of them. He goes to Isaiah 13:1-22. This is his commentary, at least portions of it:

In v. 3 Yahweh levies a mighty host for battle.

25:00 Let's just go to the passage, and I can read a few selections as we go.

### Isaiah 13

**Yahweh says, "I myself have commanded my consecrated ones, and have summoned my mighty men to execute my anger, my proudly exalting ones."**

Here also it is impossible to tell whether these are heavenly or earthly hosts or both. He calls them 'my consecrated ones' (*m<sup>e</sup>quddāšāy*), 'my warriors' (*gibbôray*—see below), and 'my proudly exulting ones' (*'allizê ga "a wātî*). The use of the first person suffix might suggest that these warriors are indeed Yahweh's

assembly. Most important is the use of the term *m<sup>e</sup>quddāš*, ‘sanctified, consecrated’, which belongs to the practice of holy war, in which the soldiers were purified and set under certain taboos before battle [MH: remember that in the book of Joshua, with the rededication of the covenant and all of that.]. Then come the words:

*Yahweh Ṣ<sup>e</sup>bā’ōt* [of hosts] is mustering (*m<sup>e</sup>paqqēd*) a host for battle.  
They come from a far-off land, from the ends of the heavens,  
Yahweh and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole earth  
(vv. 4b–5).

Using the ancient designation ‘Yahweh of hosts’, the prophet announces that Yahweh has mustered a great army to wipe out the whole earth. The heavenly army is summoned ‘from the ends of the heavens’. If indeed *kol-ha’āreṣ* is to be interpreted as the whole earth, as seems to be the case, the picture is one of the final destruction in the Day of Yahweh—a destruction wrought by Yahweh and his heavenly army (v. 5a). If the reference is only to Babylon [MH: which shows up in the context of Isaiah 13], then the army may be interpreted as a combination of earthly and heavenly beings. Whatever the case may be on these various points where certainty seems impossible there can be no equivocation over the fact that the prophet announces a day of destruction, in which the divine army of Yahweh and possibly other armies will carry on a great holy war of judgment.

Miller also goes through Joel 4:19-20 to discuss the same thing.

**Joel 4:19-21** - This passage, similar to Isaiah 13 in form and content, brings together a number of significant themes. Verse 9 begins with a heraldic call to the divine assembly to proclaim holy war (*qir’û*). Then the proclamation of the assembly goes out to the nations:

Sanctify war! Rouse up the warriors!  
Let them draw near and go up,  
All the men of war.

The language is again that of the holy wars, purifying the warriors (cf. Josh. 3:5; 1 Sam. 11:11; 21:6), stirring them to go up to battle (cf. Judg. 5:12; Isa. 51:9; and so on). The apocalyptic element appears prominently in v. 10 where the prophetic saying about the tools of war becoming the tools of peace is reversed, and plowshares and pruning hooks now become swords and spears.

**So the Day of the Lord is not like the reset button kingdom. Okay? It’s the exact opposite.**

The weak and timid become mighty warriors. The nations are commanded to gather around. But then in the midst of this command a very significant change of address appears (v. 11b):

*hanḥat yhwh gibbôreykâ*

Bring down thy warriors, Yahweh.

As has been recognized, this can only be a call for Yahweh to come forth with his heavenly army. The divine beings who make up the assembly of Yahweh are elsewhere called gibbôrîm. The verb nāḥat confirms the fact that the heavenly warriors are involved. They are brought down from above whereas the nations are brought up (w<sup>e</sup>yaʿlû, v. 12) into the ʿēmeq y<sup>e</sup> hôšāpāt. [the valley of decision]

The purpose of this warlike activity is made abundantly clear in v. 12b:

*kî šām ʿēšēb lišpôt ʿet-kol-haggōyim missābîb*

For there I will sit to judge / all the nations round about.

The apocalyptic holy war is for the purpose of bringing about Yahweh's judgment of the nations. What does that sound like? It sounds like Psalm 82. We didn't see the fruition—the fulfillment—of Psalm 82 in 70 A.D. We just didn't. What about timing, then? You have a couple of options. From *The Dictionary of the Old Testament* (The Prophets), there are occasions where the Day of the Lord phraseology is used of past events by the prophets. I'll just quote a little selection here:

Specifically, several passages (Isaiah 22:1–14; Jeremiah 46:2–20; Lamentations 1:12; 2:22; Ezekiel 13:1–9) seem to refer to the Day of the Lord as a past historical event in which Yahweh exercises divine authority over the outcome...

Interestingly, these passages describe Yahweh acting to both defeat a foreign enemy (Isaiah 22; Jeremiah 46) and to bring judgment upon Jerusalem and Judah (Lamentations 1–2; Ezekiel 13). [MH: So it works in both directions here.] This range of usage again confirms the flexibility of the Day of the Lord for prophetic proclamation. Everson correctly states that 'the Day of YHWH was a powerful concept available to the prophets for their use in interpreting various momentous events—past, future or imminent' (Everson, 335).

Now, in many cases, it's clear that what we're dealing with is something distant future to the prophets. The same resource says this:

The flexibility of the Day of the Lord motif in prophetic literature is also on display when in regard to its temporal orientation. One of the enduring questions

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surrounding the Day of the Lord concerns the timing of when the prophets expected it to occur. On many occasions it is evident that the future is in view, where the Day of the Lord is a prophesied day that brings either judgment or restoration. There is some room for variation in whether this future appearance of the Day of the Lord also indicates an eschatological end to history.

So the Day of the Lord, in terms of a future orientation, can be about judgment or deliverance—probably a little bit of both. Some of the passages we’ve already read have a little bit of both. And it may be future, not in a final sense, but it also could be future in a completely final sense—hitting the reset button and transitioning to the new heaven and the new earth. All of that concerns the nations getting judged—certainly future. That sounds like Psalm 82 and some of these passages where the Lord becomes king over all the earth. That’s distant future and it’s the eschatological endpoint—this transition from the present age to the age to come. So all of that can be in play.

So to summarize at least to this point, as it relates to future events for the prophets, the Day of the Lord concept includes (now I want you to catch these ideas):

- 1) Judgment of evil and evildoers in general, even if they’re within in the “people of God.”
- 2) Judgment of the nations, with that judgment being focused on a battle that Yahweh participates in against the enemies of his people, and that battle is specifically cast as being against Jerusalem in certain passages. In that battle, God intervenes and crushes Jerusalem’s enemies, delivering his people. The result of this battle is that Yahweh is king over all the earth (over all the nations), and then you get this idyllic, Edenic condition talk.
- 3) The judgment of the nations is in some way related to the holy war idea, where Yahweh (the divine warrior) has victory over the rival gods of the nations and becomes king of the nations.
- 4) Then lastly, you could have these astronomical portents. They could be any one of three things. Since the earthly flood is linked to punishment of supernatural evil and its spawn (think about passages where the Day of the Lord hooks back into the flood as an analogy)... Go back to the flood. There was punishment of both earthly inhabitants and supernatural evil. Since that’s true, a judgment of creation cannot be rightly excluded from the interpretation of these passages.

So what I’m saying there is, it’s not legitimate to look at the Day of the Lord language, especially when it shows up in the New Testament, where Jesus is the divine warrior and it’s the day of Christ... It’s not legitimate to look at that and say

that it was only symbolic (it's only figurative). The flood wasn't symbolic or figurative. And it included a judgment of supernatural evil and human evil in totality. However that was conceived, the point is *totality*. So it's not going to be something that we can't see. It's not going to let evildoers of either a supernatural nature or earthly nature escape or get away. Yahweh's going to be king over all the nations, not just most of the nations. We can't sell the language short and do justice to it. That's cheating.

35:00 So just a little bit of a heads up as to where we're going. To transition to the New Testament, with that as a segue... Perhaps illustrative of things we might do in an End Times series, look at the Old Testament and then take a look at the New Testament. Because New Testament talk about the End Times is—guess what? Drawn from the Old Testament! And the New Testament writers are drawing conclusions. They're linking data points. They're connecting dots. That's what they're doing. That's what New Testament writers do. So all of these topics we need to consider in light of both testaments in their own contexts. So when we get to the New Testament, what we're really talking about with a lot of this stuff (Day of the Lord) is the transition to the consummated kingdom of God. We spent a lot of time talking about the kingdom of God on the podcast. We've talked a lot about the "already, but not yet." I'm mentioning that—repeating that—for new listeners. I get it. I get that the kingdom of God is presented in the New Testament as a present reality. It's very clear. But it's also very clear that the kingdom of God doesn't end there. That's not the only way it's talked about. It is talked about in terms of a future realization—heaven come back to earth, new heaven and new earth, reset button, Edenic state on earth, heaven (the final form of the kingdom) being here on earth, in the new earth. So I wanted to quote a little bit of a selection from Bock. This is from the *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. Bock is talking about the Gospel of Luke, specifically, but I like his little section here on the kingdom. So I'm going to read it. Bock writes:

The Messiah brings the kingdom of God, God's rule manifested on earth (4:18, 43; 7:22; 8:1; 9:6; 10:11). Here is a complex theme in Luke's Gospel. The kingdom is present now, but it comes in the future. It includes earthly hope, and yet has spiritual dimensions.

The kingdom as present reality is associated with Jesus' authority, well illustrated as he exercises his command over evil, spiritual forces. This also reveals the spiritual character of the kingdom. [MH: In other words, it has nothing to do with human political fixtures.] Jesus can speak of the kingdom as "near" (10:9). And as the seventy (-two) disciples exercise authority over demons, he sees Satan fall (10:18–19). In fact, Jesus says that if he casts out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom has come upon those present (11:20–23). Asked by Pharisees when the kingdom would come, he could say the kingdom is "among you" (17:21). The king, in one parable, departs "to receive a kingdom" (19:14–15). In his hearing before the council of Jewish elders, Luke makes it clear that from that

point on Jesus will be at God's side (22:69). Finally, the appeal to Psalm 110 depicts the presence of a regal authority, ruling from the side of God.

But the kingdom is also future. Luke 17:22–37 describes the judgment preceding its arrival. Here is the “not yet” aspect—the kingdom in consummation. Luke 21:5–38 also describes the “time of redemption.” Here the imagery of the Day of the Lord abounds as evil is decisively judged.

Now let me just stop there. There are going to be some theological systems that say, “Look at Luke 17:22–37—judgment preceding the arrival of the kingdom. Well, that's the Romans—that's 70 A.D. And then we have the kingdom here because the Church ultimately conquers Rome. The Early Church, early centuries... blah blah blah.” Well, that's nice, but let's just skip Luke 21:5–38, where evil is decisively judged. Let's forget Psalm 82 factors into this in a number of conceptual ways in the New Testament—the reclaiming of the nations, the fullness of the Gentiles. These things did not happen in the first century. Back to Bock:

Within the space of a few verses (21:25–27) allusion is made to a range of OT passages suggesting the cosmic disturbance associated with the Day of the Lord (Isaiah 13:10; Ezekiel 32:7; Joel 2:30–31; Psalms 46:2–3; 65:7; Isaiah 24:19 (LXX); Haggai 2:6, 21; Daniel 7:13). OT hope and expectation is not dead, as Acts 3:20–21 also makes clear. Jesus will return to fulfill the rest of the promise, a promise that will show itself visibly on earth to all humanity, as well as in the eternal benefits given to believers.

So the kingdom is earthly, that is, Jesus will rule as a Davidide on the earth and bring about total deliverance as he executes his sovereignty over all. Such hope is most strongly expressed in the narrative and songs of Luke 1:32–33, 46–55, 69–75. The eschatological discourses and the remarks of Acts 1:11 and 3:18–21 show that the future hope has not been absorbed in the theme of present inauguration, but remains alive, connected to its OT roots. God is faithful and brings all of his promises to fruition.

40:00

That's a nice little summary of the “already, but not yet” just in Luke. He's only drawing on Luke here. I also want to bring into the discussion another influential New Testament scholar here: George Eldon Ladd. Ladd's focus is on what he calls the “biblical theology of two ages” (this present age and the age to come). He sees biblical theology marching... New Testament repurposing of the Old Testament on these two trajectories: there's a present age and there's an age to come, which I think is a simple, demonstrable way to look at things.

Now, I would recommend one of Ladd's books. Ladd is famous in scholarship for his *Theology of the New Testament*. It's a large book. It's a scholarly work. But



he distilled the content of that. At the Naked Bible Podcast, we're always looking for scholars who will distill the content and give it to the non-specialist, and Ladd did that. Way back in the '70s, he wrote a book called *The Last Things: An Eschatology for Laymen*. It's a 1978 title. I think it's still in print. If it's not, you can certainly get it used. You can also get it in Logos, as well, if you have our software and prefer the digital. So I'm going to quote a few passages from Ladd's book. And this is the lay book, *The Last Things: An Eschatology for Laymen*. I'm going to include something else from a different book of Ladd in a bit. But this is just from the book for laymen. He writes about Luke 20:35-36... Let me just read the passage here:

**But those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, for they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.**

So Ladd writes:

This age is a time of mortality and death. Marriage is an essential institution or the race would die out. The Age to Come will be inaugurated by the resurrection from the dead, and those who experience it will be like angels in one respect: they will henceforth be immortal, being sons of the resurrection with everlasting life.

The great chapter of parables makes it clear that another event which will introduce the Age to Come is the final judgment, the harvest when the wheat and the weeds are to be separated from each other at the close of (this) age (Matt. 13:39-40, 49).

So I quoted these two sections here (we're going to hear a little bit more from Ladd in a moment) to basically say that when we transition from the present age to the age to come, there's the resurrection (the general resurrection) that's in view. There is also the judgment of the tares in view. This is very consistent with Day of the Lord language in the Old Testament. If you think of Daniel 12 as marking the final fulfillment of Yahweh's return—Yahweh's coming (and any passage referring to general resurrection)—these are all going to be connected with the Day of the Lord, because evildoers are punished and the righteous are vindicated and they are raised at the last day (so on and so forth). So if there's nothing more to the kingdom than the "already," where's the general resurrection? Where's the final judgment of evil? We've already asked questions like, "Where is Yahweh, the king of all the nations?" And there are other things to loop in here. Where is "all the nations coming to worship the Lord?" All these images that you get in the Old Testament. Each element is part of the Day of the Lord concept. You don't get to throw out the ones that don't work with your



system. You don't get to do that. That's not what the New Testament writers were thinking. They were expecting these things. Why? Because they're in their Bible. You don't get to just ignore them or dismiss them, or relegate them to the realm of the invisible, or symbolic, or something. As we go on here, you'll see from the New Testament why you don't get to do that. I think you already get a sense of how that's kind of cheating, if we look at all these elements that are associated with the Day of the Lord (all these ideas), what gives us the right to just wipe a few off of the table? What I'm suggesting to you is that you don't have that right. So back to Ladd, this is from his *Laymen* book:

45:00

There are several other passages which speak of the character of this age. In Matthew 13:22 "the care of the age" is hostile to the word of the Kingdom of God and tries to choke out its growth. [MH: So in this present age, you have that conflict.] In Galatians 1:4 Paul calls it "the present evil age." In 2 Corinthians 4:4 Paul speaks of Satan as the god of this age. In his sovereign wisdom God has allowed Satan to exercise such power that he may be spoken of as the god of this age—the ultimate object of the worship of ungodly men. Of course, everything that Satan does must be done with the sovereign power and consent of God.

He's on a leash. We understand that, but here's the point. This isn't the fullness of the kingdom. This present age is not all there is to the kingdom. In the age to come... Let me put it this way: in the kingdom (return to earth), God isn't letting Satan have his way in any respect. We have two ages: the present age and the age to come. We are not in the age to come yet. There's going to be something else out there.

Another evil of this age is death. [MH: What could be more obvious?] "Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him that has the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2:14).

If the devil is the god of this age, it makes sense that we have death in this age. We do not have death after the reset button is hit. We just don't.

All the sweep of redemptive history is divided into two ages separated by the Day of the Lord. [MH: The Day of the Lord is the transition point—that's the point I'm trying to make here.] The New Testament adds several important features to this diagram: the Day of the Lord will witness the coming of the Son of Man, the resurrection of the dead, and the judgment of men.

This is emphasized by Paul when he speaks of the victorious reign of Christ. Speaking of the resurrection Paul says, "Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For

he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death” (1 Cor. 15:23–26). Here we have what amounts to a definition of the Kingdom of God. *The Kingdom of God is the redemptive rule of God in Christ, destroying his enemies and by implication bringing to his people the blessing of his reign* [MH: i.e., eternal life].

This makes several conclusions inescapable. The Kingdom of God is the work of God, not of men; nowhere do we find the idiom, much used in some circles, of building the Kingdom of God. To be sure, they may proclaim the work of the Kingdom (Matt. 24:14; Acts 8:12; 28:31), but the Kingdom is ever and always God’s Kingdom, God’s rule. Furthermore, it is clear that the Kingdom will not triumph in this age. This age remains evil until evil is purged out of his Kingdom by the Son of Man. Again, this shows why the Second Coming of Christ is essential to a biblical theology: apart from his victorious return, there will be no final victory over sin, Satan, and death. However, God’s Kingdom is sure to come; all the promises of God remain unfulfilled apart from Christ’s return.

That’s a key line: “all the promises of God remain unfulfilled apart from Christ’s return.” In other words, Christ’s return sews up a lot of things. It fills a lot of holes. It makes the picture complete. All the rest of the pieces of the puzzle that are still lying outside of the borders of the puzzle we’re working on all find their right place at the return of Christ.

Finally this theology of the Kingdom of God makes it clear that God’s redemptive purpose is not merely a way of salvation for individual souls; it is a purpose for history. We have already tried to make this clear in the chapter on the Second Coming of Christ. Because God has already intervened in history, history has a purpose and a goal; rather we should say that “redemptive” history has a purpose and a goal: the Kingdom of God...

We must recognize frankly that in all the verses cited thus far it would seem that the eschatological Kingdom will be inaugurated by a single complex event, consisting of the Day of the Lord, the coming of the Son of Man, the resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment.

Let me repeat that. These are the elements of the Day of the Lord. The Day of the Lord has the divine warrior coming. That’s the coming of the Son of Man, the return of Jesus. The Day of the Lord has the resurrection of the dead. (That’s the book of Daniel—Daniel 12, for instance.) And it also has the final judgment. Evil—wickedness—is punished, no matter where it is and who it is. And, we could add, when that happens, it’s both earthly evil (earthly evildoers are punished) and supernatural evil is punished. Yahweh reclaims the nations in full, defeats his rivals, and is Lord of all the earth. *That* is what we expect, and *that* has not happened yet. Now, I know there’s at least one system out there that

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says that it has. I think what we've covered to this point demonstrates the utter incoherence of that idea, because the only way you can defend it is to weed out certain ideas of the Day of the Lord and cast them in a certain way so that your listeners' expectation is diametrically opposed to the expectation of New Testament writers. That's the only way you can get there. And I just think that is illegitimate. We do not know what to expect better than the New Testament writers did, because they're writing under inspiration, folks.

Now the "two age" idea is why New Testament writers can speak of being in "the last days" and yet still not have the Day of the Lord fulfilled. Because the Day of the Lord is the hinge point. It's the transition from the present age to the age to come. So the New Testament writers perceived themselves as being in "the last days" because they were expecting the transition. The kingdom present is not static. To say that the kingdom is present now doesn't mean that it's just sitting there and not moving, not going anywhere. It is moving toward the Day of the Lord—toward its own transition, its own metamorphosis into the new heaven and the new earth. It's not just sitting there.

So if you have that expectation that this present age is passing away and we are waiting for the hinge point (the transition to the Day of the Lord, which *is* the Day of the Lord), you can talk about being in the "last days" and it can make sense, because you're expecting the transition. Frankly, I don't care what view of eschatology you have. I don't care what your view of End Times is. Everybody (every system) should be thinking on those terms. Every one of them. (Not to say that they all do, but every one of them should.) We should be thinking about the transition to the new heaven and the new earth. You can disagree on timing, you can disagree on what it looks like, but the transition is still to come. You are living in a time that is moving to the transition. It's not just static. And if you're moving... Think of yourself in an airport. You could just walk on the ground, but you hop on one of those escalator things that are horizontal. If it's a good metaphor, fine; if it's not, just dismiss it. But if you're on one of those things, you're not standing still. You're still moving. You're still progressing toward a point. You might *feel* like you're not moving (at least not moving your legs), but you are being moved. You are being taken from one point to the next point, whether you can discern it or not. So this is what the kingdom of God is like. It's not static. It's not stalemated by evil. It's not blunted into inactivity. It moves. It always moves toward the end that God wishes. And the transition point is the Day of the Lord. So this is why the New Testament writers say these kinds of things. Look at Acts 2:17-20. You actually get both elements. This is part of Peter's sermon. He says:

<sup>17</sup> **“And in the last days it shall be, God declares,  
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,  
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
and your young men shall see visions,  
and your old men shall dream dreams;**

We just had this tongues experience at Pentecost, and so Peter quotes this passage.

<sup>18</sup> **even on my male servants and female servants  
in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.**  
<sup>19</sup> **And I will show wonders in the heavens above  
and signs on the earth below,  
blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;**  
<sup>20</sup> **the sun shall be turned to darkness  
and the moon to blood,  
before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.**  
<sup>21</sup> **And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord  
shall be saved.'**

55:00 Did you catch that? Peter is thinking, “We’re in the last days, those days that are around before the Day of the Lord comes.” Peter is living in the present, but he sees it progressing toward the transition. To say that Peter meant the entire Day of the Lord (all of its elements are fulfilled at Pentecost) is just not workable in light of what he says in verse 20. To say that he meant the entirety of the Day of the Lord (everything in the whole package) in Acts 2 is to say he was ignorant of some of the elements of the Old Testament Day of the Lord which don’t occur in Acts 2 (like the resurrection, like the taking back of the nations, like the divine warrior coming to take control over all the nations). He’s living in Judea under Roman rule, and ultimately he’s going to be executed by the Romans. Peter’s not ignorant of these elements in the Old Testament Day of the Lord. He’s not saying that it’s all said and done in what happened at Pentecost. He’s not ignorant. He also doesn’t disagree with other New Testament writers (like Paul) who see the Old Testament Day of the Lord elements not occurring in Acts 2. They see that clearly. And they still consider those elements future (when we’re years past the time of Pentecost). We read that passage from 1 Corinthians 15:23-26, where Paul lays out a basic chronology. Now let’s go back to Ladd here, one little section, just to somewhat repeat what he said earlier. Ladd says:

We have seen that the resurrection—at least of the saints [MH: the holy ones]—will take place at the Second Coming of Jesus. However, we have also seen that the resurrection of Christ is nothing but the beginning—the first fruits—of the eschatological resurrection (1 Cor. 15:23).

There’s this general resurrection out there. Peter knows this. Peter knows Ezekiel 37. He knows these passages, and he doesn’t see that happening at Pentecost. Does he refer to it? No. Nevertheless, he thinks he’s in the last days—the days that are preceding when the Day of the Lord comes. Now, from

a different source of Ladd... This is his heftier volume: *A Theology of the New Testament*. Ladd writes this. He wants to focus a little bit on the term *Kyrios* (Lord). This is a really interesting section. You're not going to find this in the light version, but here it is in his heavier version. It's important, because think of the phrase "Day of the Lord." In the Old Testament, it's *yom* and then the divine name, *yom Yahweh*. *Yom adonai* is a term of respect. You have the divine name there, and that gets translated *Kyrios* in the Septuagint. And Ladd's going to comment on this, because *Kyrios* is used of Jesus in the New Testament. This is something that's very well known. So here's what he says:

This leads us to the basic significance of the title *Kyrios*. It is the ascription to Jesus of the functions of deity. If confession of Jesus' Lordship means salvation (Rom. 10:9), the background for this is the Old Testament concept of calling on the name of Yahweh. Paul himself makes this clear when he quotes from Joel 2:32 [MH: that's a Day of the Lord passage]: "For, 'every one who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved' " (Rom. 10:13). Thus we find that the Day of the Lord (1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Thess. 2:2) has become the Day of the Lord Jesus (2 Cor. 1:14), the Day of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:8), or even the Day of Christ (Phil. 1:6, 10; 2:16). As the Lord, the exalted Christ exercises the prerogatives of God. Thus the judgment seat of God (Rom. 14:10) is also the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10). God will judge the world through Christ (Rom. 2:16); and until the end of his messianic reign, God rules the world through the exalted Lord...

In the Old Testament "the Day of the Lord" could designate a day in the immediate historical future when God would visit his people in judgment (Amos 5:18; cf. Isa. 2:12ff.). It could also designate the final visitation of God when he would establish his Kingdom in the world, bringing salvation to his faithful people and judgment to the wicked (Zeph. 1:14ff.; Joel 3:14ff.). In the New Testament the term has become a technical expression for the day when God will visit the world to bring this age to its end and to inaugurate the Age to Come. The term is not to be thought of as a single calendar day but as the entire period that will witness the final redemptive visitation of God in Christ. [MH: It represents the full transition.]

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The expression assumes different forms: the Day of the Lord (1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Thess. 2:2; cf. also Acts 2:20; 2 Pet. 3:10); the Day of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Cor. 1:14); the Day of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:8); the Day of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:6); the Day of Christ (Phil. 1:10; 2:16); that Day (2 Thess. 1:10; 2 Tim. 1:18). In view of the fact that the exalted Christ is for Paul as for the early church the Lord (Phil. 2:11; Rom. 10:9), it should be obvious that efforts to distinguish between the Day of the Lord and the Day of Christ and to find in them two different eschatological programs, one for Israel and one for the church, are misguided. [MH: Ladd says that's deeply misguided, because the terms overlap.]

The coming of Christ to gather his people, both living and dead, to himself (1 Thess. 4:13–17) is called the Day of the Lord (1 Thess. 5:2), as is his coming to judge the man of lawlessness (2 Thess. 2:2).

Paul uses three words [MH: catch this] to describe the return of the Lord. The first is *parousia*, which may mean both “presence” (Phil. 2:2) and “arrival” (1 Cor. 16:17; 2 Cor. 7:7). The word was used in a semitechnical sense of the visit of persons of high rank, especially of kings and emperors visiting a province. Since his ascension, Christ is pictured seated at the right hand of God in heaven. He will visit the earth again in personal presence (see Acts 1:11) at the end of the age [MH: at the end of *this* age] (see Mt. 24:3) in power and glory (see Mt. 24:27) to raise the dead in Christ (1 Cor. 15:23), to gather his people to himself (2 Thess. 2:1; cf. Mt. 24:31), and to destroy evil (2 Thess. 2:8; see also 1 Thess. 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23).

The coming of Christ will also be an *apokalypsis*, an “unveiling” or “disclosure.” The power and glory that are now his by virtue of his exaltation and heavenly session must be disclosed to the world. Christ has already been elevated by his resurrection and exaltation to the right hand of God, where he has been given sovereignty over all spiritual foes (Eph. 1:20–23). He now bears the name that is above every name; he is now the exalted Lord (Phil. 2:9). He is now reigning as King at God’s right hand (1 Cor. 15:25). However, his reign and his Lordship are not evident to the world. His *apokalypsis* will be the revealing to the world of the glory and power that are now his (2 Thess. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:7; see also 1 Pet. 1:7, 13). Thus the second coming of Christ is inseparable from his ascension and heavenly session, for it will disclose his present Lordship to the world and be the means by which every knee shall finally bow and every tongue acknowledge his Lordship (Phil. 2:10–11).

A third term is *epiphaneia*, “appearing,” and indicates the visibility of Christ’s return. Although this term is limited largely to the Pastoral Epistles, Paul tells the Thessalonians that Christ will slay the man of lawlessness by the breath of his mouth and destroy him “by the *epiphaneia* of his *parousia*” (2 Thess. 2:8). The return of the Lord will be no secret, hidden event but a breaking into history of the glory of God [MH: obviously, in the returned Christ].

The inseparable connection between the two acts in Christ’s redemptive work is illustrated by the twofold use of *epiphaneia* to designate both the incarnation and the second coming of Christ.

**Did you catch that? One of the terms for Christ’s return—*epiphaneia*—is the same term used of the incarnation. This is not an invisible, symbolic thing. It’s visible. It’s an *appearing*.**

God has already broken the power of death and displayed the reality of life and immortality within history through the appearing (*epiphaneia*) of our Savior Christ Jesus in the flesh (2 Tim. 1:10). However, this is not the final term of redemption. Hope still awaits us in the future in the “appearing (*epiphaneia*) of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Tit. 2:13).

1:05:00

If you're trying to escape the implications of the Day of the Lord concept by assigning them to only symbology (that these things happened in the spiritual realm, not in the earthly realm where we could see them), that's not correct. Maybe a better way to say that is, “that's incomplete,” because you have both aspects. But what some systems want to do is they want to only have one and dismiss the other and call it good. Your work is only half done. Your system is only half coherent. That means that the other half is incoherent. It's not consistent with the language used in the New Testament or the expectation of the Old Testament, which of course was inherited by the New Testament writers.

One last thought that I want to just add here. For the kingdom (the second age) to come, where Yahweh/Jesus is Lord of all and every nation, and Lord over his believing people, the “fullness of the Gentiles” must also be included in the Day of the Lord as it plays out in the “two age” theology. Romans 11:25 is the big verse. We've devoted time in other episodes to this. But I'm just going to bring it back a little bit and maybe for new listeners reference an important article here. Romans 11:25 is the key verse:

**Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers. A partial hardening has come upon Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.**

The Gentiles are full heirs. Paul says in Galatians 3 that this is the nature of the mystery, that they would be brought back into the family of God through Christ. The Gentiles are, therefore, part of the people of God in the present age and also in the age to come. The victory over the nations at the Day of the Lord and the lordship of Yahweh over all the nations (reclaiming them as his own in the Old Testament) is the root of the New Testament idea of the fullness of the Gentiles. This means that the idea of the fullness of the Gentiles has to be included. That idea of Paul cannot be separated from the realization of the Day of the Lord that transitions everything to the future age. Folks, we don't get the fullness of the Gentiles in the first century. We just didn't. Yahweh is not ruling over the nations. Evil has not been finally judged. The rival gods have not been destroyed, like Psalm 82 described. None of these things are realities. They're all in process. They're all some way down the road. But they are not consummated.

Now I want to bring up an article here that we referenced in a specific episode, but I don't remember what episode it was. It was a while ago. This is in the protected folder for newsletter subscribers. The article is by Jason Staples and is



entitled, "What Do the Gentiles Have to Do with 'All Israel'? A Fresh Look at Romans 11:25-27." It's from the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, volume 130, issue 2, 2011—twenty pages long (371-390). I'm going to quote here a few things from pages 385-388. You're going to find something really interesting here that we have not included in other discussions of this subject—something that takes us back (believe it or not) to Genesis 48 (the blessing of Jacob of Joseph's sons). So Staples writes:

Having laid the necessary groundwork [MH: the prior pages in his article], we are now prepared to return to Paul's conclusion in 11:25-27, where he explains that Israel will be saved through the ingathering of "the fullness of the Gentiles." Despite the terseness of Paul's language, the passage becomes quite clear once the phrase το πλήρωμα των εθνών [MH: *pleroma ton ethnon*, the fullness of the nations, the fullness of the Gentiles] is recognized as an allusion to Gen 48:19,68 where Jacob blesses Joseph's sons, explaining that he is placing his right hand on the younger Ephraim's head because "[Manasseh] will also become a people and he will also be great. However, his younger brother [Ephraim] will be greater than he, and his seed will become the fullness of the nations." [MH: There's that phrase, way back in Genesis 48.]...

1:10:00

By citing this prophecy at the climax of his argument, Paul has placed his cards on the table in grand style: the Gentiles now receiving the Spirit are the fulfillment of Jacob's prophecy—they are Ephraim's seed, they are Israel, restored through the new covenant. God had planned all along that Ephraim's seed would become "the fullness of the nations," so that when Ephraim was restored, it would result also in the redemption of the Gentiles in Abraham's seed. Paul's triumphant conclusion, "καὶ οὕτως [MH: "and thus"] all Israel will be saved," seizes his opponents' territory, claiming it for the Pauline gospel. "Yes, all Israel will be saved," he says, "but 'all Israel' is more than you realize"; Israel's redemption is not limited to the Jews alone. God has promised to restore all Israel, and Ephraim—that is, "the fullness of the nations/Gentiles"—must be reincorporated into Israel and reunited with his Jewish brothers. All Israel can be saved only through the ingathering of the nations. The puzzling connection between the ingathering of το πλήρωμα των εθνών [MH: the fullness of the nations/Gentiles] and the salvation of "all Israel" suddenly makes sense, since "all Israel" must include Ephraim's seed. Romans 11:25-27 is thus entirely coherent: Verse 25: A hardening has happened to part of Israel. Paul starts from the original hardening of the northern kingdom...

Now let me pause here. I've been using the word Ephraim here, because that's who Genesis 48 is talking about. The younger (Ephraim) will be greater than Manasseh. His seed will become the fullness of the nations. Ephraim... what's Ephraim? Ephraim was the capitol of the Northern Kingdom—the one with the mixed population. Remember the first exile, 722 B.C., when the 10 tribes are scattered to the wind and other people are brought in by the Assyrians? This is



what they do. They mix the populations. Just think about that. Israel (10 tribes' worth of it) is littered (cluttered) with Gentiles even before Jesus comes. It's cluttered with Gentiles. And look at what Paul's doing. Paul knows this, and he knows Genesis 48. A hardening has happened to part of Israel. Paul starts from the original hardening of the Northern Kingdom (Ephraim) which caused them to be exiled by the Assyrians and intermingled with the nations. Judah's partial hardening then leads to the restoration of these lost tribes, necessarily opening the door to the Gentiles, since Ephraim is no longer ethnically distinct. The Gentiles are gathered in as a result of this two-fold hardening that has occurred in both houses of Israel. Now folks, that is a Genesis 50 moment. When Joseph says (after all of the evil done to him and Jacob dies and his brother are like, "Now we're going to get it")... Joseph says, "Look, you meant it for evil, but God meant it for good." This is a Genesis 50:20 moment on a grand scale. All of the awfulness of Israel's apostasy and the exile is now turned and transformed by God into the means and the mechanism of bringing all of the nations back into the family. They are all Israel, in the sense of being the people of God. They are the house of Ephraim, because Ephraim is no longer ethnically distinct, even in Paul's day, obviously. You've had centuries in the wake of what the Assyrians did to the northern 10 tribes. So back to Staples:

Nonetheless, Paul insists that even those branches presently being cut off for unfaithfulness can be grafted on again—the mercy being shown to the northern house [MH: Ephraim] is the guarantor of mercy toward disobedient Jews [MH: in Paul's own day, those from Judah]. They can (Paul seems to hold more than a little hope that they will) be restored, and this ultimate reincorporation and reunification are the greatest of all—life from the dead (Rom 11:15).

Until το πλήρωμα των εθνῶν [MH: the fullness of the Gentiles] comes in, this is, as we have already seen, also a double reference. It refers to the ingathering of the Gentiles into Israel, but in their new identity as the reconstituted "Ephraim." The forgotten, uncultivated olive branches that had long been cut off are now being grafted onto the olive tree of Israel. Paul is simultaneously proclaiming the salvation of the Gentiles and the return of the northern kingdom—as the same event. Verse 26: And thus (καὶ οὕτως) all Israel will be saved. Since "all Israel" includes both houses of Israel and the northern house is indistinct from the nations, "all Israel" must include both Jews and Gentiles.

In other words, Paul knows what he's talking about. He knows his Old Testament. He knows Genesis 48. And my point for our purposes is, this is all linked to the Day of the Lord. This is part of the transition. This was not complete in 70 A.D. It was running in the background by 70 A.D., but we have not seen its consummation.

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Now why go through all this material? I think (as we wrap up here) that should be evident. What I wanted to do was to make some points about end times thinking.

This is just a topical study, maybe a little bit of a glimpse of the kind of thing that we're going to do if that topic winds up winning the survey. I've been getting some questions trying to argue for end times views (probably new listeners who don't know that I don't care about the systems). Am I aware of this? Or are you aware of that? Yeah, I am. I taught all this stuff for years. The Day of the Lord is one of several important concepts or topics that any end times discussion needs to understand clearly and apply *consistently*.

The DOL tends to get cherry-picked or ignored when it comes to end times talk. We just don't see all the facets of it. And if we do, many say, "Well, this one doesn't quite work with what I want to argue, so we're going to minimize it." Or, "We're going to symbolize it away to death." We're going to make the visible invisible so you can't see it anymore, and you don't need to see it. Tada!" It's just not consistent methodology. So what we've covered here ought to illustrate what I think is the Achilles' Heel of full preterism. Where was the general resurrection? Where is the end of death? Where is the reset button for a new creation? When did Jesus return as a warrior? How did we miss the transition from the present age to the age to come? (Not only us, but how did everyone miss it in antiquity?) If Ladd is correct with his three terms... (And many others are with him, believe me. This is just something you can get with a Strong's Concordance, frankly—three terms associated with the Second Coming.) If he's correct about the "appearance" language of the Second Coming... It's the same word used for the incarnation, folks. The Second Coming was not an invisible thing. And it will not be an invisible thing.

Partial preterism is more coherent. For me, partial preterism depends entirely on something unknowable and unprovable (i.e., the pre-70 date of the book of Revelation). That's the indispensable element. It assumes that, and then proceeds to move to some over-stated points, such as taking the language of Revelation and then assigning *only* symbolic meaning to those wordings and phrases. That gets problematic when the language is associated with Day of the Lord and plays out elsewhere in the Old Testament as having both heavenly (supernatural) and earthly application. The astronomical portents were one of our examples today. The language in these passages may or may not be symbolic for the punishment of supernatural evil (Isaiah 24:21). They may also describe a complete overhaul of the world (the heavens and the earth, the cosmos) as the writer understands those things. It's analogous to the flood. It's a total reset button. And that's is an important point: you can't merely take the descriptions of astronomical portents and cosmic upheaval as *only* symbolic of *one* thing (i.e., the punishment of supernatural powers). Since the earthly flood is linked to punishment of supernatural evil and its spawn, a judgment of creation cannot rightly be excluded from the interpretation of these passages. In other words, you can't just take the Day of the Lord language in the New Testament (the book of Revelation specifically) and say it's just spiritual stuff. That's not a consistent methodology.

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So what this means for partial preterism is, in some respects, an undermining of certain presumptions. They need a consistent hermeneutic that works for their system, and frankly, what that means here is... You have some problems here. If the hermeneutic is flexible (if it can work more than one way, and you're only talking about it one way), then you have a problem. You have to be honest that it can work in two (or more) ways. Don't just pick one for the sake of the system. So the system is not a slam dunk. It's far from it. And it all depends on the pre-70 A.D. date for Revelation, which is not secure. So let's just be honest. It's better than full preterism, but let's just be honest. And on the other side, dispensationalists are upended by a lot of this because they too drastically separate the Old Testament people of God from the fullness of the Gentiles, like they're two different peoples of God. Sorry, but the fullness of the Gentiles language is actually rooted in Old Testament language about Israel. That's just the way it is. I don't write it, but we read it together here. You can't argue this dichotomy of two peoples of God on the way to arguing for a rapture trajectory on its basis. Some dispensationalists do this. They pin their idea of a rapture on, "This stuff in Revelation after chapter four, that's for the Jews. And we're not Jews. The church isn't just Jews. So we're taken out." Look, it doesn't work. It dishonors the element of the fullness of the Gentiles that's part of the Day of the Lord, because all that stuff is rooted in Old Testament talk about Israel—Jacob's blessing. So let's just be honest. If you're going to argue for a rapture, you're going to have to find some other way to do it. Don't use an illegitimate trajectory to do that.

So I'm asking the same thing of the dispensationalists as I am of the partial preterists. Let's just be honest. Systems always break down. They all have something to contribute. They all have weaknesses. They all have points where they break down. So my suggestion is, don't worry about them. Try to do the best that you can with the data and try to be consistent in your methodology and work on that. Noodle that. You all know my view. My view is that just as prophecy was deliberately cryptic the first time around, it's intentionally cryptic the second time around. We're not going to be able to know everything. So let's not pretend that we do and not pretend that our system has solved all of the problems. None of them have. They all have outliers. They all have problems with their methodology. That's just the way it is. It's not a crime. It's just the way it is. So the Day of the Lord is just one of these things that I think is fundamentally under-understood and methodologically toyed with to make systems work, which is why I wanted to get into the topic today.

**TS:** Yeah, Mike. I get so frustrated when I see Christians just defend their system. And it just like, nobody really knows, so why will you just defend it to the death? It's frustrating.

**MH:** It's not a hill to die on. Yep.

**TS:** Yeah, it's not a hill to die on. That's exactly right. Well, what better topic to cover during Christmas than End Times, right? Hopefully, Exodus will pull through the polls [MH laughs], now that we got a little taste of End Times, because I think our audience is probably... We're getting some comments. People are like, "Ugh, not End Times." So I think you've soured our listeners into... Which is great.

**MH:** It's okay with me.

**TS:** They're turned off of End Times. Yeah, it's great, because who cares? It's going to happen when it's going to happen, so why sit around trying to figure it out?

**MH:** We'll see how many people care. We have a little time to go.

**TS:** Well, they have one week left to care. So again, that poll is going to end at midnight on December 31. So get your vote in, and make it count.

**MH:** Indeed.

**TS:** Alright, Mike. I hope you and your family have a Merry Christmas, and I hope our listeners have a Merry Christmas. And I just want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God Bless.