

Day of the Lord Project—Lesson 1 Background and Definition of the DOTL

Background

- **Explain the process of how and why these meetings came about.**
- When it comes to accurately identifying the nature and timing of the DOTL, there are two major issues that have led to a lack of clarity.
- First, is the insistence on the part of premillennial dispensationalists that the only way the DOTL can come as a “thief in the night” is to include the 70th week of Daniel/Tribulation in the DOTL. Consequently, accurately understanding the “thief in the night” terminology is paramount if clarity as to the DOTL is to be ascertained.
- Second, virtually all Bible commentators, including many mid-Acts dispensationalists have suggested that the expression “day of Christ” in 2 Thessalonians 2:2 is inaccurate and should read “day of the Lord.” The fact that this suggestion would even be made when the Greek text contains the word *Christos* demonstrates the lack of clarity these meetings are designed to clear up. The underlying word in the Textus Receptus is *Christos*, which is translated as Christ in 568 other places and is never translated as anything else. “The day of Christ” is the correct translation. This doctoring of the text is done because most Mid-Acts Dispensationalists view the DOC as the rapture of the church. In their view, if the DOC were allowed to stand, a problem is created in verse three when Paul says, “for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition,” because then the rapture or DOC is to be preceded by prophetic events thereby violating the prophecy/mystery distinction foundational to the mid-Acts dispensational view.
- The goal of the Day of the Lord Project is bring clarity to these issues without altering the text of the King James Bible or violating the basic principles of rightly dividing the word of truth.

Two Major Views

- Generally speaking, there are two views on the duration and scope of the events included in the DOTL. J. Dwight Pentecost in his book *Things to Come* summarizes these two views as follows.
- *DOTL View # 1*—includes Daniel’s 70th Week, the tribulation through the New Heavens and New Earth. See corresponding chart.
 - Pentecost quotes the following from H.A. Ironside’s *James and Peter* as an example of this view: “. . . when at last the day of grace is ended the day of the Lord will succeed it. . . The day of the Lord follows [the rapture]. It will be the time when the judgments of God are poured out upon the earth. It includes the descent of the Lord with all His saints to execute judgment on His foes and to take possession of the kingdom . . . and reign in righteousness for a thousand glorious years.” (quoted in Pentecost, 229-230)
- *DOTL View # 2*—includes the Second Coming of Christ through the new heavens and new earth. See corresponding chart.

- Pentecost quotes the following from the *Scofield Reference Bible* regarding this view, “The day of Jehovah (called, also, ‘that day,’ and ‘the great day’) is that lengthened period of time beginning with the return of the Lord in glory, and ending with the purgation of the heavens and the earth by fire preparatory to the new heavens and new earth (Isa. 65:17-19; 66:22; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1).” (Scofield, 1349)
- The two views agree as to the conclusion of the DOTL, i.e., the new heavens and new earth, but differ on the beginning. The first view includes in the DOTL the events of the tribulation while the second view does not. Ultimately, Pentecost sides with Ironside when he states:
 - “If the Day of the Lord did not begin until the second advent, since that event is preceded by signs, the Day of Lord could not come as a ‘thief in the night,’ unexpected, and unheralded, as it is said to come in 1 Thessalonians 5:2. The only way this day (DOTL) could break unexpectedly upon the world is to have it begin immediately after the rapture of the church. It is, thus, concluded that the Day of the Lord is that extended period of time beginning with God’s dealing with Israel after the rapture at the beginning of the tribulation period and extending through the second advent and the millennial age unto the creation of the new heavens and new earth after the millennium.” (Pentecost, 230-231)
- Norman Geisler states the following regarding the DOTL, “The day of the Lord” and similar terms, as used of the end-time events, refer to the Tribulation period (1Thess. 5:2; 2 Thess. 2:2) and on through the Millennium (2 Peter 3:10-13).” (Geisler, 622)
- The DOTL entry in the *Dictionary of Premillennial Theology* written by Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum states in part:
 - “The most common biblical term for the seven years of tribulation in both testaments is the *Day of Jehovah*, or the *Day of the Lord*. There are many who use the term, the Day of the Lord, to apply to both the Tribulation and the messianic kingdom.” (Couch, 87)
- In summation, the commonly held view amongst premillennial dispensationalists is *View #1*, i.e., that the DOTL includes the events of the 70th week of Daniel. The goal of the DOTL Project is to prove conclusively from Scripture that *View #2* is actually the correct view.

Defining the Day of the Lord

- In addition to the phrase the DOTL, the expressions “that day,” “the day,” and “the great day” occur more than seventy-five times in the Old Testament. (Pentecost, 230)
- In this section, our goal is to investigate each occurrence of the expression the DOTL in canonical order. The focus of this endeavor will be to summarize the key characteristics of this event.
 - Isaiah 2:11-21
 - Proud and lofty brought low
 - Lord alone exalted
 - Men hide as the Lord shakes terribly the earth
 - Isaiah 13:6-11
 - Day of destruction from the almighty

- Day of wrath and fierce anger; destruction of sinners
 - Cosmic disturbances
 - Arrogance of the proud will cease and the haughtiness of the terrible will be laid low.
- Isaiah 24:21-23
 - Punish the host of the high ones and the kings of the earth (indicates that the day of the Lord starts in heaven before it comes to earth).
 - Cosmic disturbances
 - Lord reigns in Zion—kingdom established
- Isaiah 34:1-8
 - The sword is bathed in heaven and then comes down upon Idumea (earth).
 - Day of the Lord's vengeance
- Jeremiah 46:10
 - Day of vengeance on his adversaries
- Ezekiel 13:5
 - Day of Battle in which Israel stands
- Ezekiel 30:3-4
 - Cloudy Day
 - Time of the heathen/sword is brought upon them
- Joel 1:15
 - Day of destruction from the almighty
- Joel 2:1-2
 - Day of darkness, gloominess, cloud, and thick darkness
 - Description of the Lord's army at Armageddon
- Joel 2:11
 - The Lord commands his army
 - The Day of the Lord is great and very terrible
- Joel 2:30-32
 - One view is that the "great and the terrible Day of the Lord" is a reference to a particular portion of the Day of the Lord.
 - However, it is clear from Joel 2:11 that "great and very terrible" is a description of what the Day of the Lord is like, not a reference to a subdivision thereof.
 - Cosmic disturbance before the day of the Lord comes.
 - Deliverance will be in mount Zion and Jerusalem.
- Joel 3:14-21
 - The Lord dwells in Zion and enters the rest of God, i.e., the millennium
- Amos 5:18-20
 - Darkness and not light
- Obadiah 1:15-17

- Nigh upon the heathen
 - In mount Zion will be deliverance as the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.
- Zephaniah 1:7-15
 - 1:7 DOTL = the presence of the Lord God
 - Thus, the Day of the Lord cannot be present unless the Lord is present.
 - The great DOTL is a day of wrath.
- Zechariah 14:1-9
 - Christ returns and stands upon the Mount of Olives.
 - It is the day when the Lord is king over all the earth.
- Malachi 4:5
 - Great and dreadful
 - Elijah will be sent before the coming of the DOTL (key verse in determining the timing of the DOTL)
- Acts 2:17-21
 - Quotation from Joel 2—demonstrate that the passage has only been partially fulfilled.
 - Great and notable
 - Cosmic disturbance before the great and notable DOTL comes.
- 1 Thessalonians 5:2-4
 - DOTL comes as a thief in the night.
 - No escaping the destruction
- 2 Peter 3:10
 - DOTL comes as a thief in the night.
 - Heavens and earth are destroyed
 - Look for a new heavens and a new earth.

Conclusion

- Taking into account the combined testimony of the verses outlined above, we can draw the following general conclusions about the nature of the DOTL.
 - The DOTL is a day of destruction and vengeance from the almighty upon all his enemies. The proud, lofty, haughty, and arrogant are brought low. This is the day when the Lord shakes terribly the earth.
 - The DOTL is described as being a great, terrible, and dreadful day of darkness, cloudiness, gloominess, fierce wrath, and anger when the sword of the Lord is brought upon the heathen.
 - The DOTL is a day of battle in which the Lord commands his armies not just on earth but also in heaven. In fact, the sword of the Lord is depicted as being bathed in heaven first and then coming down upon the kings of the earth.

- The DOTL's arrival to earth is preceded by cosmic disturbances such as the sun being turned to darkness and moon to blood. In addition, Elijah the prophet is said to be sent before the coming of the DOTL.
- The DOTL is when Christ will again stand upon the Mount of Olives. It is the day when the Lord is king over all the earth. In the DOTL, Israel will possess her possessions and the Lord will enter his rest by dwelling in Zion.
- The DOTL is said to come as a thief in the night.
- The DOTL most importantly is characterized by the presence of the Lord Himself. It is the day where the Lord alone is exalted. Thus, the DOTL cannot be present unless the Lord Himself is present.

Works Cited

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Scofield, C.I. *Scofield Reference Bible*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1917.