

Day of the Lord: Blessing Turned into Cursing

Why study the Old Testament? [Again]

1. The Apostle Paul says all Scripture is inspired by God. Keep in mind the context:
 - a) This is before the New Testament Scripture has been canonized, hence this Scripture is referring to the Old Testament and
 - b) this is instruction for a “new” pastor, Timothy.
 - c) In the Church Age, the New Testament is now considered Scripture, so this instruction is for us.

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

2 Timothy 3:17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Robby Dean says:

“Most Christians today are woefully ignorant of the Old Testament. The Scripture says some very profound things about the Old Testament. In 2 Timothy 3:15-17 “and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” Paul is writing to Timothy and he reminds him of how

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he through his mother and his grandmother was taught the Scriptures from infancy. Notice he refers to the Scriptures as the “sacred writings.” Throughout the Scriptures in the New Testament we see this emphasis that there is a body of literature called sacred writings, called the Scriptures, the holy Scriptures and the Word of God.”

“At the time that Timothy was a child nothing in the New Testament had been written, so when Paul says “from childhood ... sacred writings” he is talking about the Old Testament canon that was available to Timothy. The very fact that he uses the phrase “sacred writings” indicates that there was an assumed canon of Scripture at that time that was authoritative. He said in verse 15 that these sacred writings were “able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” So he says of the Old Testament that it is able to give all the information he needed to be saved and that it pointed to Jesus Christ.”¹

From Thomas Constable: “Scripture is useful. Therefore Timothy should use it in his ministry. It is profitable for teaching (causing others to understand God's truth) and reproof (bringing conviction of error when there has been deviation from God's truth). It is helpful for correction (bringing restoration to the truth when there has been error) and training in righteousness (child-training type guidance in the ways of right living that God's truth reveals). Or as one writer put it, Scripture is useful for teaching (what is right?), rebuking (what is wrong?), correcting (how do I get right?), and training (how do I stay right?). 4 This is a selective rather than an exhaustive list of the ways in which the Scriptures are useful. In Romans 15:4 Paul wrote that God also gave the Scriptures so that people could have hope.”²

¹ <https://www.deanbible.org/completed-studies-menu/old-testament-studies-menu/serieslist/ministry/old-testament-studies>

² <https://planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/2timothy.pdf> pages 50-51

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Purpose: There is a purpose to studying the Bible; that the man of God may be adequate and equipped for every good work.

2. The Old Testament comprises approximately 2/3 of entire Bible.

If you just count the number of books 39 (OT books)/ 66 (Books of the Bible) = ~**60%**. From point 1, it is profitable for many purposes, then a large portion of our teaching should be from the Old Testament.

If you look at the number of chapters in the Old Testament 929 versus New Testament chapters 260, the Old Testament comprises **78%** of the Bible.

If you count the number of words in Old Testament 622,771 versus New Testament 184,590, the Old Testament comprises **77%** of the Bible.³

3. The Old Testament is more difficult for the current day Church Age believer to understand than the New Testament. Hence, some shy away from it because it is difficult to understand without a pastor to explain the culture and language.

A. The language and culture are very different from today. Hebrew is not an Indo-European language. Blood vengeance, animal sacrifice, polygamy, etc. are not allowed in our culture. But, we encounter them in the Old Testament.

B. The writing in the New Testament is closer in thought to western thought – it is analytic and categorical doctrinal. The Old Testament is concrete, visually and orally based, not as abstract as the New

³ <https://www.neverthirsty.org/bible-qa/qa-archives/question/how-many-chapters-verses-and-words-are-in-the-bible/>. I cannot independently confirm the numbers, but they are consistent with what other pastors claim: that the Old Testament comprises around 2/3's of the Bible.

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Testament, although there are portions of the New Testament that bring over those literary techniques.

C. But these difficulties should not deter the student of the entire Bible to delve into the Old Testament. Indeed, in years past, many parents would read stories from the Old Testament to children. This was a way to familiarize a child with the Bible but also to instill certain moral lessons.

4. The New Testament is based upon the Old Testament. No Old Testament means there is no foundation for the New Testament. I could quote many “fulfillment” passages from the Old Testament. For the sake of brevity, I won’t do that here.
5. The Old Testament, especially Genesis 1-11, provides understanding of who God is and who we are in relation to Him, but also answers the questions of man: Who am I?/Where did I come from?, What is my purpose? and What happens when I die? The Old Testament provides the foundations for our relationship to God. A. Creation, B. Basic Doctrines, C. Relationships.
6. The character of God is revealed in the Old Testament through the history of the sons of Israel.
7. Prophecy. This is a point that I keep going over, each time addition additional information. This time, I ran across a slide presentation by Dr. Jeff Kinley⁴.
 - A. Helps you understand the times in which you live (I Chron. 12:32)
 - B. Calms your fears about the future (Matt. 28:20; John 14:1-3, 27) [God is in control as

⁴ <https://www.pre-trib.org/articles/mr-jeff-kinley>. Jeff Kinley was a ThM graduate of DTS & speaker at this year’s Pre-Trib conference.

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- C. Gives you confidence, courage, and comfort in the present (I Th 4:13-18; Jn 16:33)
- D. Increases your faith in God who's in control of earth's story (Isa 40:12-26; Ps 115:3; Daniel 4:35)
- E. Helps you see the relevance of your Bible to life, for now and for the future (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21)
- F. Builds expectancy and anticipation for what is to come (Rev. 22:10; Matt. 6:10)
- G. Gives you positive hope in a hopeless world, rescuing from despair (Titus 2:13-15)
- H. Keeps you centered in an age of doctrinal error, heresy and apostasy (1 Tim 4:1; 2 Tim 3:1-17)
- I. Blesses you as you listen and obey Scripture's prophetic words (Rev 1:3)
- J. Motivates you to be urgent about your mission here on earth, not wasting your time on worthless pursuits (Eph. 5:15-16)
- K. Fuels the fire of your desire to see others know Jesus (2 Cor. 5:10-13; 6:2)
- L. Gives you perspective on the temporary nature of suffering (John 16:1,4; Rom 8:18)
- M. Helps you prioritize spiritual things over physical things, living wisely (Ps. 90:10-12)
- N. Purifies your life as you prepare yourself as Christ's Bride (I John 3:2-3)

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- O. Helps you know what to expect, living godly in an increasingly hostile world (John 15:18-23)
8. A final point that I recently stumbled on. We claim to stand on the shoulders of those who went before us. That might include Luther and other Protestant reformers. But it would also includes L. S. Chafer, C. I. Scofield and R. B. Thieme Jr., Robby Dean and Herman Mattox. So the Tribulational saints will need to stand on doctrine developed by Church Age believers and left for them. They will have very little time to become mature believers. The culture will have changed radically with the restraining power of the Holy Spirit removed.

Now back to Zephaniah.

**Zephaniah 1:7 Be silent before the Lord God!
For the day of the Lord is near, For the Lord
has prepared a sacrifice, He has consecrated
His guests.**

Be silent. Interesting interjection at this point. It is yet another literary technique used to get our attention. It is possible that it relates in some way with the half hour of silence found in the book of Revelation (8:1). Both references are to an event in the Tribulation. They may be the same. In Zephaniah is the command to be silent. In Revelation 8:1 is the ½ hour of silence.

**Revelation 8:1 When the Lamb broke the
seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for
about half an hour.**

Before the Lord God. Face to face with God. Lord here is not Yahweh but Adoni. That is one problem with some of the translations. The Word

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Yahweh by itself is often translated Lord. But so is Adoni. Here, “God” is the word Yahweh. Often we encounter the term Lord God in the English and we may assume that it is Yahweh (Lord) Elohim (God). Not so here.

For. Purpose

Sacrifice. This word indicates the ritual killing of an animal and subsequent feast, eating of the animal. Here the sacrifice is the invitees, the enemies of Yahweh who are people and not animals. But from the context, they are Jewish enemies of God.

Consecrated. This is from the Hebrew word for “holy.” The meaning is “to separate.” So, the guests have been separated or segregated to this sacrifice.

There is the irony throughout this chapter concerning God’s relationship with Israel. Actions of God usually in support of Israel are now used against the unbelieving Israel. A previous example was the

Zephaniah 1:4a “So I will stretch out My hand against Judah And against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. [Against Israel]

Exodus 7:5 The Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the sons of Israel from their midst.” [For Israel]

Day of the Lord. This is a technical term that Herman and I have taught previously.

However, it is important, perhaps essential to understand the Day of the Lord in order to understand the first part of the book of Zephaniah.

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Remember, repetition is a literary technique for emphasizing something. So, Thomas Constable counted 24 references to the Day of the Lord. Some are associated with blessing but most are associated with cursing.⁵

References to the day of the Lord as a time of Judgment	References to the day of the Lord as a time of blessing
The day of the Lord 1:7, 14 (2)	
The day of the Lord's sacrifice 1:8	
That day 1:9, 10, 15	That day 3:11, 16
That time 1:12	That time 3:19,20
A day of the Lord's wrath 1:18	
The day 2:2; 3:8	
The day of the Lord's anger 2:2, 3	The time 3:20
A day 1:15 (5), 16	

From Herman:

“‘The Day of the Lord’ includes the time and events from the beginning of God’[s] dealing with Israel [including the tribulation, the Second Advent, the Millennium] into the creation of the new heavens and the new earth. That is ‘the Day of the Lord’ covers the book of Revelation.”

From Unger.

“Day of the Lord is the protracted period commencing with the Second Advent of Christ in glory and ending with the cleansing of the heavens and the earth by fire preparatory to the new heavens and the new earth of the eternal state (Isa. 65:17-19; 66:22; II Pet 3:13; Rev. 21:1). The Day of the Lord as a visible manifestation of Christ upon the earth is to be distinguished from the Day of Christ. The latter is connected with the glorification of the saints and their reward in the heavenlies previous to their return with Christ to inaugurate the Day of the Lord. The Day of the Lord thus comprehends specifically the closing phase of the Tribulation

⁵ <https://planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/zephaniah.pdf> pages 21-22

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and extends through the Millennial Kingdom. Apocalyptic judgments (Rev. 4:1-19:6) precede and introduce the Day of the Lord.”

Ryrie Study Bible:⁶ The quote is reformatted.

Three facets of the Day of the Lord

Historical – God’s intervention in the affairs of Israel (Zeph 1:14-18; Joel 1:15) and heathen nations (Isa 13:6; Jer 46:10; Ezek 30:3)

Illustrative – whereby an historical incident represents a partial fulfillment of the eschatological Day of the Lord (Joel 2:1-11; Isa 13:6-13)

Eschatological – Eschatological Day of the Lord Includes:

Great Tribulation (Isa. 2:12-19; 4:1)

Second Coming of Christ (Joel 2:30-32)

Millennium (Isa 4:2; 12; 19:23-25; Jer 30:7-9)

Zephaniah 1:8 “Then it will come about on the day of the Lord’s sacrifice That I will punish the princes, the king’s sons And all who clothe themselves with foreign garments.

Zephaniah 1:9 “And I will punish on that day all who leap on the temple threshold, Who fill the house of their lord with violence and deceit.

Punish. This word has several different but related meanings that can indicate good or bad. The basic meaning is “to attend to, visit, muster, appoint.” It can mean “punish” or “visit.”⁷ Often, when used with a preposition “on” or “against” it has the meaning of “punishing” whatever

⁶ Ryrie Study Bible, page 1392 (Intro to Joel) The information is quoted but reformatted.

⁷ Sweeney, Marvin A., Zephaniah: A Commentary, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003, page 83

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that means in this context. This is not talking specifically about eternal punishment. Certain people have sinned to the point that God's wrath has been stirred up. For a believer, in time, God can "punish" or perhaps a better word might be "discipline" in order to retrieve the believer from a constant state of sin to a state of walking by faith. Yet, there is a point at which a believer will sin unto death. At that point, the believer is so enmeshed in a state of sin, that he is not going to return to walking by faith. At that point, God takes out this believer out of the world and brings him to heaven. For an unbeliever, there is a point at which God judges him because of his constant evil sin, that God takes him out. We know this happens to millions of people in the Tribulation. It is graphically documented in the book of Revelation. It is also documented here in the book of Zephaniah. Notice the repetition of the word "all" in verses 8-9. All who engage in certain kinds of evil. In the Tribulation, there does not appear to be any middle ground. You are either a believer or you are not. Those that are not end up dying before the start of the Millennium. Only believers enter the Millennium.

The princes, the king's sons And all who clothe themselves with foreign garments. The implication in the context of the Tribulation is that certain government officials will be working for the Anti-Christ. We have seen this kind of situation from time to time in Jewish history. For instance, Josephus did this kind of thing during the 70 A.D. destruction of Jerusalem. From Wikipedia: "Flavius Josephus fully defected to the Roman side and was granted Roman citizenship. He became an advisor and friend of Vespasian's son Titus, serving as his translator when Titus led the siege of Jerusalem in AD 70."⁸ That was not the Tribulation. "All" were not judged immediately. The judgments of God on the earth at the end of the Tribulation will be on "all" as we saw in Zephaniah 1:2. ALL.

⁸ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josephus>

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The Day of the Lord. This phrase or versions of “that day” are constantly repeated in this section of Zephaniah. The title is “The Day of the Lord.” Other terms in this chapter of Zephaniah provide descriptions of that day. The first one has to do with “sacrifice.”

Sacrifice. The term here is a generic term for sacrifice. It does not refer to a specific Jewish sacrifice. The concept behind this word is that an animal is sacrificed, the meat prepared and then eaten by the guests or invitees. Here, the invitees are the sacrifice. Everything here is upside down and backwards. Instead of this sacrifice being satisfying to God for the penalty of sin, God is using the concept of sacrifice as a means of implementing His judgments against evil people. The literary technique here includes irony. The invitees are the sacrifice. They will be killed and eaten by others. Human sacrifice would also be abhorrent to the Jewish minds.

**Zephaniah 1:9 “And I will punish on that day
all who leap on the temple threshold, Who fill
the house of their lord with violence and
deceit.**

Punish. Again a reference to judgment.

All. Again, a repetition of the word “all.”

who leap on the temple threshold. This phrase is not well understood. The word “temple” is not in the original but supplied by the translator.

House of their lord. Note the word “lord” is not capitalized. It is not Adoni or Yaweh. It is “baal.” This could be a reference to Baal worship.

Thomas Constable attempts to clarify one of the views on this phrase:

“A fourth view is that the phrase “who avoid stepping on the threshold” (NIV) implies that the Judahites were worshiping pagan deities in the

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temple courts, which had been established for the worship of Yahweh. 6 In this passage, the temple in view might be the temple of Baal. "Their lord [master]" is literally "their Baal" (cf.v. 4). Obviously the meaning of this verse is hard to decipher, but the gist of it is clear enough: God would punish those who were sinning."⁹

Violence and deceit. The Devil's response to God's plan.

⁹ <https://planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/zephaniah.pdf> pages 23-24