
CHAPTER 7

UNDERSTANDING END-TIME TERMINOLOGY

There are many eschatological terms that need clear understanding to make study meaningful. Two terms “The day of the Lord” and the “Marriage of the Lamb”, are given extensive coverage here.

THE DAY OF THE LORD

Meaning of 'the day of the Lord'

The day of the Lord implies not single day duration but a period of time beginning in the Tribulation (Acts 2:17-21; 1Thess. 5:2, 4; 2Thess. 2:1-3). It is never the same as the Lord's Day, the first day of the week or Sunday in today's terminology. The day of the Lord means a period of time in which God will deal with wicked men directly and dramatically in fearful and terrible judgment.

If used in reference to saints (both Old & New Testaments), it refers to the day of His salvation or the deliverance of the Lord. So, the *day* would be a time of judgment (Is. 13:6, 9; Jer. 46:10), as well as restoration (Is. 14:1; Joel 2:28-32). It is used in the New Testament to refer to a period after the Rapture. The day of the Lord is thus the protracted period commencing around the second advent of Christ 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. 65:17-25; 66:22; 1Cor. 1:8; 2Cor. 1:14; 2Thess. 2:1, 2; 2Tim. 4:8). This will be repeated after the Millennium with the cleansing of the heavens and the earth by fire preparatory to the new heavens and the new earth of the eternal state (2 Pet. 3:10-14; Rev. 21:1f).

Background story to “the day of the Lord”

According to Zephaniah, the end-time, a theme important to the prophet (see Zeph. 1: 7) is imminent, near and coming quickly. His warning is not for some distant day, but for now; and it is not something

to anticipate with joy. A bitter cry and a warrior's shout (either in bloodlust or in terror) will increase the tumult. God's jealousy, His strong desire to protect His unique position as Israel's Creator, Redeemer and Covenant Ruler, is stirred up by the pagan interests of his people. As a result, the fire of His wrath (cf. Dt. 4:24) will consume not only Israel, but also the whole world (cf. Zeph. 1: 2-3; 3:8; 2 Pet. 3:10-12). Today, no further warning should be expected, since the end will come suddenly as well as quickly. The partial fulfillment of this dire promise was only too quickly realized for Judah, with the devastating destruction of Jerusalem and her temple taking place in 587 B.C. during the prophet's own lifetime. The eschatological great and terrible day of the Lord is coming (Acts 2:20)!

Eschatological Reality to 'the day of the Lord'

Usually, and as a rule to covenantal dealings, Israel is given over to suffering if God is not honored, as do all nations, Blessing is, however, available to all righteous people, whatever their ethnic heritage. This ultimate day of the Lord (2Thess. 2:2) will also be universal as well as two-sided (Matt. 24:3-33; Rev. 19-22). This two-sided nature of the day – blessing and judgment; as well as its universality will culminate in Christ's second coming. Paul teaches that the Church will be raptured before that day. Like Zephaniah, Paul gives instructions about the day of the Lord (2Thess. 2:1-17; cf. Zeph. 2 & 3).

To the people in Zephaniah's day it meant the day when God would intervene to put Israel at the head of the nations, irrespective of Israel's faithfulness to him. Amos declares that the Day means judgment for Israel. See also in Is. 2:12f; Ezek. 13:5; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11; Zeph. 1:7, 14; Zech. 14:1. Other prophets, conscious of the sins of other nations as well as those of Israel, declare that the Day will come on individual nations as a punishment for their brutalities. For example, Babylon, Is. 13:6, 9; Egypt, Jer. 46 :5-10; Edom, Ob. 15; many nations, Joel 2:31; 3:14; Ob. 15. The Day of the Lord is thus the occasion when God actively intervenes to punish sin that has come to a climax.

This punishment may come through an invasion (Is. 13; Ezek. 13:5; Amos 5-6), or through some natural disaster, such as a locust invasion (Joel 1-2). At this Day, truly repentant believers will be saved (Joel 2:28-32), while those who remain enemies of the Lord, whether Jews or Gentiles, will be punished. There are also physical effects on the world of nature (Is. 2).

Distinguishing "the day of the Lord" from 'The day of Christ'

The Day of the Lord, as a visible manifestation of Christ upon the earth, is to be distinguished from the Day of Christ (Phil. 2:16). The latter is connected with the glorification of the saints and their reward in heaven after the Rapture prior to their return to Earth with Christ to in the Day of the Lord. The Day of the Lord thus encompasses specifically the closing phase of the Tribulation and applies also to the closing phase of the Millennial Kingdom. Apocalyptic judgments (Rev.4:1 - 19:6) precede and introduce the Day of the Lord, just as the birth of Christ preceded His public ministry after baptism.

Amos 5:18-20 is probably the earliest occurrence in Scripture of the phrase, "Day of the Lord." According to Amos, that day would be a time of great darkness for any in rebellion against God, whether Jew or Gentile. For the unbelieving world, traumatic physical effects on the world of nature will finally accompany the ending of the Day (2Pet. 3:12f.).

In the New Testament the Day of the Lord also represents the event of the second coming of Christ (Acts 2:20). In this case the phrase 'the day of Christ', or its equivalent, carries the same meaning. However, no specific signs precede the day of Christ and the term is used only in reference to believers. Both the up-coming and final fulfillment of the day of the Lord will come unexpectedly (1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Pet. 3:10), yet certain signs must occur first, and Christians should discern the inaugural signs of the Day (2 Thess. 2:2f.). Physical effects on the world of nature will finally accompany the ending of the Day (2 Pet. 3:12f.). This expression, when related to the return of Christ also forms a major part of the eschatology. It has various equivalents, such as 'the day' - 1Cor. 3:13, 'that day' - 2Tim. 1:12; day of the Lord Jesus Christ - 1Cor. 1:8; the day of the Lord - 1Cor. 5:5; day of the Lord Jesus - 2 Cor. 1:14; day of Christ Jesus - Phil. 1:6; day of redemption - Eph. 4:3.

The timing of 'the day of the Lord'

The final return of the Lord will come after the signs and wonders in the heavens and earth have occurred according to Joel and confirmed by Peter. So 'the day of the Lord' will start after the rapture and within the Tribulation, with the opening of the seventh seal or possibly near the

end of it. The great and awesome day of the Lord, which begins 'the day of the Lord', will be His revelation with the saints and angels (Matt. 24:30, 31; Jude 14, 15; Rev. 1:7).

"But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy. I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.'" (Acts 2:16-20; cf Joel 2:28-31).

We also understand that the rapture will take place and the Tribulation will start before the day of the Lord, as the Anti-Christ and the apostate church that will mastermind the Tribulation will appear before the day of the Lord:

"Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition," (2Thess. 2:1-3)

THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB

In the New Testament, the Church is referred to as the Bride of Christ (2Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:25-27; Rev. 19:6-9). So when the Lord promised that He would go back to the Father for our good, it would have been to start preparing the Chuppah, the marriage or wedding canopy for the Church's wedding in heaven. Again that would enable the Holy Spirit to come down on behalf of the Father and the Son; in order to find, prepare and adorn a ready Bride, the saints in Christ, for their gathering unto the Lord. The rapture will fulfill this promise by the Lord Himself. In the first place, the Bema will help remove or burn off anything that may have been hanging out. The Bride would be ready for the marriage after the saints appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ.

"And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, 'Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! 'Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.' And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, 'Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God." (Rev. 19:6-9).

Analogy drawn from Jewish Marriage

Permit me to glean from the Jewish concept of marriage to explain the mystery of the Rapture of the Church to the Marriage of the Lamb, with Christ as the Groom. The Jewish concept of marriage consists of two main stages: 1) the betrothal and 2) the nuptial.

Stage One-The betrothal: In the ancient ceremony, the bridegroom or an agent of the bridegroom's father went out in search of a bride. In some cases, a bride would often agree to the marriage without ever seeing her future groom. The betrothal (*kiddushin*) is accomplished by the *kichah*- *the taking of a woman by a man* in one of three ways: giving of money (*kessef*), contract (*she' tar*) or intercourse (*bi' ah*). The process is as follows:

1. An agreed-upon price called a *mohar* would be established for the bride in a number of camels, silver bracelets, or whatever the groom had to offer. The groom could give a ring (*kinyan*) and his contract (*she' tar*). The bride and groom were then betrothed and legally bound to each other, though they did not yet live together.
2. A scribe would draw up a *ketubah*, or marriage contract, stating the bride price, the promises of the groom (to honor, support, and live with her), and the rights of the bride.
3. Finally, the groom would present the bride with gifts. Most grooms today give their brides a ring as evidence of love and commitment, but in ancient times the gift would be almost anything. If the bride accepted her groom's gift, they would share a cup of wine - the cup of the covenant - and the betrothal was complete. Before leaving her

home, however, the groom would tell his bride, "I go to prepare a place (*chuppah*) for you; I will return again to you."

Stage Two - The nuptial: The second stage of the Hebrew marriage was the nuptial or the consummation of the marriage; what we call the wedding.

1. The groom would take his time to prepare a place (*chuppah*) for his bride in his father's house.
2. When the groom's father was convinced his son had really finished the canopy he was allowed to journey to the bride's father's house to get her with the blowing of the trumpet (*shofar*).
3. Meanwhile the bride would be preparing herself for the consummation – getting additional clothes, waiting patiently with her light always burning and enjoying a cleansing bath (*mikvah*) to keep pure in anticipation of his coming.
4. Amid great rejoicing, the groom would return with his bride to the father's home. The father would then present the bride formally to the son and then, standing under the prepared marriage canopy (*chuppah*), the officiant would read the contract (*ketubah*), recite the seven marriage blessings and the couple would retire to a private room for some minutes (*yichud*). Thereafter the groom would call their friends, and arrange for a festive wedding supper.

Application to the Church

Christians are betrothed to Christ through the new covenant written on our hearts and sanctified by the blood of Christ. We love a heavenly groom we have not seen and, because we believe He will come at any moment, we are to get ourselves ready for Him.

The Bridegroom, Jesus, has gone to His Father's house to prepare the *chupah*, or wedding canopy. No engraved invitations will be sent out as prior announcement for the heavenly wedding, so, people will have a problem reserving a day for the celebration on a calendar of events. People will rather be invited for the marriage feast after the Wedding. The Bride, the Church, herself will know the exact day only when the Groom returns at the Rapture. Usually, if the young

bridegroom was asked of the date of his wedding, he could only reply: "No man knows, except my father." Why? Because he could not get his bride until the father approved of his son's preparation. The groom's father decided when everything was in place and released his son to go fetch his bride.

The groom arrived at the bride's house with a shout and the blowing of the trumpet, or *shofar*. Thus announced, the bridegroom presented the marriage contract to the father of his intended bride. He claimed her as his own and took her to his father's house. His father would be waiting for the couple, would take the hand of the lady and place it in his son's. At that moment, she became his wife. That act was called the *presentation*.

After the presentation, the bridegroom would bring his bride to the bridal chamber he had prepared. There he would introduce her to the whole society of his friends who had heard the trumpet and come to celebrate the marriage at the marriage feast. In 2 Corinthians 11:2, Paul writes to the Church: "*For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*"

Wonderful Deductions

We are betrothed bride of Christ, sought by the Holy Spirit and purchased at Calvary with Jesus' precious blood. Paul said, "*For you were bought at a price*" (1Cor. 6:20). The Almighty Father looked down from heaven and accepted the price of our redemption. We, the bride, accepted the groom and the evidence of His love for us.

Our betrothal contract is the Word of God, for it contains every promise our loving Groom has made on our behalf. We exchange gifts at our betrothal. When we accepted Him, Jesus gave us eternal life! God Himself has given us the Holy Spirit who has bestowed His own gifts of grace, faith, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Like the bride in her purifying *miknah*, we have been baptized with water and by the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5). In this interim as we wait for our Bridegroom, Jesus has returned to His Father's house to prepare everything for our arrival. Before He departed this earth, Jesus said, "*In*

My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may also be also" (John 14:2-3).

How do we publicly demonstrate our acceptance of Christ? Just like the bride, each time we take the communion cup and drink the wine, we proclaim our marriage vows to our beloved Lord or obey the Lord's contract (*she'tar*). We demonstrate that we love only Him, that we are loyal to Him, and that we are waiting for Him.

Like the eager bride, we keep our lamps burning and strive to be ready, for we don't know when He might arrive. Our Bridegroom will soon come for us. Make no mistake; we must wait with our ears attuned to hear the trumpet sound. We're not going into or through the Tribulation. We're going home to escape the horrors of the earth in our glorified bodies. We have not seen our Bridegroom, but we love Him. And though we do not see Him, we believe, and rejoice with joy inexpressible and full glory (1 Pet. 1:8).

Our Wedding Garments

In an ancient Hebrew wedding after the bridegroom took his bride home, we will observe the following scenario:

The bride stood before the groom and awaited his appraisal. If she was wise, she had prepared a trunk with her wedding clothes, and she adorned herself in beautiful garments she had prepared out of love for her bridegroom. You would be embarrassed beyond words before your loving bridegroom, his father, and the assembled witnesses, if nothing has been prepared.

In biblical times the marriage feast was a celebration to honor not the bride, as in most customs, but the bridegroom. All the guests who assembled at the marriage feast were expected to compose poems and sing songs to honor him as they appreciated the beauty and grace of his bride.

Final Deductions

The Blessed Bridegroom has been presented with a bride and now He is coming to display the bride to all His friends, not that they might honor the bride, but that they might honor the Bridegroom

because of the bride's beauty. Jesus will be honored, not because of what we are, but because of what He has made us. In Ephesians 5:27, Paul referred to this analogy when he wrote that Christ gave Himself for the church so that *"He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish."*

We could not be holy by nature. We're not holy by practice. But the bride is the Father's love gift to the Son to honor the Son for His obedience to the Father's will. When Jesus, the Bridegroom, is presented with His bride, He will say, "She is beautiful, without spot or wrinkle." He will rejoice to lead her to the marriage banquet. The wedding gown of the church is the righteous acts of the saints (Rev. 19:8). Through the ages believers have been performing righteous acts, which have been accumulating to adorn the wedding gown. We know that as the practice the wedding gown and adornments will be used only once during the nuptials. But we will be clothed in the righteousness of Christ throughout eternity.

Marriage Feast of the Lamb

The Scriptures mention a feast in connection with the marriage of the Lamb. In the initial stages of my learning, I must confess that I got more fascinated about the Marriage Feast, rather than the Marriage of the Lamb itself. The invited guests were blessed, and I thought who could this be? Could they be the Church saints alone? No, for the Bride would not be invited to her own Wedding Feast but called with other invited guests.

Again, from Rev. 19: 9 it would seem that the feast takes place only in heaven. Then the question still arises as to the invitees to the feast. The answer could be angels and the spirits of Old Testament saints (who would not have received glorified bodies). But the spirits of dead saints do not eat physically with all probability, if not resurrected.

Comparing scripture with scripture we are now able to say that it is more probable for the marriage feast to start in Heaven before His heavenly hosts but to continue after Armageddon on Earth. In this case then 1) the display of the beauty of the Bride will be in the final *parousia*

when Christ appears and is glorified in the saints and 2) their *blessedness* before the invited guests would hold more meaning. For, in that case the invited guests could be Old Testament and Tribulation resurrected saints and living saints who will share in the Millennium (see Dan. 12:13). We also know that holy angels will not just be invited, for they will continue as ministering spirits to saints from death, in the *parousia* and even in the Millennium (Matt. 24:31; 25:31f; Luke 16:22; 1Thess. 4:16; Heb. 1:7, 14).

(Rev. 19:1-9)

After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God! "For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her." Again they said, "Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!" And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!" Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!" And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

Notice the four *Alleluia!* shouts in verses 1, 3, 4, and 6 with another *Praise our God* requested in verse 5 and the assigned reasons for those shouts. It is easy to see that two scenes are in the picture, what goes on on earth is observed from above and praise is given to God in heaven.

It includes events before and after Armageddon when the tribulation saints are fully avenged on them of their blood in the

punishment of the False Church; and the Anti-Christ, False Prophet and their followers. The Marriage of the Lamb in heaven is in anticipation of the impending rule of Christ with the Bride in the kingdom on earth.

(Dan. 12:6-13)

And one said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?" Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished. Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, "My lord, what shall be the end of these things?" And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. "Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand. "And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days. "Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days. "But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days."

Daniel portrays a clear picture. Those who wait until 1335 days says Daniel are blessed (vs. 12). For, there will be the resurrection of all dead saints (both Old Testament and Tribulation saints) after Armageddon, *arising to their inheritance at the end of the days* (Dan. 12:2, 13; Rev. 20:1- 6). This ends what is called the first resurrection of the dead. The first resurrection will very likely conclude with the resurrection of all Old Testament and Tribulation saints within about 30 days [1290-1260] after the visible return of Christ in full display of His glory (Rev. 20: 5, 6; ref: Dan. 12:11-13).

Some schools of thought now believe that it is after this time that the effects of Salvation, with the attendant *Marriage Feast of the Lamb* takes place on the earth at the early stages of Christ's Millennium. Isaiah has this to say, "*And in this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all people a feast of choice pieces, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of well-refined wines on the lees. And He will destroy on this*

mountain the surface of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces; the rebuke of His people he will take away from all the earth; for the LORD has spoken. And it will be said in that day: "Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." (Is. 25:6-9). So then the feast will take place on earth possibly within the 75 [1335-1260 (ref : Dan. 12:12)] days after the Bride (the church) and the Groom (Christ) return to the earth to destroy Satan and his forces or 45 days [1335-1290] after the resurrection of Old Testament and Tribulation saints. The Old Testament and Tribulation saints - all now resurrected (within 30 days earlier on), are invited (or also called) to attend (Rev. 19:7-20:5; ref: Dan. 12:1, 12).

We observe also that it is within this 30 days that the Tribulation Temple will be cleansed of the abomination of desolation (Dan. 12:11). In fact there will be general cleaning after Armageddon (Rev. 19:20, 21). Then our Lord Jesus Christ would officially begin His Millennial Kingdom on earth with His Bride and drink of the fruit of the vine once more with us (Matt. 26:29; Mk. 14:25). And in this case the "blessed invited guests" could be all resurrected Old Testament and Tribulation saints and living millennial saints (Dan. 12:12; Matt. 25:34; Rev. 19:9).

It is important, for me to say that all the above, though, should not bother us as much as the Rapture, the Bema and the Marriage of the Lamb itself. For to me the Church saints must be ready, and should have enough clothes stored for the Wedding Day before the subsequent Feast out of her righteous acts (Rev. 19: 7-9).