

Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible

To read, understand, interpret, and apply God's Word to our various contexts there is a simple process to follow. The problem is that we don't want to take the time to do it.

The big question we must answer is when we read the Bible is how we look for meaning in the text.

1. Is the meaning found in the reader's response—where they create a meaning with which they are comfortable?
2. Is the meaning found in Authorial intent—where we discover the meaning God & the human author intended.

In *Grasping God's Word*, authors and Bible professors, Duvall & Hays, share what they have spent their careers teaching students about how to correctly read the Bible so as to hear the author's intended message, because it is important!

The Interpretative Journey (There are 5 steps on this journey):

1) Grasping the Text in Their Town

- *Read the text carefully and make observations.*
- *Study the historical and literary context.*
- *Synthesize the meaning of the passage for the biblical audience.*

2) Measuring the Width of the River to Cross

- *Account for common differences: culture, language, situation, time, and covenant.*
- *Focus on the unique differences found in a specific text.*
- *If you are studying an Old Testament passage, you must account for the life and work of Jesus Christ.*

3) Crossing the Principaling Bridge (*What is the theological principle in this text?*)

Holding the differences and similarities together, identify a broad theological principle.

A theological principle should...

- *be reflected in the text.*
- *be timeless and not tied to a specific situation.*
- *not be culturally bound.*
- *correspond to the teaching of the rest of Scripture.*
- *be relevant to both the biblical and contemporary audience.*

4) Consult the Biblical Map (*How does our theological principle fit with the rest of the Bible?*)

- *Does this principle correlate with the rest of the Bible?*
- *If in the OT, run your theological principle through the grid of the New Testament.*

5) Grasping the Text in Our Town (*Applying the theological principle to a specific situation.*)

- *How should individual Christians today live out the theological principles?*
- *How should Christians live out these theological principles in community?*
- *There are numerous applicational possibilities, because Christians today find themselves in a variety of situations.*

By embarking on this journey, we commit to the goal of grasping the meaning of text.

We do not create meaning out of a text; rather, we seek to find the meaning that is already there.

Reading and Interpreting Revelation

One of the reasons Revelation is such a strange book for so many of us is that we don't embark on the Interpretive Journey. We don't consider what this meant to the original audience before trying to apply it to interpret it through our own circumstances.

Are we willing to set aside our structures and speculations and allow the text (Bible) to speak for itself? If we already know the answer before we even start reading, we will almost certainly find support for our position. Such "confirmation bias" is to be avoided.

Part of grasping the text in their town, is understanding **the genre of literature** the author has used. The Bible contains at least 8 different literary genres. Revelation combines several.

It is Epistle (Letter): Epistles were written to a particular audience to address a particular issue. The first step to understanding what they mean is to work to hear the message as it would have been heard by the original audience.

It is Prophecy: Four Major Themes in OT Prophecy

1. Rebellion of Man

4. Kingdom Hope

Day of the LORD

2. Grace (Love & Mercy) of God

3. Judgment of God

These trajectories come to fruition through the day of the Lord. The Rebellion of man trends down to the Judgment of God, while the Grace (Love & Mercy) of God ascends to Kingdom Hope.¹

- OT Prophets didn't write in a linear/timeline fashion. They generally write as the Lord communicated the visions/warnings/promises to them. Even when predicting future events, it is very hard to see the time-gaps separating them.
- OT Prophecy is less than 10% predictive and more than 90% prescriptive.
- OT Prophets jump from topic to topic without warning.
- OT Prophets deliver God's warning against idolatry, immorality, injustice, and religious ritualism.
- OT Prophets communicate God's relational invitation to repentance—Return to me!
- Revelation arguably contains more allusions to the OT than any other book in the Bible. Is it any wonder it shares the same message?

Revelation as Apocalypse

¹ Based on the work of Prof. David Needham.

1. The taproot of apocalyptic is the Old Testament **prophetic** literature, especially as it is found in Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, and parts of Isaiah.
2. Apocalyptic literature was born either in **persecution** or in time of great oppression. Therefore, its great concern was no longer with God's activity *within* history. The apocalyptists looked exclusively forward to the time when God would bring a violent, radical end to history, an end that would mean the triumph of right and the final judgment of evil.
3. Unlike most of the prophetic books, apocalypses are **literary** works from the beginning. An apocalypse is a form of **literature**.
4. Most frequently, "the stuff" of apocalyptic is presented in the form of **visions and dreams**, and its language is **cryptic** (having hidden meanings) and symbolic. Most contained literary devices that intended to give the book a sense of antiquity. The most important of these devices was **pseudonymity** . . . using the name of an ancient patriarch etc. as the author to gain authority. These writings were supposedly sealed up long ago for the time of the reader.
5. The images of apocalyptic are often forms of **fantasy**, rather than of reality. By way of contrast, the non-apocalyptic prophets and Jesus also regularly used symbolic language, but most often it involved **real** images...

Salt (Matt. 5:13)	Silly doves (Hosea 7:11)
light (Matt. 5:14-16)	Half baked cakes (Hosea 7:8)
vultures and carcasses (Luke 17:37)	
Seeds, soil, kings, servants, chariots, nature, etc.	

But most of the images of apocalyptic belong to **fantasy**, for example a beast with seven heads and ten horns (Rev. 13:1), a woman clothed with the sun (Rev. 12:1), locusts with scorpion tails and human heads (Rev. 9:10), et al. The **fantasy** may not necessarily appear in the items themselves (we understand beasts, heads, and horns) but in their unearthly **combination**.

6. Because they were literary, most of the apocalypses were very formally stylized... Dividing time and events into neat packages. There was also a great fondness for the symbolic use of **numbers**.

Revelation is Different from Other Apocalyptic Literature in three ways:

- A) Revelation is not pseudonymous, John writes in his own name.
- B) The book is presented as prophecy
- C) It sees God working in history. He is not simply anticipating the end. He knows that it has already begun with the coming of Jesus (the end as already/not yet).

"On the one hand, the book is cast in the apocalyptic mold and has most of the literary characteristics of apocalyptic. It is born in persecution and intends to speak about the end with the triumph of Christ and His church, and it is a carefully constructed piece of literature using cryptic language and rich symbolism of fantasy and numbers.

On the other hand, John clearly intends this apocalypse to be a prophetic word to the church. His book is not sealed up for the future. It was a word from God for their present situation. Speaking God's word to the present usually has as its content either judgment or salvation."

Another important thing to remember is that **Apocalyptic imagery is of several different types:**

- A) **Constant:** some imagery is constant like the donkey and elephant in politics.
- B) **Fluid:** some imagery seems to change from one image to another.
- C) **Specific:** Some of the images clearly refer to specific things.
- D) **General:** Many of the images are probably general with no specific expression.
- E) **DIT:** When John himself interprets his images, we must hold to it firmly.

These principles are taken from Fee & Stuart's [How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth](#).

So what should we look for when we read?

- Read it in one sitting...as a total experience. (Take in the sights, sounds, smells, emotions, movements, perspectives)
- On a second reading, look for major characters. What does the text say about them? How do they fit into the story?
- Look for wholes: see each image/vision as a whole and don't allegorically press all the details. In this matter the visions are like parables. The whole vision is trying to say something. The details are either for a) Dramatic effect (6:12-14); or, b) to add to the picture as a whole so that the reader will not miss the points of reference (9:7-11). So, don't try to deconstruct each symbol...
- Look for the big picture in the book. Don't try to make it too complicated. Major messages include...

Jesus is among (in the midst of) his people

Jesus is Lord not Caesar is Lord, (In the church, In Heaven, and Ultimately on Earth)

The devil is relentless

Hang in there (overcome)

God wins (and in his victory there is hope!)

We are invited to the celebration! Life together on the other side!

Some Bad Substitutes for Application to be avoided (Hendricks, *Living by the Book*)

1. We substitute interpretation for application.
2. We substitute superficial obedience for substantive life-change.
3. We substitute rationalization for repentance.
4. We substitute criticism for circumspection.
5. We focus on our own thoughts rather embracing than God's message

Major Prophetic Themes in the Minor Prophets

1. The Love & Mercy of God (Grace)

- A. Hosea 2:14, 19; 11:1, 8; 14:4-5
- B. (Amos 9:8-9)
- C. Jonah 4:2, 10-11
- D. Micah 6:8 (6:1-5); 7:18-20
- E. Nahum 1:3a, 7
- F. Zephaniah 3:16-19
- G. Zechariah 13:1
- H. Malachi 1:1

2. Rebellion of Man (Sin)

- A. Hosea 2:5; 4:6; 7:13; 11:2-7
- B. Amos 4 “yet you have not returned to Me” (5x)
- C. Obadiah 3
- D. Jonah 1:3
- E. Micah 1:5; 3:1-3, 11; 7:1-6
- F. Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:4
- G. Zephaniah 1:12; 2:1; 3:2
- H. Haggai 2:14
- I. Zechariah 11:4-13
- J. Malachi 1:2; 3:13

3. Coming Judgment of God

- A. Hosea 1:6, 9; 9:17; 13:14
- B. Joel 1-2 locusts; 3:12-15
- C. Amos 1-2 “I will send fire . . .”; 9:1-4
- D. Obadiah 15
- E. Jonah 3:2-4
- F. Micah 1:3-4
- G. Nahum
- H. Habakkuk 1:5ff; 2:16
- I. Zephaniah 1:4-18; 2:2; 3:8
- J. Haggai 1:9-11; 2:22
- K. Zechariah 1:21; 12:2; 14:3
- L. Malachi 3:2; 4:1

Day of the LORD

4. Promised Kingdom Glory

- A. Joel 3:16-20
- B. Amos 9:11-15
- C. Obadiah 19-21
- D. Micah 5:4; 7:14-20
- E. Habakkuk 2:14
- F. Zephaniah 3:9-20
- G. Haggai 2:6-9
- H. Zechariah 2:10-12; 3:10; 6:12-13; 8:8-15; 13:9; 14:8-21
- I. Malachi 3:16-17; 4:2

The Day of The Lord

Here is a brief summary of what the Bible says about the Day of the Lord. (see attached verses)

1. The apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction
2. A day of reckoning
3. A day of darkness and distress
4. The Branch of the Lord will be glorious and beautiful
5. The nations will resort to the root of Jesse
6. The Lord will again recover the second time with His hand the remnant of His people
7. A battle to end all battles
8. Cruel and with fury
9. Will put an end to arrogance of the proud
10. The host of Heaven and the kinds of the Earth will be punished
11. The land of Judah will be a strong city
12. The Lord will begin his threshing - starting at Euphrates and to Egypt
13. A trumpet will be blown and those who would have perished will come to worship the Lord
14. There is none like it
15. Jacob will be freed
16. A day of vengeance, a slaughter
17. A day of clouds, a time of doom
18. A day when armies will amass against Israel
19. Those found written on the book will be rescued
20. The dead will rise
21. A fire consumes before them and behind them a flame burns The land is like the garden of Eden before them But a desolate wilderness behind them, and nothing at all escapes them. Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; And like war horses, so they run.
22. The Lord will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, Blood, fire and columns of smoke
23. Judgment in the valley of decision
24. No one can escape it
25. The City of David will be rebuilt
26. He will gather the lame and the outcasts, and the remnant of Jacob
27. The warrior will cry out bitterly
28. And all the earth will be devoured In the fire of His jealousy, for He will make a complete end, indeed a terrifying one, of all the inhabitants of the earth.
29. Nations will be gathered, kingdoms will be assembled, to pour out on them His indignation, all His burning anger; for all the earth will be devoured by the fire of His zeal.
30. A humble and lowly people will take refuge in the Lord
31. The enemies of God will be cleared away
32. The chosen will be made a signet ring
33. The crucified Christ will be universally acknowledged
34. Everyone and everything will be holy unto the Lord
35. Elijah will be sent prior to the day
36. The sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory. "And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER his elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other
37. There will be prior signs...
38. You will not know when the day is coming, so be ready
39. everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.
40. Amen

Isaiah 2:12 For **the LORD of hosts will have a day of reckoning** against everyone who is proud and lofty And against everyone who is lifted up, That he may be abased.

Isaiah 4:2-6 In that day the Branch of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth will be the pride and the adornment of the survivors of Israel. It will come about that he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy--everyone who is recorded for life in Jerusalem. When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and purged the bloodshed of Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning, **then the LORD** will create over the whole area of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, even smoke, and the brightness of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory will be a canopy. There will be a shelter to give shade from the heat by day, and refuge and protection from the storm and the rain.

Isaiah 5:29-30 Its roaring is like a lioness, and it roars like young lions; It growls as it seizes the prey and carries it off with no one to deliver it. And it will growl over it **in that day** like the roaring of the sea If one looks to the land, behold, there is darkness and distress; Even the light is darkened by its clouds.

Isaiah 11:10 Then **in that day** the nations will resort to the root of Jesse, Who will stand as a signal for the peoples; And His resting place will be glorious.

Isaiah 11:11 Then it will happen **on that day** that the Lord will again recover the second time with His hand the remnant of His people, who will remain, From Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.

Isaiah 13:4-6 A sound of tumult on the mountains, Like that of many people! A sound of the uproar of kingdoms, of nations gathered together! The LORD of hosts is mustering the army for battle. They are coming from a far country, From the farthest horizons, The LORD and His instruments of indignation, to destroy the whole land. Wail, for **the day of the LORD** is near! It will come as destruction from the Almighty.

Isaiah 13:9-11 Behold, **the day of the LORD** is coming, cruel, with fury and burning anger, to make the land a desolation; and He will exterminate its sinners from it. For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not flash forth their light; the sun will be dark when it rises and the moon will not shed its light. Thus I will punish the world for its evil and the wicked for their iniquity; I will also put an end to the arrogance of the proud And abase the haughtiness of the ruthless.

Isaiah 19:16-17 In that day the Egyptians will become like women, and they will tremble and be in dread because of the waving of the hand of the LORD of hosts, which He is going to wave over them. The land of Judah will become a terror to Egypt; everyone to whom it is mentioned will be in dread of it, because of the purpose of the LORD of hosts which He is purposing against them.

Isaiah 24:21-22 So it will happen **in that day**, That the LORD will punish the host of heaven on high, and the kings of the earth on earth. They will be gathered together Like prisoners in the dungeon, and will be confined in prison; and after many days they will be punished.

Isaiah 26:1 In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: "We have a strong city; He sets up walls and ramparts for security.

Isaiah 27:1 In that day the LORD will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, With His fierce and great and mighty sword, Even Leviathan the twisted serpent; And He will kill the dragon who lives in the sea.

Isaiah 27:12-13 In that day the LORD will start His threshing from the flowing stream of the Euphrates to the brook of Egypt, and you will be gathered up one by one, O sons of Israel. It will come about also in that day that a great trumpet will be blown, and those who were perishing in the land of Assyria and who were scattered in the land of Egypt will come and worship the LORD in the holy mountain at Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 30:7-8 'Alas! for **that day is great**, there is none like it; and it is the time of Jacob's distress, but he will be saved from it. 'It shall come about **on that day**,' declares the LORD of hosts, 'that I will break his yoke from off their neck and will tear off their bonds; and strangers will no longer make them their slaves.'

Jeremiah 46:10 For **that day belongs to the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance**, so as to avenge Himself on His foes; And the sword will devour and be satiated and drink its fill of their blood; For there will be a slaughter for the Lord GOD of hosts, In the land of the north by the river Euphrates.

Ezekiel 13:5 You have not gone up into the breaches, nor did you build the wall around the house of Israel to stand in the battle on **the day of the LORD**.

Ezekiel 30:3-4 "For the day is near, Even **the day of the LORD** is near; at will be a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations. "A sword will come upon Egypt, and anguish will be in Ethiopia; When the slain fall in Egypt, they take away her wealth, and her foundations are torn down.

Ezekiel 38:14-16 "Therefore prophesy, son of man, and say to Gog, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "**On that day** when My people Israel are living securely, will you not know it? "You will come from your place out of the remote parts of the north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great assembly and a mighty army; and you will come up against My people Israel like a cloud to cover the land. It shall come about **in the last days** that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me when I am sanctified through you before their eyes, O Gog."

Daniel 12:1-2 "Now **at that time** Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise and there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.

Hosea 3:5 Afterward the sons of Israel will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king; and they will come trembling to the LORD and to His goodness **in the last days**.

Joel 1:15 Alas for the day! For **the day of the LORD** is near, and it will come as destruction from the Almighty.

Joel 2:1-2 Blow a trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for **the day of the LORD** is coming; Surely it is near, A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness As the dawn is spread over the mountains, So there is a great and mighty people; There has never been anything like it, Nor will there be again after it To the years of many generations.

Joel 2:10 Before them the earth quakes, the heavens tremble, The sun and the moon grow dark And the stars lose their brightness.

Joel 2:23-28 So rejoice, O sons of Zion, And be glad in the LORD your God; For He has given you the early rain for your vindication And He has poured down for you the rain, The early and latter rain as before. The threshing floors will be full of grain, And the vats will overflow with the new wine and oil. "Then I will make up to you for the years That the swarming locust has eaten, the creeping locust, the stripping locust and the gnawing locust, My great army which I sent among you. "You will have plenty to eat and be satisfied and praise the name of the LORD your God, Who has dealt wondrously with you; Then My people will never be put to shame. "Thus you will know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God, and there is no other; and My people will never be put to shame. "It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions.

Joel 2:30-31 I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, Blood, fire and columns of smoke. "The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood Before **the great and awesome day of the LORD** comes.

Joel 2:32 "And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the LORD Will be delivered; For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem here will be those who escape, s the LORD has said, even among the survivors whom the LORD calls.

Joel 3:12-14 Let the nations be aroused and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge All the surrounding nations. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe Come, tread, for the wine press is full; The vats overflow, for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For **the day of the LORD** is near in the valley of decision.

Joel 3:16-18 **The LORD roars from Zion** and utters His voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth tremble, but the LORD is a refuge for His people And a stronghold to the sons of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, dwelling in Zion, My holy mountain so Jerusalem will be holy, and strangers will pass through it no more. And **in that day** the mountains will drip with sweet wine, And the hills will flow with milk, And all the brooks of Judah will flow with water; And a spring will go out from the house of the LORD To water the valley of Shittim.

Amos 5:18-20 Alas, you who are longing for **the day of the LORD**, for what purpose will the day of the LORD be to you? It will be darkness and not light; as when a man flees from a lion and a bear meets him, or goes home, leans his hand against the wall and a snake bites him. Will not **the day of the LORD** be darkness instead of light, even gloom with no brightness in it?

Amos 9:11 "In that day I will raise up the fallen booth of David, and wall up its breaches; I will also raise up its ruins And rebuild it as in the days of old;

Micah 4:6-8 "In that day," declares the LORD, "I will assemble the lame and gather the outcasts, even those whom I have afflicted. "I will make the lame a remnant and the outcasts a strong nation, and the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion from now on and forever." As for you, tower of the flock, Hill of the daughter of Zion, to you it will come-- Even the former dominion will come, The kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem.

Micah 5:8-9 The remnant of Jacob Will be among the nations, among many peoples like a lion among the beasts of the forest, like a young lion among flocks of sheep, which, if he passes through, tramples down and tears, and there is none to rescue. Your hand will be lifted up against your adversaries, and all your enemies will be cut off.

Zephaniah 1:14-18 Near is **the great day of the LORD**, near and coming very quickly; Listen, **the day of the LORD!** In it the warrior cries out bitterly. A day of wrath is that day, a day of trouble and distress, a day of destruction and desolation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet and battle cry against the fortified cities and the high corner towers. I will bring distress on men so that they will walk like the blind, because they have sinned against the LORD; and their blood will be poured out like dust and their flesh like dung. Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to deliver them on **the day of the LORD'S wrath**; And all the earth will be devoured In the fire of His jealousy, for He will make a complete end, indeed a terrifying one, of all the inhabitants of the earth.

Zephaniah 2:1-3 Gather yourselves together, yes, gather, O nation without shame, before the decree takes effect-- **the day** passes like the chaff-- before the burning anger of the LORD comes upon you, before the **day of the LORD'S anger** comes upon you. Seek the LORD, all you humble of the earth, who have carried out His ordinances; seek righteousness, seek humility. Perhaps you will be hidden In **the day of the LORD'S anger**.

Zephaniah 3:8 "Therefore, wait for Me," declares the LORD, "For **the day when I rise up** as a witness indeed, My decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, To pour out on them My indignation, All My burning anger; For all the earth will be devoured By the fire of My zeal.

Zephaniah 3:11-13 "In that day you will feel no shame because of all your deeds by which you have rebelled against Me; for then I will remove from your midst your proud, exulting ones, and you will never again be haughty on My holy mountain. "But I will leave among you a humble and lowly people, and they will take refuge in the name of the LORD. "The remnant of Israel will do no wrong and tell no lies, nor will a deceitful tongue Be found in their mouths; For they will feed and lie down with no one to make them tremble."

Zephaniah 3:14-20 Shout for joy, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! The LORD has taken away His judgments against you, He has cleared away your enemies The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; You will fear disaster no more. **In that day** it will be said to Jerusalem: "Do not be afraid, O Zion; Do not let your hands fall limp. "The LORD your God is in your midst, a victorious warrior He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy. "I will gather those who grieve about the appointed feasts-- They came from you, O Zion; The reproach of exile is a burden on them. "Behold, I am going to deal at that time with all your oppressors, I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will turn their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. **"At that time,** I will bring you in, even at the time when I gather you together; Indeed, I will give you renown and praise among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes," Says the LORD.

Haggai 2:23 **'On that day,'** declares the LORD of hosts, 'I will take you, Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, My servant,' declares the LORD, 'and I will make you like a signet ring, for I have chosen you,'" declares the LORD of hosts.

Zechariah 9:16-17 (perhaps about the triumphal entry/cross/resurrection)

And the LORD their God will save them **in that day** as the flock of His people; For they are as the stones of a crown, sparkling in His land. For what comeliness and beauty will be theirs! Grain will make the young men flourish, and new wine the virgins.

Zechariah 12:10 "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.

Zechariah 14:2 For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city.

Zechariah 14:20-21 **In that day** there will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, "HOLY TO THE LORD " And the cooking pots in the LORD'S house will be like the bowls before the altar. Every cooking pot in Jerusalem and in Judah will be holy to the LORD of hosts; and all who sacrifice will come and take of them and boil in them and there will no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts in that day.

Malachi 4:1-2 "For behold, **the day is coming,** burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze," says the LORD of hosts, "so that it will leave them neither root nor branch." "But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall.

Malachi 4:5 "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of **the great and terrible day of the LORD.**

Matthew 7:22-23 "Many will say to Me **on that day,** 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'

Matthew 24:21 "For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.

Matthew 24:30-31 "And **then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky,** and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory. "And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

Matthew 24:33 so, you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door.

Matthew 24:43-44 "But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. "For this reason you also must be ready; **for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will.**

Mark 13:19 "For **those days** will be a time of tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never will.

Mark 13:26-27 "Then they will see **THE SON OF MAN COMING IN CLOUDS** with great power and glory. "And then He will send forth the angels, and will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest end of the earth to the farthest end of heaven.

Mark 13:29 "Even so, you too, when you see these things happening, recognize that He is near, right at the door.

Mark 13:32 "But of **that day** or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

Luke 12:39-40 "But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into. "You too, be ready; **for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect.**"

Luke 21:11 and there will be great earthquakes, and in various places plagues and famines; and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.

Luke 21:31 "So you also, when you see these things happening, recognize that the kingdom of God is near.

John 6:40 "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on **the last day.**"

John 11:24 Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on **the last day.**"

John 12:48 "He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him **at the last day.**

Acts 2:19-20 'AND I WILL GRANT WONDERS IN THE SKY ABOVE AND SIGNS ON THE EARTH BELOW, BLOOD, AND FIRE, AND VAPOR OF SMOKE. 'THE SUN WILL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD, BEFORE **THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS DAY OF THE LORD SHALL COME.**

Romans 2:5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in **the day of wrath** and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,

Romans 2:16 on **the day** when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.

1 Corinthians 1:8 who will also confirm you to the end, blameless in **the day of our Lord** Jesus Christ.

Philippians 1:6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until **the day of Christ Jesus.**

1 Thessalonians 5:2-3 For you yourselves know full well that **the day of the Lord** will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape.

1 Thessalonians 5:4-8 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that **the day** would overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day We are not of night nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert

and sober. For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.

2 Thessalonians 2:3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for **it will not come** unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,

2 Timothy 1:12 For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until **that day**.

2 Timothy 4:8 in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on **that day**; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

2 Peter 3:10 But **the day of the Lord** will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

2 Peter 3:11-12 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of **the day of God**, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!

Revelation 6:15-17 Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for **the great day of their wrath** has come, and who is able to stand?"

Revelation 20:8-9 and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them.

Revelation 22:5 And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.

[List compiled by Pastor Mark Nicklas.]

Isaiah Studies

The Day of the Lord

(The Crossroad of History)

A "Day" of double significance when God will be what He is to a world that has rejected His Grace. Isaiah 34. Yet this day (a very brief time) will also be the doorway into His promised kingdom for those who respond to His grace.

Isaiah 26:20-21; cp. 35

Notes:

- Four Great Themes Appear to be dominant in Isaiah:

- God's Grace (Love & Mercy)
- Man's Rebellion
- God's Judgment
- Kingdom Glory

It is hoped that this diagram will allow you to trace through Isaiah two of these themes to their ultimate climax. Though a separate diagram would be needed to follow the progression of the other two themes, it is significant to notice that all four themes are closely intertwined. One would not need to read very far from these references to discover both man's rebellion and God's grace. (Space will not allow inclusion of every reference)

- Since the book of Isaiah is the focus of this diagram, certain other prophetic issues are not noted. It should be remembered though, that God in His grace has extended the time between the coming of the Spirit and the Day of the Lord to allow for the last 2000 years of "wild olive branch" grace largely to the non-Jewish world. (Romans 11:17-25)
- Some of the passages listed appear to have had some partial fulfillment in Old Testament times.

Kingdom Glory in View of God's Grace

1:26; 2:1-5
4:2-6
9:2-3, 6-7, 12:1-6
24:14-15, 23
25:1-4, 26:1-4, 27:2-6
28:16-17
30:19-26, 29
32:15, 15-18
33:17-24
CP. 35

God's Judgment in View of Man's Rebellion

9:4-5; 10:16-19
5:24-30
2:19-27
1:24, 31
13:3-13
Much of cps 14
24:1-3, 17-22
29:5-8
26:20-21, 30-33
30:27-28, 30-33
CP. 34
42:14-15
47:1-15
49:24-26
59:15-18
63:1-6
65:6-7
66:15-16
66:7-14, 19-23
65:8-25
61:4-62:12
59:21-60:12
53:12-56:8
52:7-10
51:3-8, 11, 22
49:9-23 (cf. 44:23)
43:5-9, 45:22-25
40:9-11, 42:1-4
CP. 35

7:14
9:6-7
53:1-12
32:15
44:3-5
(cf. Joel 2:28-32)



Holy Spirit



Ultimate Kingdom (Isaiah 66:22)
Ultimate Judgment (Isaiah 66:24)

A Sampling of New Testament References:

Ultimate Judgment

- Acts 17:30
- 2 Thessalonians 1:4-9
- 2 Peter 3:10, 12
- Revelation 16:15-20; 19:11-21

Ultimate Kingdom Glory

- 2 Thessalonians 1:10
- Titus 2:13
- 2 Peter 3:13
- Revelation 19:5-8; cps 21-22

Did John Darby invent the idea of the Rapture in 1830?

Jewish Biblical prophets such as Isaiah (Isaiah 26: 19-21), described the tribulation, resurrection of the saints and hiding of believers during a period of wrath, writing in the 8th century BC. The catching away of the church just prior to the tribulation as a thief in the night can be found all through the old Testament and New Testament. The notion of the rapture as separate from the second coming has a long pedigree. It did not suddenly appear with John Darby in the 19th century.

1AD to 100 AD. The Harpazo of the church was explicitly taught by Paul, John and the gospels.

100-400 ad. The rapture was taught in some form by church Fathers Irenaeus, Cyprian, Ephrem of Nisibis, Tertullian and others. Irenaeus wrote in Against Heresies, “Therefore, when in the end the Church shall be suddenly caught up from this, it is said, ‘There shall be tribulation such as has not been since the beginning, neither shall be.’”

250 AD. Cyprian (200 AD – 258 AD) – Cyprian was Bishop of the church in Carthage. During his short stint as leader of that church, he guided the flock through intense persecution at the hands of the Roman Empire. In 258 AD after spending seven months of confinement to his home by order of Roman authorities, he was beheaded for his faith. Several of his works exist today.

In Treatises of Cyprian he wrote on the subject of the Great Tribulation in which he believed more terrible things were yet still imminent: “We who see that terrible things have begun, and know that still more terrible things are imminent, may regard it as the greatest advantage to depart from it as quickly as possible. Do you not give God thanks, do you not congratulate yourself, that by an early departure you are taken away, and delivered from the shipwrecks and disasters that are imminent? Let us greet the day which assigns each of us to his own home, which snatches us hence, and sets us free from the snares of the world and restores us to paradise and the kingdom.”

373 AD. Bishop Efreem “Because all saints and the Elect of the Lord are gathered together before the tribulation which is to about to come and are taken to the Lord, in order that they may not see at any time the confusion which overwhelms the world because of our sins.” This was prior to the second coming.

426 AD. Augustine in his book The City of God squelched all talk of the rapture or tribulation for the Catholic church. He taught that the millennium was metaphorical, a long period of time that began with Pentecost and would end with his second coming. Christ was reigning in the hearts of believers who make up the church, His spiritual kingdom. His ideas were later twisted to support the Pope’s rule. All talk of the rapture, the antichrist, the tribulation, the restored nation of Israel was only allegorical. This interpretation was in force for the next 1000 years.

1300 AD. Brother Dolcino believed and preached that the antichrist was coming. As leader of the Apostolic Brethren in northern Italy, Brother Dolcino led his people through times of tremendous papal persecution. At the antichrist’s revealing, the followers of Christ would be raptured into Paradise, in which are Enoch and Elijah. And in this way they will be preserved unharmed from the persecution of Antichrist. Then Enoch and Elijah themselves would descend on the earth for the purpose of preaching against Antichrist. They held to the idea that believers would be caught up in the air, followed by judgments on earth, and Crist would come physically and the Millennium would be birthed.

1585 AD. Francisco Ribera, was a counter-reformationist who tried to shift reformation accusations against the pope to a far future antichrist. He published a 500 page futurist commentary on the book of Revelation detailing the future events such as the rise of the antichrist and the following 7 year tribulation.

He challenged Augustine's dominant allegorical or idealist interpretation and defended against the reformation historicist identification of the current Pope as the antichrist.

1639 AD. The first president of Harvard, Increase Mather, and brother Cotton Mather taught explicitly on the rapture. Puritan leader, Increase Mather, argued "that the saints would be caught up into the air" and thus "escape the world's final conflagration." That conflagration would be ended by the second coming.

AD. 1672. Joseph Mede, (1586-1683) called the "Father of modern interpretation" wrote in 1672, "I will add this more, namely, what may be conceived to be the cause of this RAPTURE of the saints on high to meet the Lord in the clouds, rather than to wait His coming to earth....What if it be, that they may be PRESERVED during the Conflagration of the earth and the works thereof, 2 Pet.3:10."

1687 AD. "Peter Jurieu in his book, Approaching Deliverance of the Church (1687) taught that "Christ would come in the air to rapture the saints and return to heaven before the battle of Armageddon. He spoke of a secret rapture prior to His coming in glory and judgement at Armageddon."

1745 AD. Philip Doddridge's commentary on the New Testament (**1738**) and John Gill's commentary on the New Testament (**1748**) both use the term rapture and speak of it as imminent. It is clear these men believed that this coming would precede Christ's descent to the earth and the time of judgment. The purpose was to preserve believers from the time of judgment.

Protestant scholars James Macknight (**1763**) and Thomas Scott (**1792**) taught that the righteous will be carried to heaven, where they will be secure until the time of judgment is over."

Other 17th-century expressions of the Rapture are found in the works of: Protestant Bible scholars Robert Maton, Nathaniel Homes, John Browne, Thomas Vincent, Henry Danvers, and William Sherwin.

The term Rapture was used by Philip Doddridge and John Gill in their New Testament commentaries, with the idea that believers would be caught up prior to judgment and prior to Jesus' second coming.

Welsh Baptist scholar Morgan Edwards (**1722–95**) taught "Another event previous to the Millennium will be the appearing of the Son Of Man in the clouds, coming to raise the dead saints and change the living, and to catch them up to himself, and then withdraw with them, as observed before. This event will come to pass when Antichrist be arrived at Jerusalem in his conquest of the world; and about three years and a half before his killing the witnesses and assumption of godhead."

The great evangelical scholar and commentator Matthew Henry, born in **1662**, defended the Rapture in his commentary on 1 Thessalonians 4:17, "At or immediately before, this Rapture into the clouds, those who are alive will undergo a mighty change." All this before we ever get to John Darby in 1840!

The rapture was taught and preached by early evangelicals like DL Moody, Dr. Ironsides, G Cambell Morgan, Hudson Taylor, William Seymour (the father of the Azusa street revival), Amy Semple McPherson, founder of Foursquare, the Assembly of God church, Billy Graham and scores of others.

The idea that the concept of the rapture sprang from JN Darby's imagination is clearly a fiction.

The rise in belief in the pre-tribulation rapture is sometimes wrongly attributed to a 15-year-old Scottish-Irish girl named Margaret McDonald who was one of the first to receive a spiritual baptism under a Pentecostal awakening in Scotland in Edward Irving's Pentecostal church. In 1830, she supposedly had a vision of the end times which describes a post-tribulation view of the rapture that was first published in 1840. However, Darby had already written out his pretribulation rapture views in January 1827, three years prior to her 1830 vision and prophecy. Therefore, she could not be the source of Darby's doctrine.

Core Scriptures Describing the Rapture.

1 Thessalonians 4:15 “This we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.”

Jesus does not set foot on the earth during the rapture. He remains up in the stratosphere, in the clouds. Instead we gather, saints are resurrected and we all go up to meet him and continue up into heaven.

1 Thessalonians 5:2 “you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like **a thief in the night**. While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape.”

Usually connected with the Daniel 9:27 prophecy. “And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week (peace treaty between Israel and neighbors), but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction.

1 Thessalonians 5:4 “But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him.”

There is sleeping as in dead. And then there is sleeping as in ignoring the end times rapture signs.

2 Thessalonians 2:2 “Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that **the day of the Lord has come.....**”

The day of the Lord is the Great Tribulation, or the “time of Jacob’s trouble.” He is assuring them they did not miss the rapture, as bad as it is, they’re not in the Great Tribulation.

2 Thessalonians 2:3 “...Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy (*the departure*) comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God (*From Daniel 9:27*). Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? And you know what restrains him now (*the Holy Spirit present in the church*), so that in his time he will be revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming (*Second coming*); that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.”

1 Corinthians 15:51 “Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be

raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.”

Matthew 24:32:44 “Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves (*nation of Israel*), you know that summer is near; so, you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door. Truly I say to you, this generation (*70-80 years according to Psalms 90*) will not pass away until all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away. But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. As were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Two will be in the field; one will be taken, and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord will come. But know this, that if the owner of the house had known what hour **the thief** would come, he would have watched and not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for in an hour when you least expect, the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will”

Note that Noah and his family were caught up above the flood and the door shut behind them as the inhabitants of the world were left behind to their doom. Similarly, Lot and his family was caught up into the mountains while the sodomites were left behind to destruction.

Luke 17:34 “That night two people will be asleep in one bed; one will be taken, the other left. Two women will be grinding flour together at the mill; one will be taken, the other left”

The thief in the night is what we would call a cat burglar, a silent thief under the cover of darkness that comes while people are sleeping and steals the jewels quietly. Like “to Catch a Thief” or the “Pink Panther”

Matthew 25:1-13. “Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps. Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the prudent, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the prudent answered, ‘No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.’ And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. Later the other virgins also came, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open up for us.’ But he answered, ‘Truly I say to you, I do not know you.’ Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.”

Comment: I believe this is talking about the church waiting for the bridegroom to return for the last 2000 years. Half the church has fallen asleep and does not even have the Holy Spirit. No oil.

Revelation 4:1 “After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like *the sound* of a trumpet speaking with me said, “Come up here”

Isaiah 26:11 “Your dead will live; Their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, for your dew is as the dew of the dawn, and the earth will give birth to the departed spirits. Come, my people (*the living*), enter into your rooms and close your doors behind you (*5 wise virgins go in and shut the door*); hide for a little while until indignation runs its course. For behold, the Lord is about to come out from His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; and the earth will reveal her bloodshed and will no longer cover her slain.”