



“Jesus’ Gospel message of the Kingdom of Heaven at hand, is expanded and extended to everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord through His death and resurrection. This is not a new idea. The prophet Joel referenced a day when God’s dwelling would be within His people and He would transform this world as we know it. This week we will be looking at Peter’s handling of the words of Joel and how these words had importance in Joel’s day, in Peter’s day and in our day today.”

Prophecy, The Prophets and the Central Themes

The Bible Project has a some great resources to dig more into prophecy and the prophets.

The following link is to a podcast episode they have for How to Read the Bible. The first part of the podcast discusses a few reason why reading the prophets are so challenging. It addresses how they have an odd way of talking and the arrangement is hard for us to follow. The second part of the episode addresses our modern day definition of prophets and prophecy and how it influences how we read it in the Bible. They explain what prophecy is and what it is not. In the third part they discuss Moses as a prophet. Lastly, they discuss the role of the covenant in prophecy and how the prophets were “covenant watchdogs.”



This link is to the Bible project video titled “The Prophets.” In it you can learn more about the prophets themselves and how to read them in the Bible. In it they go more in-depth on the role of biblical prophets, The Day of the Lord, and the story of hope and restoration.

Unifying Themes in the Prophetic Books of the Old Testament by Justin Taylor from Paul

Houses’s essay in the ESV Study Bible

The Prophetic Books include most of the OT’s greatest themes, preserving in written form for future generations the reasons Israel’s history happened as it did. Though the authors wrote in different times and under different circumstances, their messages are in theological harmony with one another and with other types of biblical books. Several interrelated ideas unify the prophetic message, making it possible for readers to find their bearings in some difficult literature. It is often helpful to decide which of the following themes the biblical author is stressing when one becomes puzzled by the content of the books.

First, the prophets assert that God has spoken through them.

They clearly considered themselves God’s messengers and heralds, for they repeatedly preface their messages with the phrase, “Thus says Yahweh.” In this way the prophets are claiming that their books are the written word of God. Peter explains that the prophets “were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet. 1:21). Just as God used Moses to write and preach so that Israel could know God’s will in his era, so God used the prophets in their generations.

The prophets declared God's instructions in two basic ways: word and symbol. Usually the prophets presented God's word orally (e.g., [Jer. 7:1-8:3](#)) or in written form (e.g., [Jer. 36:1-32](#)) to varying types and sizes of audiences. Occasionally they performed symbolic acts that demonstrated God's purposes. For example, Isaiah went naked and barefoot for three years to teach God's people their future if they continued to seek help from other nations rather than from God ([Isa. 20:1-6](#)). Perhaps the saddest case of symbolic prophecy was Hosea's marriage to unfaithful Gomer, which portrayed God's relationship with unfaithful Israel ([Hosea 1-3](#)).

Second, the prophets affirm that God chose Israel for covenant relationship.

The Pentateuch (the first five books of the OT) teaches that God chose Abraham and his family to bless all nations ([Gen. 12:1-9](#)), that he revealed salvation by grace to Abraham ([Gen. 15:6](#)), and that he assigned Moses to write a record of this revelation ([Ex. 24:4](#)). Furthermore, through Moses in Exodus-Deuteronomy he revealed the lifestyle that reflects that relationship.

With these truths in mind, the prophets addressed Israel as a people with special responsibilities based on this special relationship ([Jeremiah 2-6](#); [Hosea 1-3](#); [Amos 2:6-3:8](#); etc.). Through the prophets God revealed the success and failure of Israel's attempts or lack of attempts to fulfill their confession of faith in God and their God-given role as a kingdom of priests charged with serving the nations (see [Ex. 19:5-6](#)).

Third, sadly, the prophets most often report that the majority of Israel has sinned against their God and his standards for their relationship.

They have failed to trust God ([Isa. 7:1-14](#)). Thus, they have broken the Ten Commandments (cf. [Ex. 20:1-17](#) and [Jer. 7:1-15](#); [Hos. 4:2](#)). They have worshiped other gods ([Ezek. 8:1-18](#)). They have mistreated one another and failed to preserve justice among God's people ([Isa. 1:21-31](#)). They have refused to repent ([Amos 4:6-11](#)).

Of course, in these times there was always a faithful minority, called the "remnant" (see [Isa. 4:3](#); [10:20-22](#); etc.), as the prophets' ministries themselves demonstrate (see [Hebrews 11](#)).

Fourth, the prophets warn that judgment will eradicate sin.

This judgment is often called the "day of the Lord" ([Isa. 2:12-22](#); [Joel 2:1-11](#); [Zeph. 1:7-18](#); etc.; see note on [Amos 5:18-20](#)). This is a day in history, as when Jerusalem was destroyed by Babylon ([Jer. 42:18](#)), but it is also a day to come, when God will judge all the world's inhabitants ([Isa. 24:1-23](#)). The prophets recorded these warnings in writing so readers can do what the prophets' original audience usually failed to do—turn from sin to God.

Fifth, the prophets promise that renewal lies beyond the day of punishment that has occurred already in history and beyond the coming day that will bring history as we know it to a close.

The coming of the Savior lies beyond the destruction of Israel and other such events. He will rule Israel and the nations, and he will bring peace and righteousness to the world ([Isa. 9:2-7](#); [11:1-16](#)). This Savior must suffer, die, and rise from the dead ([Isa. 52:13-53:12](#)). He will be "like a son of man," and "the Ancient of Days" (God himself) will give him all the kingdoms of the world ([Dan. 7:9-14](#)). He will be the catalyst for a new covenant with Israel that will include all those, Jew or Gentile, whom God's Spirit fills and changes ([Jer. 31:31-40](#); [32:14-26](#); [Ezek. 34:25-31](#); [36:22-32](#)). This new people will serve him faithfully. Eventually he will cleanse the world of sin and recreate the earth ([Isa. 65:17-25](#); [66:18-24](#); [Zeph. 3:8-20](#)). The creation now spoiled by sin will be whole again.

The Day of the Lord

The Bible Project has the following resources on the Day of the Lord.

“The Day of the Lord is a phrase used in the Bible to describe how God is at work in history to confront collective human evil, liberate his people from oppression, and assert his rule over all creation.”

“The history of the term Day of the Lord spans from Genesis to Revelation. It is a phrase used in the Bible to describe how God is at work in history to confront collective human evil, liberate his people from oppression, and assert his rule over all creation.”

-From the Study Notes of Day of the Lord from the Bible Project.



The following link is for the Bible Project video titled Day of the Lord. In it they discuss rebellion in the Garden to Babylon, how God's people become like Babylon and how they experience being conquered and taken into exile. It later goes over The Day of the Lord in Hebrew Poetry. It explains the wartime and battlefield imagery that we read in the passage of Joel this Sunday. Lastly, it discusses Jesus' conquering of the real enemy sin.

Since the Day of the Lord often brings about thoughts of the end times, tribulation and judgment, the Bible Project did a whole podcast series on it that is seven episodes long. It talks about Babylon, Jesus and Revelations. They do a great job breaking down and explaining this confusing topic. Scan the QR to go to the link for the podcast episodes.



The Day of the Lord *from the Filament Bible App*

The expression day of the Lord refers to a time of retribution when God judges his enemies in wrath and fury. The ungodly receive the punishment they deserve, while the righteous enter their full salvation (see Isa 3:16-4:6). On the day of the Lord, God manifests his awe-inspiring lordship over creation. When God comes in glory, humans experience terror (Joel 2:10, 19,21) because all human support structures (religious, economic, military, social) come under his scrutiny.

This expression first appeared in the prophecy of Amos (Amos 5:18), but evidently it did not originate with him. Amos was correcting a popular misunderstanding that the Israelites already held. They believed the day of the Lord would be a joyous day of salvation when God would intervene in the world to judge Israel's enemies and reestablish Israelite rule over all of greater Canaan. But Amos warned the Israelites that the day of the Lord would not be light for them, but darkness, for they were in rebellion against him (see Amos 5:10-12, 21-27). Self-confident Israelites assumed that God was always on their side, but their sins had, in fact, made them God's enemies, and they deserved his full punishment.

The expression became part of the standard vocabulary of the prophets, often being referred to simply as "that day" (e.g., Isa 2:11;27:1; Zeph 1:8). In light of God's warnings and the people's sinfulness, the prophets envisioned that day as imminent (see, e.g., Joel 1:15; 2:1). As such, they hoped that their warnings would spur repentance among God's people (see Zeph 2:1-3). Unfortunately, their warnings largely fell on deaf ears. The day of the Lord came for the northern kingdom when Assyria destroyed Samaria; it came for the southern kingdom when Babylon invaded in 605-586 BC and destroyed Jerusalem.

While the day of the Lord is catastrophic for the ungodly-Joel compares its devastation to that of a locust plague (Joel 1:1-2:11)- it provides assurance to God's people that God is sovereign and just, and it serves as a day of salvation for those who have listened to the prophets and turned to the Lord (see Joel 2:31-32). The same God who would bring devastation upon his enemies would be a refuge and a fortress to his people (Joel 3:11). And the nations that were used by God to bring his judgement upon Israel and Judah would later face their own day of the Lord (see, e.g., Isa 13:4-22; Ezek 30:1-5); Obad 1:15-16)

While the judgement referred to by the Old Testament prophets was largely realized in the Exile, New Testament writers picked up the expression day of the Lord to speak of the return of Christ as judge of all the earth. The day will come "as unexpectedly as a thief." (2 Pet 3:10; also see 1 Thes 5:2-4), so God's people must be prepared-or else face a similar fate to those who failed to heed the warnings of the prophets.