

## THE DAY OF THE LORD

(Danny Hays)

The prophets use the phrase “the day of the LORD” to refer to the time when God will intervene into human history in a dramatic and decisive way to bring about the fulfillment of his plan. In addition to the phrase “the day of the LORD,” the prophets will also use similar terms such as “that day” and “the day” to convey the same concept. On the one hand, “the day of the LORD” is a time of judgment on God’s enemies—those who oppose him, oppress his people, or rebel against him. It is also a time of judgment on Israel and Judah for their rejection of God and their terrible sins against the covenant (Isa. 3:18–4:1; Amos 5:18–20). On the other hand, for the true people of God who trust in him, “the day of the LORD” is a time of wonderful blessing and restoration. This applies both to restored Israel/Judah and to the nations. “The day of the LORD” is a major theme throughout the prophetic books. Among the Major Prophets, Isaiah employs this phrase the most frequently. It is also a central unifying theme in the Book of the Twelve (the Minor Prophets), playing a central role especially in Joel and here in Zephaniah.

The New Testament, closely linked to the Old Testament prophets, uses this term as well, likewise frequently employing close synonyms such as “those days,” “that day,” or “the great day.” The New Testament writers will use the term to refer to that time in the future when God will dramatically enter into human history to bring about the fulfillment of his plan. In the New Testament, this usually refers to the second coming of Christ, a time of deliverance for his people but a time of judgment on the unbelievers (Mark 13:24; 1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Thess. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:10, 12).

