

Definition of Terms

Related Terms

Terms related to Rapture, Resurrection, and the Second Coming that must also be addressed include: Day of the Lord, wrath of God, and the Tribulation. The Day of the Lord is an Old Testament term, which becomes contextualized by the eschatological writings in the New Testament. It is mentioned by the Prophets: Obadiah (Obad 15); Joel (Joel 1:15; 2:1-2, 10-11, 30-31; 3:14-16); Amos (Amos 5:18-20); Isaiah (Isa 2:12-21; 13:6-13); Ezekiel (Ezek 13:3-8; 30:2-3); Zephaniah (Zeph 1:14 – 2:3); and Zechariah (Zech 14:1-4). In all these scriptures, the Day of the Lord is characterized as a time of thick darkness, gloominess, trouble, distress, terror and God pouring out His destruction, “wrath” and fierce anger, punishment, indignation and fury, vengeance and fire upon the world for its evil, sin and iniquity at some time in the future.¹ Therefore, the “Day of the Lord” is when the “wrath of God” will be poured out upon the Earth because of sins. The clear New Testament references to the Day of the Lord (Acts 2:19-20; 1 Thess 5:2-4; 2 Thess 2:1-2; and 2 Pet 3:9-10), place it within the context of Daniel’s 70th Week (from Dan 9:24-27; sixty-nine of the seventy weeks of years, or 483 out of 490 years, were fulfilled upon Jesus the Messiah’s death and resurrection in AD 29 or 30). This remaining 70th Week is also commonly referred to as the seven year Tribulation period addressed in the Book of Revelation and by Daniel 12; Matthew 24; Mark 13; and Luke 21. This seven year period is also commonly broken into two 3 ½ year periods (Dan 9:27, “but in the middle of the week”), with the latter 3 ½ year period being known as the Great Tribulation. As previously alluded to in 1 Thessalonians 1:10 and 5:9, God will *deliver (sozo)* believers from this wrath to come and “did

¹Rosenthal, 118-124.

not appoint” believers unto this wrath, but *salvation (soteria)* through Jesus Christ. Therefore, believers will not be on earth during the Day of the Lord/Tribulation; when God pours out his wrath upon the world, but in Heaven with Jesus² (another reference to the Rapture of the Church).

The theological terms related to the Rapture are: eschatology, imminency, dispensationalism, premillennialism, historic premillennialism (historicism), futuristic premillennialism (futurism), pretribulationism, midtribulationism, posttribulationism, postmillennialism, and amillennialism. Both eschatology and imminency were defined in the “Problem” section. Premillennialism, historicism, futurism, pretribulationism, midtribulationism, posttribulationism, postmillennialism, and amillennialism, were all defined in the “Background” section.

Dispensationalism is a theological belief attributed to John Nelson Darby that teaches that God deals with humanity throughout Biblical History in a number of (usually seven) periods of time, economies, administrations, or dispensations (for example, Innocence, Conscience, Government, Patriarchal Rule, Mosaic Law, Grace or the Church Age, and the Millennial Kingdom). Dispensationalists hold to the following four major doctrines: (1) A distinct separation between an earthly Israel and the heavenly Church; (2) A clear separation between Law and Grace; (3) The New Testament Church is a “parenthesis” in God’s plan and was not foretold in the Old Testament; and (4) A clear distinction between the Rapture of the Church and

²J. Randall Price, “Old Testament Tribulation Terms,” in *When the Trumpet Sounds*, ed. Thomas Ice and Timothy Demy (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1995), 82-3.

the Second Coming of Christ, separated by the seven year Tribulation. All of their beliefs are based on a literal, plenary interpretation of the Bible.³

Based on the problem addressed above and the terms which have just been defined, an exegetical study will be done in the next chapter of the primary and related passages normally attributed to the Rapture of the Church.

³Walter A. Elwell, ed., “dispensation, dispensationalism,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 343-5.