

The Great and Dreadful Day of the Lord

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THIS BOOKLET IS NOT TO BE SOLD. The information provided is for the benefit of former members of the congregations of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), and of current and prospective members of God's Church.

What is the great and dreadful day of the Lord mentioned in Mal 4: 5? Is it the Great Tribulation of Mat 24: 21 or some other Biblical event which would be of even greater importance than the Great Tribulation?

Please Note: All comments in brackets [] or in parentheses () as well as highlighted text (bolded and/or in blue) are from the author of this study. Bible quotations are in maroon.

I think it is essential to clarify the question of the “Holy Spirit” before we begin this study. If we say that who or what is the “Holy Spirit” is the question that needs to be answered, we are starting from the assumption that there exists such a being as the Holy Spirit and that it is a separate and distinct being from God and the Word. The question which should be asked is who are the beings the Bible tell us are holy, whose composition is spirit and who have existed eternally? Either the Bible plainly tells us who are the separate and distinct beings that existed from all eternity who created all things (spirit beings and the material universe) or we have no way of getting an answer to our question.

The Holy Spirits of the God Family

The Bible tells us in Gen 1:1 that:

Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

The Hebrew word translated “God” is “Eloheem” which is the plural form of “Eloah which means “God”. The word “Eloheem” refers to “gods.” It is a uniplural noun like family, group, team, etc. In the beginning, there was therefore more than one God being in existence but how many were there?

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.

Joh 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

In the beginning when God created the heaven and the earth there was God and there was another being with God who was also God, the Word. How can these two beings both be God; isn't that impossible?

The word God indicates the kind of existence of these 2 beings: their nature is to be God in the same way that all human beings have the same human nature. However, having the same nature does not mean that all human beings constitute a single being; indeed, they are all separate and distinct beings with their own personalities. God and the Word have in common the same nature or, level and type of existence, but they are separate and distinct beings just like all human beings who have the same human nature are separate and distinct beings.

God the Father

We read in the Bible that God became a father when the Word became flesh (Php 2:5-8) by being born of woman after having been conceived in the virgin Mary by the holy spirit being called God (Luke 1:35). God from that point on became God the Father and the Word, who was born as the flesh-and-blood Jesus of Nazareth became God's Son or the Son of God. He was both fully God (his father was God and fully human (his mother was the virgin Mary)).

Jesus was God the Father's only begotten son at the time when He was conceived in Mary's womb but He was not to be the only one begotten of the Father. God the Father is the holy spirit being in the Godhead that calls men to salvation.

Joh 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Joh 6:65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

Joh 18:9 That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou [God the Father] gavest me have I lost none.

1Pe 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

God the Word and Spokesman

The Bible term for being called is to be spiritually begotten by God the Father (1Pe 1:3). When we are begotten, we become a spiritual embryo that can be born again as a glorified spirit being with eternal life. Those begotten of the holy spirit God the Father who follow their calling are then able to come to the holy spirit being called the Word and Spokesman (John 6:44; 65; 18:9) who then teaches them. The glorified Jesus-Christ as God the Father's Word and Spokesman is the holy spirit being that works in the minds of God the Father's called and chosen ones.

Joh 7:39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Jesus had to first be glorified for it to be possible for Christians to have access to the holy spirit called the Word and Spokesman because the glorified Christ is the holy spirit being who works in the minds of God's saints (John 14:17) in the same way that Satan is the evil spirit that works in the minds of the children of disobedience (Eph2:2).

Joh 14:17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he [I,Christ] dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. [On the day of Pentecost, it would be in them and in all true Christians.]

Eph 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, [Satan] the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

The holy spirit God the Father calls men and those who follow their calling are then taught by the holy spirit called the Word and God the Father's Spokesman.

Joh 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

The Holy Ghost

The expression “Holy Ghost” used in the Bible is in error as there are no ghosts in the Godhead but rather 2 beings that are holy (John 17:11; Isa 6:3) and spirit (John 4:24).

Joh 17:11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

Isa 6:3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

Joh 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

These 2 God beings who are holy and spirit are the holy spirit beings of the God family who existed in the beginning at the creation of all things.

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.

Joh 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

And, the Word who was with God is before all things i.e., nothing existed before He created them whether made of spirit or matter.

Col 1:15 [Christ] Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

Col 1:16 For by him [the Word who became Jesus-Christ] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

Col 1:17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

In the beginning before anything either physical or spiritual was created, there was God and the Word who existed before all things and no other being is mentioned as having existed with them. There is no biblical evidence that there ever existed a third, separate and distinct personage in the Godhead called the “Holy Spirit” who dwelt in eternity with God and the Word.

God is a Family

Throughout the Bible we can find many verses which clearly indicates the existence of family relations between God and the Word and God’s called, chosen and faithful.

Mat 11:27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

Mat 12:50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

Joh 20:17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but o to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

God is clearly a family in which many can be ultimately born again by a resurrection from the dead to eternal, glorified spirit life in God’s Kingdom.

Rom 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he [God’s Son] might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Col 1:18 And he [the glorified Christ] is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Christ was the first to be born again by a resurrection from the dead to be followed by many brethren.

Bible Writing Convention

The practice in the Bible has been to simply use the expression “the Holy Spirit” without indicating which God personage in the Godhead the expression represents. Over time, because of this practice, just about everybody has come to believe that the Holy Spirit is a separate and distinct God being in the Godhead but, there is no single verse or group of verses in the Bible that prove the existence of such a third being in the Godhead. The words “holy” and “spirit” are adjectives that describe the nature of God the Father and of God the Word i.e., they are holy beings made of spirit.

Whenever we encounter the expressions the “Holy Spirit” or simply the “Holy Spirit” in the Bible we must look at the context to determine of which holy spirit being of the Godhead the Bible is talking about: the holy spirit, God the Father or the holy spirit, the Word and Spokesman.

The Word is the holy spirit being in the Godhead who carries out the instructions and wishes of the holy spirit, God. He is the faithful son who seeks to do his father’s will in all things. He is the member of the God family that did the work of creating the heaven and the earth, who ruled over ancient Israel through Moses and his human successors, He is the one who became a man who suffered and died to be God the Father’s perfect sacrifice for sin and make the salvation of mankind possible, etc. and He came to reveal the Father to those who follow the Father’s calling.

Making Things Clearer

In this study, when referring to God’s spirit who, depending on the circumstances can be the holy spirit personage called God the Father or the holy spirit personage called God the Word and Spokesman, I will not capitalize either of the adjectives “holy” and “spirit”. This is in order to not perpetuate the false impression in the minds of readers that there is a 3rd being in the Godhead called the “Holy Spirit.” Instead, I will refer to either of the holy spirits in the God family as being God’s spirit without capitalizing the word “spirit” to make it plain that we are not referring to a third God being in the God family called the “Holy Spirit” but to one of the 2 God beings in the Godhead.

God's family is presently made up of 2 holy spirit beings to which are to be added thousands and possibly millions of other holy spirit beings when God's plan of salvation for mankind has reached its end. The saints that endure in the faith until the end of their natural human life, will be resurrected as individual holy spirit beings in God's Kingdom when it is established.

There are two studies which you can read regarding what is the "Holy Spirit" and decide for yourself in light of the Bible-based evidence offered if such a being exists in the Godhead. These studies are: [What is the Holy Spirit? Cliff Notes Version](#) and [Who or What is the Holy Spirit?](#)

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God says that He will send Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. What is that day and can we know for sure what it is

In the organization called the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) under the leadership of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA) it was taught that the Great Tribulation was the Great and Dreadful Day of the Lord mentioned in the book of Malachi.

Mal 4:5 Behold, I will send you [Israel] Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

Mal 4:6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

HWA claimed that he was one who came in the power and spirit of Elijah and turned the heart of the fathers to the children and of the children to their fathers but the WCG is not the physical nation of Israel to whom Elijah is to come. The book of Malachi is wholly addressed to the physical nation of Israel not to God's Church.

Mal 1:1 The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi.

This is further confirmed by Christ in the following verses of Matthew 17.

Mat 17:9 And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, **Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.**

Mat 17:10 And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias **[a Greek variant of the word "Elijah"]** must first come?

Mat 17:11 And Jesus answered and said unto them, **Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.**

Mat 17:12 **But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.**

Mat 17:13 Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

Peter, James and John had just seen the transfiguration of Jesus. He had been speaking with Moses and Elias so the disciples asked Jesus that since Elias had already come to Israel why was it that the Scribes were saying that Elias still had to first come to Israel.

He had to first come to the physical nation of Israel before what would happen? The restoration of all things to the **physical** nation of Israel (Mat 17:11) and, as we have just read in Mal 4:5, Elijah was to come to the physical nation of Israel before the Great and Dreadful Day of the Lord.

If the Great and Dreadful Day of the Lord is the Great Tribulation (GT) then it means that Elijah has to have come to the physical nation of Israel before the GT arrives. However, Israel will not be gathered from the nations where they have been scattered until after Christ's Second Coming.

Eze 11:17 Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.

At his First Coming to Israel which then were some of the members of the tribes of Levi, Benjamin and Judah (collectively known as the Jews) living in the Promised Land but Christ plainly says there are other members of the nation of Israel who were not then back in the Promised Land.

Joh 10:16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

There is a time coming when all of Israel will be returned to the Promised Land and that will be after Christ's Second Coming. Therefore, Elijah cannot yet have come to Israel as it will not exist as the nation that it was with all 12 tribes returned to the Promised Land and living as one nation.

Elijah is to come, and can only come to Israel after Christ's Second Coming which occurs at the blowing of the 7th trumpet of the 7th seal of the book of Revelation. God's great wrath doesn't end until the pouring out of the last 7 vial plagues.

Rev 15:1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for [in them is filled up the wrath of God](#).

Only then will it be possible for Israel to be gathered and resettled in the original Promised Land and it will take some time for Israel to do so. Only after peace has returned and Israel has become a functioning nation would it be possible for Elijah to come and restore all things to it.

The Great Tribulation is past. What is the next great event to occur in the administration of God's plan of salvation for mankind?

The Great and Dreadful Day of the Lord.

In order to find out what is Great and Dreadful Day we have to go to the book of 2nd Thessalonians.

2Th 2:1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

2Th 2:2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that [the day of Christ](#) is at hand.

2Th 2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come [a falling away first](#), and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

2Th2: 1 tells us that there is coming a day when the Lord Jesus

Christ will come and that in that day, God's saints will be gathered together unto Him. Would that be a reference to what will happen at Christ's 2nd Coming when those who have died in the faith and the faithful then alive will become immortal spirit beings?

What happens at Christ's Second Coming is given us in the following verses of 1 Thessalonians 4.

1Th 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

1Th 4:17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

This is further confirmed in the following verses of 1Co 15.

1Co 15:51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

1Co 15:52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

When the 7th trumpet of the book of the Apocalypse or Revelation sounds is the time of Christ's Second Coming and it is the time of the first resurrection of God's saints. But when will the other saints who are yet to come during the Millennium and during the time of the Last Great Day be resurrected?

2Th 2:2-3 tells us of another time when God's saints are to be resurrected and it is something that happens at a time called the "day of Christ." However, and this is the critical point we have to keep in mind, the "day of Christ" will not happen except there comes [a falling away first](#).

When will this falling away take place?

Falling Away

God makes it very plain that no one is to judge His servants which is to say His called and chosen ones or truly converted Christians.

Rom 14:4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

Furthermore, God tells us that all judgment has been given unto Christ.

Joh 5:22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed **all judgment unto the Son:**

2Co 5:10 For we **must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ**; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

This means that no man can make the determination that someone has fallen away because only God can know what is in the heart of men. Only He can make a judgment on the extent to which someone who has been called is really trying to obey Him or not? Truly converted Christians have to please God not organizations of men calling themselves churches of God.

Jer 17:10 I the LORD **search the heart**, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

This is why God tells us all not to judge anyone.

Mat 7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.

If we judge others saying that someone has lost his salvation then we will be judged by God as having knowingly and willfully disobeyed Him and lose our salvation.

But of course, Christians are to judge all things against the requirements of God's law which is not the same thing as declaring that someone has fallen away. We can only keep God's law by evaluating what we want to do and what the world does against the requirements of God's law. This is how we know what we need to do to obey God. God's law is the basis of God's government in our lives as we try to follow it as best we can.

We can look at the world and make judgments about its many evils but we cannot ever make the judgment that someone has fallen away which is to say, lost his salvation.

So when will the “day of Christ” mentioned in 2Th 2:2 and “the falling away” mentioned in 2Th 2:3 take place.

The Great White Throne Judgment

At the end of the Last Great Day, there will be the Great White Throne Judgment (GWTJ) where Christ will divide the goat (those who lose their salvation) from the sheep (those who become part of God’s Kingdom).

Mat 25 tells us about the time when Christ will judge (determine who fell away and who did not) the nations.

Mat 25:31 When the Son of man [Christ] shall come in his glory, [as God the Word] and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: [a great white throne]

Mat 25:32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

Mat 25:33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

Mat 25:34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

These verses give us understanding of what happens in the GWTJ.

Rev 20:11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

Rev 20:12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

The dead are resurrected to flesh-and-blood life to be judged by Christ as having either fallen away when called by God the Father or as having followed their calling and having had their names written in the book of life.

Rev 20:13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell [the grave] delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

The works of all men when called by God is to obey Him in all things as best they can until the end of their natural lives and to grow the knowledge and understanding of the truth given them at the time of their calling by their study of God's holy Bible.

Rev 20:14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

Rev 20:15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

The book of life is the book of remembrance mentioned in Malachi 3:16.

Mal 3:16 Then they that feared [whose attitude was to obey God] the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.

God made sure not to forget who they were at the time of the GWTJ.

Summary and Conclusion

Someone who has fallen away is someone who has abandoned his calling and lost his salvation. The only one who can make this judgment is Christ. The destruction of the organization called the Worldwide Church of God is not in any way, a falling away (no man can determine that) nor is it the falling away mentioned in 2Th 2: 3.

And, there is no falling away to occur before the Great Tribulation of Mat 24: 21 nor can there be as only Christ can make that judgment and He will only make it at the time of the Great White Throne Judgment (GWTJ). The only possible falling away, the actual determination of who has fallen away and of who has not, will only occur in the GWTJ.

So, quite obviously, the Great Tribulation is NOT the Great and Dreadful day of the Lord or “day of Christ” mentioned in 2Th2: 2. This day will not take place until there comes a falling away [first](#). And as we have seen, the only falling away that will ever occur is in the GWTJ when God’s saints are gathered unto Him and those who have fallen away die the second death in the lake of fire.

The “day of Christ” is when God’s saints are gathered unto Him and become part of God’s Kingdom as stated in 2Th2: 1. It is also the time when the man of sin, the son of perdition will be revealed.

2Th 2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

Who that man is cannot now be revealed to the world because everyone has their own religious beliefs and spiritual leaders and as far as they are concerned their beliefs and spiritual leaders are the true ones and all the others are false.

In the GWTJ there will be no doubt about who is that man. The man of sin and son of perdition will not be revealed during the Great Tribulation.

The Great Tribulation is NOT the Great and Dreadful Day of the Lord. The Great and Dreadful Day of the Lord is the Great White Throne Judgment.

