



A Day

How long is a day in Scripture? A day in Scripture can be figurative and refer to far more than 24 hours such as the “day of the Lord” which is 1,007 years. A day in Scripture can be literal and refer to a literal 24-hour solar day. This is the most common use of the Hebrew and Greek words for “day” in the Bible. A day can also be figurative and refer to a very short period of time such as the “day of Christ” which is much less than one second – in the “twinkling of an eye.”

Because God exists apart from time, God’s perspective views a day as the same as 1,000 years and 1,000 years the same as one day. 2 Peter 3:8.

“But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.” (2 Peter 3:8, NASB)

Day Used as a Literal 24-hour Period of Time

The Jewish Sabbath refers to a 24-hour day starting at sunset on Friday through sunset on Saturday. The Roman day which we use today is from midnight to midnight. Lev. 23:32.

“It is to be a sabbath of complete rest to you, and you shall humble your souls; on the ninth of the month at evening, from evening until evening you shall keep your sabbath.” (Leviticus 23:32, NASB)

God the Holy Spirit’s restoration of the Earth took six literal 24-hour days. A principle of Hebrew syntax indicates that when the Hebrew word for “day” יוֹם (yôm) is qualified by either a cardinal (1,2,3) number or an ordinal number (1st, 2nd, 3rd), it always refers to a literal 24-hour day without exception. Exodus 20:11.

“For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.” (Exodus 20:11, NASB)

In Genesis 1:5, “there was evening and there was morning” indicates that the earth had begun to rotate with respect to the source of the light that was above the earth. “One day” refers to a literal 24-hour day of earth’s rotation.

“God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.” (Genesis 1:5, NASB)

The “Lord’s day” in Revelation 1:10 refers to Sunday.

“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet,” (Revelation 1:10, NASB)

Believers are commanded to take in the Word of God daily in Psalms 119:97. “Day by day” in 2 Corinthians 4:16 means the “inner man” or the soul is to be renewed daily.

“Mem. O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.” (Psalms 119:97, NASB)

“Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.” (2 Corinthians 4:16, NASB)

Divine discipline can result in loss of days in the believer’s lifespan. Psalms 102:23; Psalms 90:9.

“He has weakened my strength in the way; He has shortened my days.” (Psalms 102:23, NASB)



“For all our days have declined in Your fury; We have finished our years like a sigh.” (Psalms 90:9, NASB)

Believers are to live each day as unto the Lord with Bible doctrine as our priority so that we will grow spiritually and in divine wisdom. Rom. 14:5-6; Psalms 90:12.

“One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God.” (Romans 14:5-6, NASB)

“So teach us to number our days, That we may present to You a heart of wisdom.” (Psalms 90:12, NASB)

The number of days given to each believer in God's plan is related to the importance given to Bible doctrine and their spiritual growth or retrogression. Prov. 3:1-2.

“My son, do not forget my teaching, But let your heart keep my commandments; For length of days and years of life And peace they will add to you.” (Proverbs 3:1-2, NASB)

We are to live one day at a time as though each could be our last. Prov. 27:1.

“Do not boast about tomorrow, For you do not know what a day may bring forth.” (Proverbs 27:1, NASB)

Day Used as a Figurative Period of Time of Much Less Than 24 hours

The original creation of the universe and all that is in it by God the Son was instantaneous. In Genesis 1:1, the word “created” or בָּרָא (bara) in the Hebrew means to create out of nothing. God the Son spoke a single word unknown millions of years ago and the universe was formed instantaneously. It took Jesus Christ less than a second. In Psalms 33:6, “by the word of the Lord” means it was instantaneous. In 2 Peter 3:5, “the word of God” also means it was instantaneous.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” (Genesis 1:1, NASB)

“By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host.” (Psalms 33:6, NASB)

“For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water,” (2 Peter 3:5, NASB)

The “day of the Lord” in 2 Thessalonians 2:2 refers to the Rapture of the Church which will be instantaneous.

“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.” (2 Thessalonians 2:2, NASB)

The “day of Christ” refers to the Rapture of the Church which will take place in the “twinkling of an eye.” Phil. 2:16; Phil. 1:10; Phil. 1:6; 1 Cor. 15:52.

“holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.” (Philippians 2:16, NASB)

“so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;” (Philippians 1:10, NASB)



“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.” (Philippians 1:6, NASB)

“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.” (1 Corinthians 15:52, NASB)

The “day of redemption” in Ephesians 4:30 refers to the redemption of the believer’s body at the moment of resurrection.

“Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” (Ephesians 4:30, NASB)

The “day of salvation” in 2 Corinthians 6:2 refers to the time it takes for someone to decide to accept the work of Jesus Christ on the Cross for their sins.

“for He says, "AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU." Behold, now is "THE ACCEPTABLE TIME," behold, now is "THE DAY OF SALVATION"—” (2 Corinthians 6:2, NASB)

The “day of God” in 2 Peter 3:12 and the “day of eternity” in 2 Peter 3:18 both refer to the beginning of the eternal state.

“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!” (2 Peter 3:12, NASB)

“but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.” (2 Peter 3:18, NASB)

Day Used as a Figurative Period of Time of More Than 24 hours

The “day” in 1 Corinthians 3:13 refers to the Judgment Seat of Christ where believers will be judged by Jesus Christ for their production of divine good and human good while they lived on earth. This will last for seven years while the Tribulation is occurring on earth.

“each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work.” (1 Corinthians 3:13, NASB)

The “day of the Lord” in 2 Peter 3:10 and the “day of God” in 2 Peter 3:12-13 refer to a time after the Millennium when Jesus Christ will destroy the existing earth and universe and will then create a New Heavens and New Earth for eternity.

“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 3:10, NASB)

“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! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.” (2 Peter 3:12-13, NASB)

The “day of the Lord” in Isaiah 13:6, Joel 1:15, and Joel 2:1 refers to the Second Advent of Jesus Christ.

“Wail, for the day of the LORD is near! It will come as destruction from the Almighty.” (Isaiah 13:6, NASB)

“Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is near, And it will come as destruction from the Almighty.” (Joel 1:15, NASB)



"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," (Joel 2:1, NASB)

The "day of wrath and revelation" in Romans 2:5 refers to the judgment of all unbelievers by Jesus Christ at the Great White Throne Judgment. The duration of this last judgment is not known, but it will likely last far more than 24 hours. Rev. 20:12.

"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 2:5, NASB)

"And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds." (Revelation 20:12, NASB)

Importance of a Single Day in History

This is illustrated by the one day at a time concept. The Church Age began on one day. Acts 2. Christ bore the sins of the world on one day. John 19; 1 Peter 3:18.

"For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;" (1 Peter 3:18, NASB)

The Book of Revelation was given to John on one day, a Sunday. The doom of the inhabitants of the earth of Noah's generation was sealed on one day. Rev. 1; Matt. 24:38-39.

"For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be. " (Matthew 24:38-39, NASB)

The Lord will return in a certain unknown, single day in history. Matt. 24:36; Matt. 24:50.

"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. " (Matthew 24:36, NASB)

"the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know, " (Matthew 24:50, NASB)

Man will die on earth only once on a single day. Heb. 9:27.

"And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment," (Hebrews 9:27, NASB)

Christ made one offering, once for all. Heb. 10:10.

"By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (Hebrews 10:10, NASB)

In one day, Job lost his family, cattle, camels, oxen, asses and property. Job 1. In one day, July 1, 1860, some 63,000 men were killed, wounded, captured or missing in action in the Battle of Gettysburg in the American Civil War.