

1. Last week I taught the *Doctrine of Persecution*. When time expired we were in the process of analyzing Rev 6:12-17 where the sixth seal reveals several unnatural disasters.
2. Before continuing, I want to provide “1Jo 1:9 time” as may be necessary.
3. I want to review some of that learned last week and then begin new material on page two.
4. The four horsemen clearly describe a summary of the events of the seven year tribulation when the Antichrist rises to power and asserts his influence over planet earth. They describe a series of battles occurring just before the Second Advent.
5. The hope of permanent peace by means of the United Nations and other human effort is doomed to failure according to Matthew where Christ is quoted as saying you shall always have war and poverty. At the return of Christ at His Second Advent it is then and only then that poverty and war are eliminated.
6. The fifth seal begins a description of several natural disasters and the sixth seal paints a picture of many martyred saints awaiting God’s retribution.
7. Now let's see what we can learn from Rev 6:12-17 where we see God directly delivering His wrath upon planet earth.

Expanded Translation

Rev 6:12 John watched as Christ opened the sixth seal. Suddenly there was a great earthquake: the entire planet was violently shaken. The sun turned black as rough sackcloth, the moon turned blood red.

Rev 6:13 Several of the stars fell to earth, just like fruit shaken loose by a sudden windstorm.

Rev 6:14 The sky was rolled up like a scroll and all the mountains and islands in the sea were torn from their ocean homes, tossed in the air and sent rolling in all directions.

Rev 6:15 Then the various heads of state and their political appointees, their generals, the rich, the famous, their ecclesiastical leaders, and even the lowliest members of the human race, all ran and hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. In the middle of this horrific destruction God directly poured out His wrath on the warring parties.

Rev 6:16 It was from these remote hiding places that the unbelievers of planet earth begged to die, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb of God’ they cried!

Rev 6:17 ‘For the great day of His wrath has come, and there is no one who can stand up under His judgment.’ The world powers began to reel under the wrath of God Himself. The end seemed to be drawing near. The Antichrist was permitted to work his magic and gather the armies of the world to the holy land and an ominous rendezvous at Jerusalem.

1. It would be difficult to paint any scene more moving or terrible than that described at the opening of the sixth seal.

2. All the elements of a great catastrophic judgment of God are here present, namely, a great earthquake, the sun becoming black, the moon becoming as blood, the stars of heaven falling like ripe figs, the heaven departing like the unrolling of a scroll, and every mountain and island moving.

3. This is an awe inspiring scene, but what does it mean prophetically? Many expositors have had difficulty interpreting these passages. The tendency has been to regard these judgments as symbolic rather than real.

4. The motive behind this interpretation has been a reluctance to accept a literal interpretation of these judgments falling on the earth at this time. The disturbances of the heavens have been taken to refer to changes in human government, and disturbances in the earth as referring to the upsetting of tradition and commonly fixed ideas.

5. Other men like Chafer, Thieme, Pentecost, Ryre and Walvord have urged an interpretation of Revelation in its plain sense unless good reasons indicate otherwise. Peake, an expositor of some note has written,

“The Apocalypse is no doubt often obscure and its language is often allegorical. But it has to be interpreted in its plain sense far more frequently than many expositors are willing to admit. Much is written in simple characters which expositors have insisted on treating as hieroglyphics. In particular natural phenomena have been interpreted of historical events and the author has been credited with describing a political movement when he has been really speaking of God's judgments through nature. And the temptation has been especially great to find allegories where the author describes things in a matter-of-fact way, when the descriptions are bizarre and uncongenial to modern taste.”

6. There are a number of reasons for preferring a literal meaning. While this is not the final breakup of the world as described later, it does seem to indicate that beginning with the sixth seal, God is undertaking a direct intervention into human affairs.

7. The judgments of war, famine, and death, and the martyrdom of the saints have largely originated in human decision and in the evil heart of man. The judgments described here, however, originate with God; seemingly His very own divine punishment inflicted upon a blasphemous world.

8. In view of the catastrophic and climactic character of the period, there is no good reason why we should not expect the agents to be precisely the elements mentioned, namely certain disturbances in the heavens and earthquakes on the earth.

9. This is borne out by the effect upon the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the chief captains, the mighty men, bond men, and free men mentioned in verse 15, who hide themselves in dens and in the rocks of the mountains.

10. The events are of such character that all these men, though clearly heterogeneous, are impressed with the fact that the day of the wrath of the Lord has come and that their judgment is now about to take place. In support of this, E. W. Bullinger writes, "It is impossible for us to take this as symbolical; or as other than what it literally says. The difficulties of the symbolical interpretation are insuperable, while no difficulties whatever attend the literal interpretation."

11. It is questionable whether changes in government and in human affairs would have brought such a striking transformation in the hearts of these wicked people. As is often the case with desperate men, instead of availing themselves of the grace of God, they attempt to hide from the wrath of the Lamb by seeking escape in death.

12. However their hope is futile, for death is not an escape but merely a change from one state to another. Those who escape through death from the immediate judgment of God are destined for eternal judgment at the judgment of the great white throne.

13. The earth today, so indifferent to the claims of God, so bent upon pleasure, luxury, and fame, will face in that day God's terrible judgment. All levels of society are described. Some are great men, some are slaves. In relation to the judgment of the Lord Jesus Christ, however, everyone is exactly in the same predicament. Success in the world does not help; no one escapes.

14. After due consideration of the great writings of past expositors from both camps and from comparisons of related Scriptures in both the Old and New Testament, there is no doubt in my mind a "literal meaning is required."

15. The elements of divine judgment pictured in our verses are common in the prophecies pertaining to the end of the age by Christ Himself.

16. Both earthquakes and the sun becoming black are predicted by Joel.

Joe 2:1 Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming. It is close at hand--

Joe 2:2 a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. Like dawn spreading across the mountains a large and mighty army comes, such as never was of old nor ever will be in ages to come.

Joe 2:10 Before them the earth shakes, the sky trembles, the sun and moon are darkened, and the stars no longer shine.

Joe 2:30 I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke.

Joe 2:31 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

17. The heavens departing as a scroll are mentioned in Isa 13:13 and 34:4.

Isa 13:13 Therefore I will make the heavens tremble; and the earth will shake from its place at the wrath of the LORD Almighty, in the day of his burning anger.

Isa 34:4 All the stars of the heavens will be dissolved and the sky rolled up like a scroll; all the starry host will fall like withered leaves from the vine, like shriveled figs from the fig tree.

18. The resulting impression upon the unbelieving world is that the time of the judgment of God has come. They themselves say "let the mountains and rocks" ... Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

19. It is apparent that creatures of earth have had some foreboding that their blasphemous unbelief and worship of the beast pictured in Revelation Chapter 13 are in defiance of the true God.

Rev 13:1 And the dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name.

Rev 13:2 The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority.

Rev 13:3 One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was astonished and followed the beast.

Rev 13:4 Men worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, "Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?"

20. The world now however as the sixth seal falls seek refuge from the Christ and apparently realize that the day of divine wrath has come.

21. The day of wrath in one sense is the whole period of the Great Tribulation, when God will deal in direct judgment with the world, climaxing with the return of Christ in power and glory and divine judgment upon all who oppose His coming.

22. There are those like Hal Lindsey who place modern weapons on the scene as the direct cause as over against the direct work of God. His position is certainly not like that of Ironside who allegorized away the literal meaning but rather Lindsay sees modern weapons as more than sufficient to do the job or jobs described by John. Experts agree the frequency of earthquakes is increasing.

23. Professor R. A. Daly in *Our Mobile Earth* says that "by far the most awful earth shock is yet to come. So many authorities have warned Californians to expect a giant quake along the San Andreas Fault that the people who live anywhere near it tend to keep their fingers crossed!"

24. Hal Lindsey goes on to write, "But the earthquake of this sixth judgment will be "the grand-daddy of them all." The particular Greek word used here actually means "a violent, catastrophic shaking." This meaning, coupled with the darkening of the sun and moon, leads me to believe that the Apostle John is describing an earthquake set off by a nuclear explosion. Remember, John had to describe phenomena of a very advanced technical age in terms of his first century understanding.

"Recently as I was studying about nuclear weapons I discovered that science has perfected a cobalt bomb one of the most lethal weapons known to man. A cobalt bomb is made by placing a shield of cobalt 59 metal around a hydrogen bomb. By this comparatively simple operation the destructive capacity of the hydrogen bomb is doubled. More significantly, however, the radioactive contamination of the cobalt bomb is tremendous. Scientists have dubbed it "the dirty bomb" because of its fallout. This is what I believe may be pictured in Revelation 6:12."

25. The words "great earthquake" in verse twelve in the Greek is **megas seismos**. We of course get our word seismic from **seismos** and our prefix mega from **megas**.

26. Verse 13 states that "the stars of heaven fell to the earth." This word for star (**asteres**) can refer to either a star or a meteor. In this verse it seems more likely that meteors are intended. When meteors first strike the atmosphere of the earth they glow with a fiery red color. The Apollo heat shields glowed in the same way when they returned to earth.

27. It is possible as some have conjectured that the meteor may be referring to more than ordinary celestials falling to earth. Most countries today have sophisticated ballistic missiles which can be fired from aircraft, hardened silos, submarines and aegis class destroyers.

28. In support of this, E. W. Bullinger writes, "It is impossible for us to take this as symbolical; or as other than what it literally says. The difficulties of the symbolical interpretation are insuperable, while no difficulties whatever attend the literal interpretation."

29. Since such missiles come straight down from the sky, they can strike several cities simultaneously and with virtually no warning. When these missiles streak through the air they'll look like meteors showering the atmosphere!

30. The statement in Rev 6:14 "And the atmosphere was pushed apart like a scroll when it is rolled together" sounds a great deal like a description of a nuclear explosion. Dr. Edward Teller once wrote similarly in his description of an atomic explosion "the air pushes apart forming a giant vacuum in which the entire atmosphere rolls away and then back into that vacuum."

31. John's words in this verse may be a picture of an all-out nuclear exchange. When this happens, John says every mountain and island will be jarred from its present position. The whole world will be literally shaken apart!

32. In describing the period of judgment as a day of wrath, reference is not to a twenty - four hour period but longer. The "Day of The Lord" is a technical term for the Tribulation, the Second Advent of Christ and the immediate aftermath thereof.

33. Chapter six would seem to be a summary of what will occur in "The Day of the Lord" - that which occurs in the Tribulation, the 2nd Advent and the immediate events subsequent thereto.

34. The day of wrath is in contrast to the day of grace. Though God in every dispensation deals with all believers and saves them by grace, the present age is supremely designed to manifest grace not only as the way of salvation but as a way of life.

35. Today God is not attempting to bring divine judgment to bear upon sin. Though there may be some forms of immediate retribution; for the most part God is not settling accounts. Neither the righteous are rewarded nor the wicked judged in a final sense today. Our day of grace will be followed by the Day of the Lord which features His day of wrath.

36. By contrast to the judgments which are inflicted upon a Christ rejecting world, believers in this present age are promised escape from the judgment which the world richly deserves.

Joh 3:18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

Joh 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

37. The person who trusts in Christ is not only un-condemned in this world but he has eternal life and is a member of God's forever family.

38. By contrast the unbeliever shall never see life, but abides under the wrath of God which in due time will be inflicted. The Revelation discredits those who hold that God is so loving and kind that He will never judge people who have not received His Son.

39. Although the modern mind is reluctant to accept the fact that God will judge the wicked, the Bible clearly teaches He will. The Scriptures reveal a God of love as clearly as they reveal a God of wrath. The passages before us reveal God's solemn word that there is an inevitable judgment ahead for those who do not accept Christ as Savior.

40. The close of chapter six advances the narrative to a new high in the progress of the book. In some sense chapter 6 is the outline of the important facts of the period of the great tribulation. The rest of the events of the book of the Revelation is comprehended in the seventh seal which is later introduced in chapter 8.

41. Chapter 6 closes with a pointed question: "Who shall be able to stand?" The answer is obvious: Only those who avail themselves of the grace of God, even though they suffer a martyr's death in this future tragic period.

43. This is brought out in the next chapter. Chapters six and seven emphasizes the importance of partaking of the grace of God in this present age with the bright prospect of the Lord coming for His own. Now let's see what we can learn from Revelation Chapter Seven.

Introduction

1. In contrast to chapter six which seems in the main to give a chronological sequence of major events of the great tribulation, chapter seven does not advance the narrative but directs attention to two major groups of saints in the tribulation.

2. The opening portion of the chapter pictures the 144,000 Jewish evangelist; they are representative of a godly remnant of Israel on earth in the great tribulation.

3. The latter part of the chapter describes a great multitude of martyred dead in heaven, those who died as a testimony to their faith from every kindred, tongue, and nation.

4. The question has often been asked, Will anyone be saved after the rapture? The Scriptures clearly indicate that a great multitude of both Jews and Gentiles will trust in the Lord after the church is caught up to glory.

5. Though the children of God living on earth at the time will be translated when Christ comes for His church at the Rapture, immediately a testimony for Christ is raised up.

5.1 Though these are never described by the term church, they are constantly called saints, that is, those set apart as holy to God and saved through faith alone in Christ alone.

6. The presence of saved people in the world after the rapture has puzzled some because according to 2Th 2:7 the one who now restrains sin, often identified as the Holy Spirit, is pictured as being removed from the world.

2Th 2:6 And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time.

2Th 2:7 For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way.

2Th 2:8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.

2Th 2:9 The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders,

7. The question then is how can people be saved in the tribulation if the Holy Spirit is taken out of the world? The answer, of course, is that the Holy Spirit is removed from the world in the same sense in which He came on the day of Pentecost.

8. We spent some time earlier reviewing the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Age of Israel.

8.1 We called the Old Testament work of the Holy Spirit in the Age of Israel an "Endowment;" this in contrast to the convincing/indwelling/filling ministry of God the Holy Spirit in the Age of the church.

9. People were saved before the day of Pentecost and He, the Holy Spirit, will continue with His work in the Tribulation just as He did in the Old Testament.

10. Though the special ministries which are characteristic of the present dispensation may cease, there will be the continued ministry of the Spirit in a similar way to that which existed before Pentecost.

11. Walvoord has written: "The Holy Spirit will continue to be working in the world, but in some particulars in a different way. There is good reason to believe, however, that the Holy Spirit will lead people to Christ, and many will be saved during the tribulation. A description of this is given in the seventh chapter of the book of Revelation, which is so plain that no one should question whether people will be saved after the rapture."

12. Let's now look at verses one through three of chapter seven.

KJV

Rev 7:1 And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

Rev 7:2 And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,

Rev 7:3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

NIV

Rev 7:1 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree.

Rev 7:2 Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea:

Rev 7:3 "Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God."

1. The awful judgments described in Chapter Six give rise to the desperate question of man, "Who is able to stand?" (Rev 6:17).

Rev 6:17 For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

2. Revelation chapter 7 answers that question. It also shows once more that "even in judgment, God demonstrates mercy."

2.1 God will provide an opportunity for the whole world to hear the gospel of Christ during this awful time of Tribulation (Mat 24:14-15).

Mat 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

Mat 24:15 "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel--let the reader understand ..."

3. So far six seals of judgment upon the earth have been opened. Revelation Seven gives us a parenthetical panorama of the evangelistic activity of the Tribulation period.

4. The chapter flashes back to the very beginning of the Tribulation when the Antichrist on the white horse is first revealed, i.e., right after the Rapture.

4.1 It is here we see God sending out 144,000 evangelists with the gospel message before any judgments fall upon the earth.

5. These are Jews who have been witnessed to by Christians prior to the Rapture; when they discover believers are gone, they turn in faith to Christ as their Messiah.

6. The latter part of Chapter seven shows the great success of the Jewish evangelistic efforts. Their converts are shown at rest before the throne of God.

6.1 There is such a great multitude of them from all nations, tongues, and tribes that they cannot be numbered.

Rev 7:9 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.

7. There is another question introduced in this chapter, "why are the 144,000 chosen evangelists only of the Jewish race?"

8. In order to answer this question, we must understand why God called the nation of Israel into being in the first place, and why they are called "the chosen race."

9. God's purposes for the Jewish people are woven throughout the entire Bible, starting with Genesis 11 and continuing uninterrupted through the Gospel of Luke. (Other New Testament books, such as Hebrews and James, also have a strong Jewish emphasis.)

10. The sheer fact that over three-fourths of the Bible is about the Hebrew race indicates the importance which they hold in the eternal purposes of God.

11. Four thousand years ago God called Abraham out of "ancient Babylon" and presented him with several fantastic promises and sobering responsibilities.

11.1 He promised Abraham a son from whose loins would be born a unique race of people - a race chosen and blessed in a special way by God Himself.

12. What were God's purposes for creating this race? There were numerous reasons, let me highlight four such reasons:

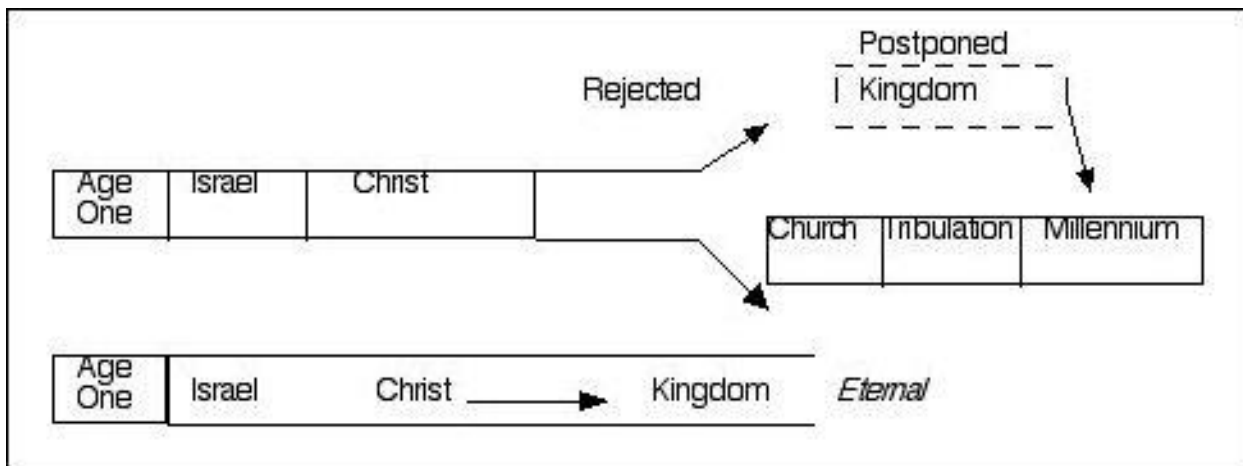
13. First, the Jewish people were to receive and write down God's revelation to man. Though the Jewish people have failed in performing some of the things God wanted them to do, they did fulfill this main purpose. Virtually every book of both the Old and New Testaments was penned by a Jewish writer.

14. A second reason the Jews were chosen was to protect and preserve the textual purity of the Scriptures they had penned. The degree of success which the Jewish scribes had in doing this is one of the wonders of the ancient world.

14.1 When you consider the turbulent history the Jews endured and the unbelievable job they did in preserving their Scriptures, every Jew and Christian today should give them humble thanks.

14.1.1 A startling example of the accuracy of the Jewish scribes in copying and caring for their beloved Scriptures is the Scroll of Isaiah, discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls in the late nineteen forties (1940s). The date of this Scroll of Isaiah has been fixed at 200 B.C. while the earliest Isaiah manuscript we had known about before this discovery is dated A.D. 900! Though more than 1000 years separated the two manuscripts, they were virtually identical when compared!

14.2 The third reason for Israel's existence was to serve as the human family through which the Messiah, the Savior of mankind, would be born. There are over three hundred specific prophecies in the Old Testament which refer in some way to the Messiah's coming. The great paradox is that when the Messiah did come with His credentials of fulfilled prophecy, the very people who had predicted His coming rejected Him!



14.3 Nevertheless, the New Testament begins, "These are the ancestors of Jesus Christ, a descendant of King David and of Abraham"(Matthew 1:1).

14.4 A fourth reason the Jewish race was selected was to witness to the pagan world that there is only one true God and to show men how to come to know Him. Throughout their four thousand years of existence, the Jews have not always been willing witnesses of this fact to the world.

End Lesson Taught 12-7-2016

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