

INTRODUCTION

1. Today we are looking at the Word of God as it pertains to future events, so let me invite you to take God's Word and turn with me to Revelation chapter 6.
2. We have already looked at the first 5 seals and now we're considering the 6th found in verses 12-17.
3. Read Revelation 6:12-17
4. As we have been looking at each seal, we have learned that each seal that has been opened by the Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ, is acted out.
5. We saw that in seal 1 when the rider on the white horse, who is the Antichrist, was given "a crown" because "he went out conquering and to conquer" with peace.
6. He had a bow and now arrows. So his conquest was through diplomacy but as we said, this is a false peace and will only last for 3 1/2 years. Then he will abominate the temple, according to 2 Thessalonians 2:4, and declare that he is God.

7. 1 Thessalonians 5:3 (NASB) While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape.
8. The second seal, which is war, will “take peace from the earth” and “men will slay one another” (Rev.6:4).
9. As a result of war in the second seal, the third seal will bring “famine” (Rev.6:5).
10. The conditions of that time will be reduced to rationing and as a result of war and famine, the fourth seal will bring death (Rev.6:7).
11. Revelation 6:7-8 (NASB) 7 When the Lamb broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, “Come.” 8 I looked, and behold, an ashen horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him. Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth.
12. When the fifth seal is opened in Revelation 6:9-11, we see the death of martyrs.
13. Revelation 13:7 (NASB) 7 It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and

authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.

14. Daniel 7:25 (NASB) He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.
15. And now as the sixth seal is opened in verses 12-17, we see cosmic disturbances.
16. The sixth seal continues a pattern begun at seal five, which demonstrates a difference between seals one through four and seals five through seven.
17. No horse and rider is indicated.
18. The question of the Martyrs is answered indirectly.
19. The sign that announces the imminent arrival of the wrath of God is given in the form of earthly and cosmic disturbances unparalleled in human history.
20. The impact is obvious—"men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world (Luke 21:26)" (http://revelationcommentary.org/06_chapter.html).

21. Notice its opening in verse 12.

LESSON

I. The First Seal - False Peace (vv.1-2)

II. The Second Seal - War (vv.3-4)

III. The Third Seal - Famine (vv.5-6)

IV. The Fourth Seal - Death (vv.7-8)

V. The Fifth Seal - Martyrs (vv.9-11)

VI. The Sixth Seal - Cosmic Disturbances (vv.12-17)

A. Its Opening (v.12)

It is the same as the 5th seal in that no voice is heard only the phrase “When He opened” referring to the Lamb.

B. Its Contents (vv.12-17)

John now sees cosmic disturbances through verse 14 and in verse 15-17 people fleeing to the “caves and among the rocks of the mountains” (v.15).

As we saw previously, these disturbances occur “before” the Day of the Lord.

Joel 2:30-31 says, “I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, Blood, fire and columns of smoke. 31 ‘The sun will be turned into darkness And the moon

into blood before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.””

Luke 21:25-26 says, “There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, 26 men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.”

1. Verse 12 says when this seal was opened by the Lamb “there was a great earthquake.”

“Earthquake” Gr.seismos, literally means “a shaking” (MacArthur). This word occurs 8 times in the NT and in the Septuagint in Joel 2:10 to describe the heavens trembling.

“There have been many earthquakes in recorded history...But the cataclysmic event John saw in this seal is to be far more powerful and devastating than any previous earthquake. In fact, this one will shake more than just the earth (6:13-14)” (John MacArthur, Revelation).

“Luke 21:26 indicates that "the powers of the heavens will be shaken." This is also supported by both Matthew 24:29 and Mark 13:25. However, Isaiah 13:13 and Joel 3:16 both indicate that both

the heavens and the earth will be shaken during the Day of the Lord. Therefore, both the heavens and the earth will shake violently” (The Revelation Commentary).

There are earthquakes everyday.

On Friday (10/22), there were 237 earthquakes in places like Spain, Haiti, Philippines, Mexico, Costa Rica, Australia, Italy, New Zealand, Indonesia, Hawaii, Greece, Nicaragua, Alaska, Chile, Dominic Republic, Argentina, and Turkey.

God uses earthquakes for various reasons:

He used it at Jesus’ death - Matthew 27:50-54 (NASB) 50 And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. 51 And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split. 52 The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; 53 and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many. 54 Now the centurion, and those who were with him keeping guard over Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, became very frightened and said, “Truly this was the Son of God!”

He used it at Jesus' resurrection - Matthew 28:1-2 (NASB) 1 Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave. 2 And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it.

He used at Paul's release from prison in Philippi - Acts 16:25-26 (NASB) 25 But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; 26 and suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened.

God uses earthquakes sometimes to reveal his anger - 2 Samuel 22:8 (NASB) "Then the earth shook and quaked, the foundations of heaven were trembling and were shaken, because He was angry.

He used an earthquake to destroy all the men of Korah - Numbers 16:28-33 (NASB) 28 Moses said, "By this you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these deeds; for this is not my doing. 29 If these men die the death of all men or if they suffer

the fate of all men, then the LORD has not sent me. 30 But if the LORD brings about an entirely new thing and the ground opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that is theirs, and they descend alive into Sheol, then you will understand that these men have spurned the LORD.” 31 As he finished speaking all these words, the ground that was under them split open; 32 and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, and their households, and all the men who belonged to Korah with their possessions. 33 So they and all that belonged to them went down alive to Sheol; and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly.

God reveals His judgment with earthquakes - Isaiah 29:6 (NASB) From the LORD of hosts you will be punished with thunder and earthquake and loud noise, with whirlwind and tempest and the flame of a consuming fire.

God overthrows kingdoms with earthquakes - Haggai 2:21-22 (NASB) 21 “Speak to Zerubbabel governor of Judah, saying, ‘I am going to shake the heavens and the earth. 22 I will overthrow the thrones of kingdoms and destroy the power of the kingdoms of the nations; and I will overthrow the chariots and their riders, and the horses and their riders will go down, everyone by the sword of

another.’

There will be an earthquake when Jesus returns - Zechariah 14:4 (NASB) In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.

2. Verse 12 continues by saying “the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair.”

“Sackcloth was rough cloth worn by mourners, usually made from the hair of black goats. Following the violent earthquake that devastates the earth, the sun will turn as black as a mourner's robe” (MacArthur).

Scientist Dr. Henry M. Morris explains what could cause that phenomenon:

“The great earthquake described here ... for the first time in history is worldwide in scope. Seismologists and geophysicists in recent years have learned a great deal about the structure of the earth and about the cause and nature of earthquakes. The earth's solid crust is traversed with a complex network of faults, with all resting upon a plastic mantle whose

structure is still largely unknown. Whether the crust consists of great moving plates is a current matter of controversy among geophysicists, so the ultimate cause of earthquakes is still not known. In all likelihood, the entire complex of crustal instabilities is a remnant of the phenomena of the great Flood, especially the breakup of the fountains of the great deep.

In any case, the vast worldwide network of unstable earthquake belts around the world suddenly will begin to slip and fracture on a global basis and a gigantic earthquake will ensue. This is evidently, and naturally, accompanied by tremendous volcanic eruptions, spewing vast quantities of dust and steam and gases into the upper atmosphere. It is probably these that will cause the sun to be darkened and the moon to appear blood-red. (The Revelation Record [Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 1983], 121).

The prophet Joel spoke of these same phenomena in connection with the Day of the Lord: "The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes" (Joel 2:31; cf. Isa. 13:9-10; Matt. 24:29; Mark 13:24-25; Luke 21:25).

3. The third disaster in verse 12 is "the moon became like blood."

According to Dr. Morris, the effects of the great earthquake will cause “vast clouds of ash and smoke to be spewed out by the volcanic activity associated with the great worldwide earthquake. That ash and smoke will eclipse the moon, coloring it blood red as it attempts to pierce the smoke-darkened sky.

Isaiah says of this event in Isaiah 13:10, "The sun will be dark when it rises and the moon will not shed its light." Joel adds, "the sun and the moon grow dark" (Joel 2:10). And, in Joel 2:31 “the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood” (cf. Acts 2:20).

“These phenomena will affect every aspect of life as the normal cycle of daylight and darkness is disrupted. The total eclipse of the sun and moon will add more reason for the world to be in panic” (MacArthur).

4. If that wasn't enough, verse 13 says then “the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind.”

“Stars” (asteres) can refer to “any heavenly body other than the sun and the moon. Obviously, in this context it does not refer to actual stars, since they are far too large to fall to the earth and would

incinerate it long before striking it. Also, the stars are still in place later when the fourth trumpet sounds (8:12). This is most likely a reference to asteroid or meteor showers bombarding the earth. There has been much speculation among scientists recently about the effects of a large asteroid striking the earth. Modern experts believe that the impacts of asteroids, comets, and meteors striking the earth would be devastating and cause unprecedented destruction. There will be so many such bodies hitting the earth that John, in a vivid analogy, likens the scene to a fig tree that casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. With the whole earth being pummeled by fiery balls plunging out of the blackness there will be nowhere for people to flee, nowhere for them to hide” (John MacArthur, Revelation).

5. Then in verse 14 “The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.”

John likens the sky to an unrolled scroll that splits in the middle and rolls up on either side.

This vivid picture finds a parallel in Isaiah 34:4: “And all the host of heaven will wear away, And the sky will be rolled up like a scroll; All their hosts will also wither away As a leaf withers from the vine, Or

as one withers from the fig tree.”

6. The sixth cosmic disturbance occurs at the end of verse 14: “And every mountain and island were moved out of their places.”

Dr. Henry Morris again says, “The earth's crust, highly unstable ever since the great Flood, will be so disturbed by the impacting asteroids, the volcanic explosions, and the worldwide earthquakes, that great segments of it will actually begin to slip and slide over the earth's deep plastic mantle.

Geophysicists for many years have been fascinated with the idea of "continental drift" (although strong evidence has been accumulating against any such phenomenon occurring in the present age). Several have published theories of a past naturalistic catastrophism involving what they call "the earth's shifting crust." Some such phenomenon may actually be triggered under this judgment of the sixth seal, dwarfing the damage occasioned by all the mighty earthquakes of the past. (The Revelation Record, 123).

7. Verses 15-17 record the reaction from all unbelievers to these cosmic disturbances:

- a) This first effects “the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and

the strong and every slave and free man” (v.15).

“The kings of the earth refers to the heads of state throughout the world. The great men (megistanes) are the high-ranking officials in government. The commanders are the military leaders, while the rich are those who control commerce and business and the strong may well be the influential...Nor will the common people, the lower classes, escape; every slave and free man will be as terrified as the influential and wealthy” (John MacArthur, Revelation).

- b) They all have the same reaction: They “hid themselves...from the wrath of the Lamb” (vv.15-17).
- c) This is a fulfillment of Isaiah 2:19-21, which says, “Men will go into caves of the rocks And into holes of the ground Before the terror of the LORD And the splendor of His majesty, When He arises to make the earth tremble. 20 In that day men will cast away to the moles and the bats Their idols of silver and their idols of gold, Which they made for themselves to worship, 21 In order to go into the caverns of the rocks and the clefts of the cliffs Before the terror of the LORD and the splendor of His majesty, When He arises to make the earth tremble.”

John MacArthur says, “The reaction of the unbelieving world to the terrors unleashed by the sixth seal will not be one of repentance (cf. 9:21; 16:11), but of mindless panic. They will finally acknowledge what believers have been saying all along, that the disasters they have experienced are God's judgment. Yet, like the demons of whom James wrote (James 2:19), they will believe and fear but will not repent. They will follow Satan, believe his lies, and embrace his messenger, Antichrist. As a result, God will judicially abandon them: "For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness" (2 Thess. 2:11-12). Those who repeatedly harden their hearts will have their hearts hardened by God; they will be unable to repent and believe.

The panic-stricken sinners will react irrationally, foolishly attempting to hide themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains (cf. Isa. 2:17-21)—the very places that are being shaken. They are no doubt seeking refuge from the swarms of meteors and asteroids bombarding the earth. But in light of the massive earthquake and its continuing aftershocks, the widespread volcanic eruptions, and the other disturbances to

the earth's crust, such hiding places will offer no safety. Further, it is impossible to hide from God or evade His judgment” (Revelation).

8. The question in verse 17 asked is a direct parallel of Joel 2:11:

“The LORD utters His voice before His army; Surely His camp is very great, For strong is he who carries out His word. The day of the LORD is indeed great and very awesome, And who can endure it?”

CONCLUSION

1. These next three seals will begin with the wrath of Satan as he moves the Antichrist to persecute the saints and will close with the cosmic disturbances associated with the coming of the Day of the Lord’s wrath.
2. In the 6th seal, they will think that this terrifying preparation is the actual wrath of God but it will only be a prep for what He is yet about to do.
3. “For the great day of His wrath has come [aorist tense]” tells us that all of these cosmic disturbances will usher in the Day of the Lord.
4. And who will be “able to stand?”

5. The only way to escape the wrath that is to come upon all ungodly sinner is to repent and turn to Jesus for salvation.
6. When you repent from your sin, He removes the condemnation and grants you eternal life.
7. Will you flee this Day that is to come?
8. If this doesn't move you, neither will the opening of the six seals.
9. Cry out for God's mercy and repent! (Pray).