

The Day of the Lord & What Happens when God Shakes the Earth

Revelation 6:12-17

This morning we are examining the Biblical Doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ. This Doctrine is taught in God's Word across over 1,800 verses, with over 300 of those verses in the New Testament.

The Doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ

God's Word is immensely prophetic.

When the Bible was written it was made up of approximately 27% prophetic material. Over the thirty-five hundred years since the Bible first began to be written down, many of the prophecies have already come true. But many prophecies are still slumbering, not yet awakened and launched into history, by the Hand of God Himself. God watches over His Word to perform everything He has written (Jer. 1:12).

Our text this morning is just one of those verses portraying an event that is quietly awaiting a future moment to be deployed, just as God told us it would. Revelation 6:12 (NJKV):

I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood.

Many Slumbering Prophecies

None of these seals of Rev. 6 have yet been broken and launched upon Earth. They still slumber like a giant volcanic eruption, as the white-hot magma rises and slowly builds to explosive force, just waiting to be triggered.

When they do, the superman, humans have always longed for, will emerge: so that global peace & prosperity will at last arrive (the white horse). That deception of the first seal will be followed quickly by global warfare (the red horse); then by starvation & scarcity (the black horse); then by death & pestilence (the pale horse); and then finally by a countless number of martyrs who died for the Name of Christ under the reign of the False Christ, the Final Emperor (the fifth seal).

Only 4 of the 66 books of the God's Word contain no prophecy about future events. Those

four are: Ruth, Song of Solomon, Philemon, and 3 John¹. A summary of the Bible's prophetic content would be that:

“Out of the OT's 23,210 verses, 6,641 contain predictive material, or 28.5 percent. Out of the NT's 7,914 verses, 1,711 contain predictive material, or 21.5 percent. So for the entire Bible's 31,124 verses, 8,352 contain predictive material, or 27 percent of the whole².

Of these, over 1,800 verses (including 318 in the New Testament) deal with the Second Coming of Christ³.

If all of these 1,800+ verses describing the Second Coming of Christ were grouped together, they would be equivalent to the size of one-fourth of our entire New Testament. That is huge, and that is what God planned. We need to know and understand what God has planned in the second coming of Christ.

The Second Coming is the Day of the Lord

In God's Word, the description of Christ's Second Coming covering those over 1,800 verses employs several key Biblical terms. But the most crucial of all those terms is the one known as: the Day of the Lord.

We are examining the Day of the Lord in two parts. Last time we looked at the Lord, the One whose Day it is. We saw that He is coming in the person of God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. In Hebrews 1:1-3 we saw that the:

Ruler of Everything is coming, as described by those words at the end of v. 3: Jesus Christ “sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high”.

Jesus is seated in Heaven right now, at the Right Hand of God the Father, interceding for us His Church. Our Savior Himself is going to stand up, empty Heaven of every angel and every saint, and come back to finish the plan of God. One way to express this event is to merge the two key descriptions and call this event:

The Day of the Lord's Second Coming

When the **Inheritor of Everything**, the **Creator of Everything**, the **Radiator of God's Glory, Character of God**, and the **Sustainer of Everything**, the **Purifier of Sins**, returns as the **Ruler of Everything**: the Universe begins to convulse.

¹ J. Barton Payne, Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy: The Complete Guide to Scriptural Predictions and Their Fulfillment (NY: Harper & Row, 1973), p. 681.

² Ibid., p. 13.

³ Ibid., p. 680.

As Christ comes, the Earth begins to quake, and every human with sin staining their lives: begins to crawl for cover, burrow for holes to hide, and cry out in the fear that will forever consume them in torments, as an Angry God returns.

Understanding the Key Terms

For a moment remember with me the various ways God has chosen to describe this terminal event for earth dwellers. In a key passage is Daniel 9. There we see that God explains that the end of days for earth builds up over seven years. This seven-year period is called in the New Testament the Tribulation. In the Old Testament it is called the Day of the Lord.

The seven years also is further divided by God's Word into various sub divisions known as: times, time, and half a time or three and one-half years; also 42 months, and also 1,260 days. All of these are tied to the seven years. The various sub terms are used to distinguish when some events fit into the overall seven-year period.

Graphic: The Seven Years Daniel 9:27a

Graphic: The Midpoint & the Antichrist Daniel 9:27b

Graphic: The Seven Years, 3 ½ Years, 42 Months, and 1,260 Days

That is the Day of the Lord. That is the Lord who returns, and that is what fills the pages of the Scriptures as a warning to all sinners to repent while there is time. Here is a brief description of what will happen. The clearest picture comes when we merge into those closing verses of Revelation 6, some of what the spokesmen for God saw the coming Day of the Lord in the Old Testament.

Graphic: The Six Seals of Revelation 6

Seal # 1 in Revelation 6:1-2: is the White Horse & Rider of global deception, false peace and prosperity and the rise of the superman called the Antichrist.

God gives humans up to what they have always wanted, anything but Him.

Seal # 2 in Revelation 6:3-4: is the Red Horse & Rider of warfare & killing.

God gives humans up to murder, warfare, and death from fighting.

Seal # 3 in Revelation 6:5-6: is the Black Horse & Rider of the spread of famine and scarcity.

God gives up humanity to widespread starvation.

Seal # 4 in Revelation 6:7-8: is the Pale Horse & Rider of the horrific duo of Death and Hades.

When Christ is rejected, the Spirit is restrained, and the Father is unwanted all across the world will be the warfare and famine of the second and third seals, plus the addition of most likely pestilences and plagues called "beasts".

Seal # 5 in Revelation 6:9-11: is when the Prayers of the Martyrs are unleashed. Just as our prayers for God's Kingdom to come are going to be reflected in His wrath during the Tribulation, here we see those who have been slain for their witness for Christ. The martyrs pray, and God powerfully responds. Those prayers break forth in the next seal.

As if a global dictator, global wars, famines, pestilences, and death were not enough, now we see God's Wrath in action. All of the troubles of the Tribulation so far were generated by humans. Now comes a little taste of the Wrath of God.

In Revelation 6:12-17 we see the sixth seal. Within this seal John describes six disasters that strike the Earth as God, now at this mid-point of the seven years, God finally shows the Earth His wrath.

Rev. 6:12 starts after the wars that ravaged humanity, the false promises of the Antichrist that seduced humanity away from the true Gospel, the famines and plagues

Seal # 6 in Revelation 6:12-17: is when the Wrath of God is unleashed and the whole Earth shakes. What an awful time that will be. God unleashed six forms of wrath and touches every level of humanity.

When God Shakes the Earth

Everything that humans have experienced for the 42 months of Revelation 6:1-11, have been mostly self-induced. These first five seals chronicle the natural consequences of sinful humanity's evil ways, magnified by the removal of the restraining Hand of God, through Christ's Church and the Spirit of God.

Great Quake v. 12a “I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake”:

John first notes that this is far more than another of the many quakes that will be increasing as the Tribulation grinds on (Mt. 24:7), this is the first ‘cosmic quake’ (6:13-14) that signals not only all of the six disasters of v. 12-17 as a *mega seimos* (great shaking in Greek). This also is the biggest, strongest, most powerful quake ever to be felt by humans on Earth. That is how God jolts humanity awake to His Presence they so long have ignored and denied.

Sun Blackened v. 12b “and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair”:

What John sees reminds him of sackcloth, a material made from the hair of black goats, and portrays the suppression of sunlight by thick and dark clouds during the day. Creationist and hydraulic engineer, Dr. Henry Morris writes this in his commentary on Revelation:

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. 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.⁴

Moon Blood v. 12c “and the moon became like blood”:

The seismic volcanism of the first jolt of God’s wrath leaves a lingering reminder as the global ash cloud obscures, and alters weather by the reduction of sunlight and breathable air across the earth. One common element in all of the Old Testament prophets descriptions of this same event involves this moon discoloration. As an ominous reminder of God’s wrath, the sun will look like it has a black sheet in front of it each day, and the moon a blood red sheet each night.

In Isaiah 13:10 the prophets sees that, “The sun will be dark when it rises and the

⁴ *The Revelation Record* [Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 1983], 121.

moon will not shed its light.” The prophet Joel adds: “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).

Stars Fall v. 13 “And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind”:

As if the biggest quake, followed by light obscuring volcanic ash and atmospheric borne choking dust were not enough, now comes another round of horrifying wrath unleashed by God. In the darkness of the day and the eerie redness of the night come flashes of light through the smoke filled air. Like mortar shells raining down on a battlefield, God sends cosmic debris with blinding flashes across the sky followed by deafening sonic booms echoing across the entire globe.

This Greek work *asteres* refers to anything in the sky other than the Sun, and sounds ominously similar to our English word asteroids. Just as NASA recently catalogued the 1,400 nearby & dangerous asteroids that could endanger the Earth⁵, God lets earth-dwellers see them up close.

When fireballs fill the skies of the entire globe, it will be like the amazing Russian fireball recently seen on the global news outlets (February 15, 2013) the sound of which circled the earth twice. Only this time there is no place to hide, no place untouched by the booms, crashes, and terrifying incoming missiles from God.

Sky Splits v. 14a “Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up”:

Jesus promised just this event in Luke 21:11, as He said that there would be events people would see in the sky that would lead to heart attacks and death on the spot from fear (“hearts failing them for fear”). That is probably what John sees and tries to describe with the “sky receded” detail. When everything above us, the realm of the Prince of the Power of the Air is struck by God, humans are melted with terror.

Earth Shakes v. 14b “and every mountain and island was moved out of its place”:

Finally, John captures the final event of this sixth seal unleashed. John describes what could only be called a crustal paroxysm, as every above sea level part of the crust of the earth starts to move. What an amazing thought that everything moves around in a spasm as God Almighty jolts the Earth.

⁵ <http://rt.com/news/nasa-hazardous-asteroid-map-575/> August 16, 2013.

Two pages after the last comment by Dr. Morris come these words that clearly describe in scientific terms what John was shown by God:

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". 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.⁶

So, God enters into human events in the most visible way ever. No human ever witnessed God in the act of creation; and few humans witnessed God in human flesh walking the Earth. But, all humans feel the jolt of God. They are terrified, they die of fear, and they flee His face.

Mankind Hides v. 15-17

Look down at what God says will happen as I read Revelation 6:15-17 (NKJV)

And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, 16 and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! 17 For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Welcome to the worst days ever to come to Earth, and God is only starting. This is the first third of what He has planned. The seven trumpets and seven bowls follow the seventh seal about to be unleashed.

The Ruler of Everything is coming

Jesus is seated in Heaven right now, at the Right Hand of God the Father, interceding for us His Church. When Jesus sat down it meant that the work of salvation was finished. Jesus paid the price and earned the right to redeem us, and ever lives to intercede for us. He has opened the way to the Father, and is preparing a place for us.

Our Savior Himself is going to rise from the Right Hand of Almighty God. Jesus Christ is going to empty Heaven of every angel and every saint, and come back to finish the plan of

⁶ The Revelation Record, 123.

God.

As Christ comes, the Earth begins to quake, and every human with sin staining their lives: begins to crawl for cover, burrow for holes to hide, and cry out in the fear that will forever consume them in torments as an Angry God returns.

Coming Again

(John W. Peterson, 1957)

Standing before Him at last,
Trial and trouble all past,
Crowns at His feet we will cast,
Jesus is coming again!

Chorus

Coming again, Coming again,
May be morning, may be noon,
May be evening and may be soon!
Coming again, Coming again;
O what a wonderful day it will be -
Jesus is coming again!