

"The Seals of the Last Days"

Revelation 6:9-17
5-8-2022



INTRODUCTION:

***The Last Days will be a time of:**

I. World-wide Conquest (v. 1-2)

II. Wars & Rumors of Wars (v. 3-4)

III. Severe Famine (v. 5-6)

IV. Death & Destruction (v. 7-8)

V. INNOCENT BLOODSHED (v. 9-11)

VI. INCOMPARABLE HORROR (v. 12-17)

A. In the Day of the LORD, there will be:
<u>Terrifying Signs of Doom</u> (v. 12-14)

1. "Great Earthquake" (v. 12a)
2. "Sun...moon" altered (v. 12b)
3. Stars fall (v. 13)
4. Heaven (sky and space) departs (v. 14a)
5. Every mountain and island shifted (v. 14b)

B. In the Day of the LORD, there will be:
<u>No Place to Hide</u> (v. 15-17)

1. Universal dread (v. 15-16)
2. Total despair (v. 17)



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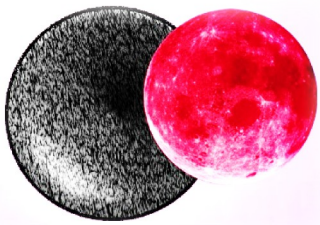
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INTRODUCTION:

In Matthew 24 the Disciples asked Jesus what would be the sign of His coming and of the end of the age. What He outlined there runs strikingly similar to Revelation 6.

Revelation chapter 6 unveils before our eyes a general overview of the future final 7 years of this age. This chapter spans most of the final 7 years.

It gives no details of events, but a synopsis of what is yet to occur. The details are given after the seven seals are broken and the trumpet and seal judgments are fulfilled.

The prophecies in Revelation often involve a broad, general picture (overview) followed by detailed pictures.

EX: In good journalism (newspaper articles, etc.), the writer will give the major points (to grab your attention), then go back and give the details.

Revelation 6 is similar to a movie trailer (it previews events) and gives a general view of events which happen on earth leading up to the end of this age. The seals preview events leading up to a time period known as the Day of the Lord.

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V. INNOCENT BLOODSHED (v. 9-11)

Note the end-time persecution of believers - SEE Mt. 24:9-12

"Souls under the altar" = the bottom (the foot) of the alter is where the blood of a sacrifice was poured out in the O.T. (Ex. 29:12; Lev. 4:7, 18, 25, 30).

These souls are under the altar because they allowed their blood to be shed as martyrs for Christ during the Tribulation.

Daniel 7:21-22 - I beheld, and the same horn (the Antichrist) made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.

Revelation 20:4-6 - And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.
5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.
6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

NOTE: Verse 9 proves that the saint goes to Heaven when he dies.
"To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord."

They were martyred for two reasons:

1. for the Word of God
   (they would not deny their convictions)

2. for the testimony they maintained
   (they would not let go of their faith)

"How long" = Note: The question is not IF but WHEN? Many O.T. saints asked the same thing (Ps. 74:9, 79:5, 94:3; Hab. 1:2).

Judgment is certain, and unavoidable; but God controls the timetable. A delay in judgment does not mean that God is asleep; nor that He is aloof and uninterested in His people's suffering, but that He is fulfilling His plan.

V. 10

Note: The martyrs appeal to God's holiness and truth. Why?

God's holiness and truthfulness are the basis upon which we can be sure that He will recompense (take vengeance).

--God must judge because He is holy (His holiness demands that He execute vengeance upon evil doers - Rev. 20:1-15).

--God will judge because He is true (He cannot lie. He promised that He would - Eccles. 12:14 - "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."
SEE II Pet. 2:9, 3:7).

V. 10-11
APPLIC: Be patient. God will recompense. Never take vengeance yourself. If you do, you are robbing God of His prerogative (Heb. 10:30).

V. 11
"White robes" = a symbol of purity and undefilement (cp. Rev. 3:4, 5).

God alone can make us white as snow (Is. 1:18). Our purity is "in Christ"; and our robe comes from God. We cannot earn or buy one with our works.

NOTE: "Souls" (v. 9) are clothed (v. 11) even before they receive their resurrected bodies.

"A little season" - a short time. The Great Tribulation does not last long (7 years). Jesus said that the same generation of people living at the beginning of the Trib. would not pass away until it was over - Mt. 24:34.

The Tribulation is not some long, indefinite period of time as some amillennial theologians believe.

"Should be killed...fulfilled" - God sovereignly knows the fate of each believer.

God does not pour out His fury in the Day of the Lord until his saints are taken out.

Does not the Day of God's wrath include the first five seals?

Evidently not. Prewrath proofs:

(1) While Christ is sovereign over the events of the first five seals (since He opens each one), the nature of the events that transpire indicate the results of man's sin and wrath, not God's. The N.T. speaks of both the wrath of Satan (Rev. 12:12; Lk.21:23) and the wrath of God (Rev. 6:17). And the contexts of both clearly distinguish them in time and character.

(2) During the five seals, God uses natural (earthly) causes to accomplish His purpose; whereas beginning with the sixth seal and continuing through the trumpet and bowl judgments, God uses supernatural causes to judge.

* (3) The fifth seal could not be God's wrath since it describes the martyrdom of God's faithful saints.

* (4) The question asked by the martyred "souls under the altar" (Rev. 6:10)
indicates that God's judicial wrath on His enemies had not yet begun.
(God answers their prayer in 8:3).
Revelation 6:10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

(5) The word "wrath" is not used in the first five seals.

(6) The sign of God's wrath is said to begin in Rev. 6:17, and the outpouring of God's wrath begins in 8:7

VI. INCOMPARABLE HORROR (v. 12-17)

A. In the Day of the LORD, there will be: Terrifying Signs of Doom (v. 12-14)

The sixth seal introduces the impending "Day of the Lord."

The "Time of the Gentiles" has run its course. Now it's time for God to undeniably step into human history!

V. 12-14

1) SEE Joel 2:30-31 - the time described is "before" the Day of the Lord (cp. Acts 2:17-21)

2) SEE Matthew 24:29 - the time described is "after" the almost completed 7 years of Tribulation.

The physical disturbances described in verses 12-14 occur just prior to the Battle of Armageddon (SEE Is. 34:1-8).

1. "Great Earthquake" (v. 12a)

Earthquakes are often used to introduce God's judgment.

When God wants to make an undeniable statement, He will often do so by sending an earthquake to accompany a climatic event.

EX: Christ's crucifixion - Mt. 27:51-54
Christ's resurrection - Mt. 28:2
Paul and Silas' release from prison - Acts 16
During Uzziah's reign (Amos 1:1)
(Josephus connected this earthquake with the sacrilege and consequent punishment of that monarch - cp. Antiquities IX 10:4 with II Chron. 26:16).

Earthquakes are God's means of warning of impending judgment (cp. Is. 29:6; Ps. 18:7 - "Then the earths hook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because He was wroth.").

NOTE: the earthquake mentioned in Rev. 6:12 is called "great." This quake is not a mere tremor; but a worldwide shaking of the earth that results in universal destruction. Its description is in Rev. 16:17-19.

2. "Sun...moon" altered (v. 12b)

"Black as sackcloth of hair" - sackcloth was the rough cloth made from the hair of a black goat and worn in times of mourning (Reinecker, p. 827).

"Sun" - Is. 24:23 - "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously."

"Moon" - Is. 13:10 - "For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine."

Since the sun is darkened, the moon no longer reflects its light; but rather the moon reflects the blood-guilty earth. (EX: How water turns to blood in Trib. in payback for all the innocent blood that had been shed. SEE Rev. 16:3-7).

The entire world depends upon the faithfulness of the sunrise and sunset to fulfill their established orderly patterns. When the sun, moon, and stars forsake this order, it is evident that the end of the world is at hand (Charles, cited from Reinecker, p. 828).

3. Stars fall (v. 13)

"Untimely figs" = unripe green figs which fall off of the tree before harvest time.

It's interesting that earth is the target for all stars. Outer-space (as it were) aims its gun and fires its bullets at a world that deserves execution.

4. Heaven (sky and space) departs (v. 14a)

The time that <u>every</u> mountain and island will be jarred loose is when the <u>seventh bowl</u> is poured out at the end of the Tribulation (Rev. 16:20) (just prior to the final battle).

"The heaven" - the sky and outer-space.

A reference to the first and second heavens (not a reference to God's heaven - the third heaven - c[. II Cor. 12:2 - "The third heaven is called Paradise -
v. 4)

Heaven "departed" - lit. was split apart. The picture is of sky and space being ripped in two and having the two ends rolled up like a scroll, thus revealing what has been hidden from man's view since the creation of the world -- namely, the throne of God in the third heaven! [NOTE: their reaction when His glory is made visible (v. 15-16)]

Matt. 26:64 - Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

NOTE: There is coming a day when "they shall look on Him whom they pierced" as they see Jesus visibly returning to earth.

There is coming a day when one last effort will be vainly attempted to destroy Him who is indestructible, as the enemies of Christ see Him coming (Rev. 19:19).

5. Every mountain and island shifted (v. 14b)

B. In the Day of the LORD, there will be:
<u>No Place to Hide</u> (v. 15-17)

SEE Isaiah 2:10-21 and 13:6-13

1. Universal dread (v. 15-16)

The emphasis is on the <u>all-inclusiveness</u> of the terror. Not a living soul on earth (outside of the redeemed) will avoid the awesome judgment of God.

The following list covers a <u>seven-fold spectrum</u> of different ranks and status:
"kings" - nobility
"great men" - authority (civil officials)
"rich men" - wealth
" chief captains" - high rank (a reference to a leader of 1,000 soldiers)
"mighty men" - strength
"bond men" - a slave (servant)
"free man" - the liberated man

<u>Everyone</u> -
from the highest to the lowest . . .
from the richest to the poorest . . .
from the strongest to the weakest . . .
from the most well-known to the most unknown. . .
from the emperor down to the most insignificant slave
. . . will tremble in terror when the sixth seal is loosed.

"Fall on us" - Note their request is not to die but to be covered from the view (presence) of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Him that sitteth . . .Lamb" - NOTE: Again, God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ are tied together, pointing to the equality of the Father and Son.

"Wrath" - deep seated anger!

2. Total despair (v. 17)

"The great day" - a day of wrath like no other.

"The wrath of the Lamb" - "wrath and lamb" do not usually go together, since a lamb is a tender, small, harmless animal. Many wrongly view Jesus Christ as weak, impotent, powerless, unauthoritative, etc.

Even though He came to earth the first time as meek and gentle, He will return the second full of fury toward rebellious mankind!

"Who shall be able to stand" - Who will hold their ground when God pours out His fury? Obvious answer - No one!

- Who will proudly boast then? Who will belittle God's power then? Who will degrade God's sovereignty then?
- Who will diminish God's holiness, righteousness, and justice then?
- Who will mock God's hatred for sin then?

CONCLUSION:

The difficult and dreadful days ahead should **humble** us before a holy, all-powerful God and stir us to flee from the wrath to come!