

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Revelation 6:12-17/Cosmic Disturbances/Signs of the Times

7/23/17

The first four seals can be described as an intensification of what we have seen in history but with a global impact. The fifth seal brings us to the middle of the Tribulation. With the opening of the sixth seal, however, what spills out is unique!

Rev. 6:12 - *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.*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 (that easily).*¹⁴ *Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.*¹⁵ *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?"*

Jesus said earthquakes would be one of the signs of "the beginning of sorrows" (Matt. 24:7-8). The Hebrew prophets predicted a time where God would intensely shake the earth (Hag. 2:7).

In seal 6 there are five different "previews" of the remainder of the Tribulation period. These "previews" can be found in the trumpets. When the bowl judgments occur, they will do so in a very short period of time towards the end. At the opening of the sixth seal, perhaps we are looking at one of those "previews" of the rest of the Tribulation when we read...

I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake. Joel 2:10 – in describing "the day of the Lord," the prophet explains that *the earth quakes before them* (the enemy), *the heavens tremble; the sun and moon grow dark, and the stars diminish their brightness*. This catastrophic event extends beyond the geography of the earth to affect the cosmic realm...

The sun became black as sackcloth of hair – Jesus said that cosmic signs would be associated with the time of the end.

the moon became blood – the entire moon will take on a reddish appearance.

And the stars of heaven fell to the earth – Gk word for star in this passage is *asteres* from which we get the word *asteroid*. Here and in Rev. 8:10 *stars* are said to fall to the earth. It seems best to understand these as asteroids (or meteors) for even the smallest sun would consume the entire planet should it ever fall to earth.

Since the seven seals encompass all the judgments and then the Second Coming, let's look at what happens after the tribulation re: the cosmic disturbances...

Matt. 24:29-30 - Immediately after the tribulation *of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the*

heavens will be shaken. ³⁰ Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Rev. 6:14 – *Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up* – the Gk. word for “receded” is the same word that was used to describe the “parting” of Paul and Silas from Barnabas and Mark (Acts 15:39). The NASB - *The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up.* At the Great White Throne judgment – nonbelievers standing before God, *Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them* (Rev. 20:11). GOD is going to cause this to happen and He’s Almighty. HE created the earth. Certainly He can pull it apart! We see the universe coming apart in the book of Revelation as we look for new heavens and a new earth!

Timeframe?

Isa. 34:4, 6, 8 – Context: God has judged the nations and destroyed all their armies – utterly destroying them. Does this sound like near the end – Armageddon? ⁴ *All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll; ...For the LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Edom* (Petra – Isa. 63)... ⁸ *For it is the day of the LORD’s vengeance, the year of recompense for the cause of Zion.* When Jesus returns at His physical Second Coming, it is the day of vengeance, and the year of His redeemed has come!

After the heavens are shaken, we read...

Matt. 24:30 - *Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven....* Could it be that the sky recedes/parts to reveal Jesus return? Remember, the seals cover the seven year Tribulation to the Second Coming!

Continuing in Rev. 6...

and every mountain and island was moved out of its place – It has been suggested that the seismic disturbances will be of such magnitude that the entire geography of the earth is altered. This is a preview. In Rev. 16:20 we read that *every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.*

Rev. 6:15-16 - *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!”*

The kings of the earth:

Psa. 2:2 - *The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying* (timeframe of Psalm – directly before the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom).

Rev. 17:2 – the kings of the earth will commit fornication with Babylon.

Rev. 16:14 – when the sixth bowl is poured out the *spirits of demons, performing signs, go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.*

the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men – power given to the leaders during this time.

every slave and every free man – while this timeframe might be looked upon as being at the “height” of humanism’s achievements, at the time of the end, slavery will not yet have been abolished.

hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains – the magnitude of the judgments coming upon the earth affects every man! Why does every man hide? It is a vain attempt to hide from almighty God. Isn’t this a classic scenario of man’s response to his own sin? Hiding from God!

Rev. 6:16 - *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!* It appears that they see God Who sits on the throne. They are not asking for God’s mercy, they are rather calling out to inanimate objects and asking for a covering instead of asking for the covering of God in Jesus, the Lamb of God! There will be no hiding at the Great White Throne of Judgment – God’s final judgment of the non-believers – at the end of the Millennial Kingdom.

How do people respond to us when we share Jesus?

II Cor. 2:15-16 - *For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.*¹⁶ *To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?* We do not share in our own strength. We present the Gospel only through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The wrath of the Lamb – The Lamb Who was silently led to the slaughter (Isa. 53:7) at the cross, Who took our judgment at the cross, grants forgiveness to those who put their trust in HIM ALONE for their salvation...this Lamb is now meting out wrath. These who cry out to the rocks to fall upon them, had rejected Jesus. And now, upon seeing the Lamb and recognizing who He is, it’s too late!

Rev. 6:17 - *For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”* *has come* – the Gk. word *helthen* is aorist indicative which refers to a previous arrival of the wrath, not something about to take place. These who ask for the mountains and the rocks to fall upon them are recognizing the wrath of the Lamb!

who is able to stand? What a question! *Able* is in the present tense. These people are concerned about now! That's been the problem since the fall – not thinking about the future – not concerned about an afterlife!

“Signs of the times” – how are we to understand that phrase?

Jesus used the term “signs of the times” to verify His first coming. Jesus fulfilled OT prophecies and performed miracles authenticating His Messiahship (Psa. 16:10; Psa.22; Isa. 7:14; Isa. 35:5-6; Isa. 53; Isa. 61:1ff; Micah 5:2....).

Jesus came against the Jewish religious leaders for missing the signs of His first coming. Jesus spoke of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD...*For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side,⁴⁴ and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation* (Luke 19:43-44).

In Luke 21:25-28 - *And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring;²⁶ men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.²⁷ Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.²⁸ Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.*

In this passage, Jesus clearly referred to signs that will precede His physical second coming to earth.

In Matt. 24:3, when Jesus' disciples asked Him, *Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?*...Jesus did not tell the disciples, “Don't be concerned about any signs.” In Matt. 24:4-31 we read of general and specific signs of the end of the age – DURING THE TRIBULATION!

The *events* we are seeing in the world today are setting the stage for what will occur after the rapture in anticipation of Jesus' physical return to the earth to establish His Kingdom. Definite signs precede Jesus' physical Second Coming.

No sign is noted in Scripture signaling the rapture. Signs are noted for Jesus' physical return not for the Church's meeting Him in the air!

The rapture is a sign-less event. The rapture is imminent...it can occur at any moment. There is no prophetic event in God's prophetic calendar that must occur prior to the rapture. The rapture is the next event on God's prophetic calendar...for the CHURCH. Therefore there can be no signs for the rapture!

The time for us NOW is the Church Age. The stage is being set. The props are in place, the actors have been selected. Yet, the curtain has not risen. God is allowing world events to take place and players to assume their roles for the drama to begin. Before the

curtain goes up and reveals the lawless one, the son of perdition, the antichrist, the Church will rise to meet the Lord in the air at the rapture.

Jesus' physical second coming, when His feet will touch the Mt. of Olives (Zech. 14:4) is **preceded by SIGNS**: the 7-year Tribulation, the antichrist being revealed, 144,000 Jewish male virgins being sealed and used by God as His servants, the two Jewish witnesses coming on the scene and preaching, angels proclaiming the Gospel. . . . We read of all these signs before Jesus returns on a white horse followed by the redeemed on white horses (Rev. 19:11).

Therefore, Jesus' physical second coming CANNOT be imminent; it cannot be at any moment – because the signs must precede His Second Coming.

And so we see these signs unfold in the book of Revelation – but not for the Church.

How are we to understand the “signs of the times”? “Signs of the times” are visible events pointing to God’s direct intervention!