

7. The Sixth Seal Cosmic Disturbances

Revelation 6:12-17

The Book of Revelation

YouTube video link: <https://youtu.be/-C9o9tzuP-Y>

In our last two studies, we have been looking at chapter six of the Book of Revelation, starting with the [Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse](#) and our previous study, [The Fifth Seal and Great Tribulation](#). Today, we look at what happens on Earth at the opening of the sixth seal. The Lord is revealing to us a time in the future, a seven-year period spoken of by the prophet Daniel (9:27), in the middle of which an event called the “Abomination of Desolation” takes place, i.e., a desecration by the Antichrist of a newly built temple in Jerusalem, Israel. The fifth seal and Matthew’s Gospel tell of a time of great distress or tribulation that occurs after that desecration takes place. Paul the Apostle states that part of this desecration is when the Antichrist will seat himself in the Temple of God, proclaiming himself as God and demanding worship from people all over the world (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

During that period of tribulation, there will be various events taking place, e.g., fire from heaven, the two witnesses, and an angel preaching (Revelation 14:6). We will examine those events in greater detail as we study further in this book. Before we read what happens at the opening of the sixth seal, let’s look more into the events described as occurring during the Great Tribulation (KJV) or Distress (NIV), i.e., the preceding signs about which Jesus warned His disciples on the Mount of Olives. Jesus warned that the situation on Earth would look very bleak:

If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened (Matthew 24:22).

The Great Tribulation, Distress, persecution, and martyrdom of God’s people will be cut short of the entire three and a half years. This Greek word (koloboó), translated into English by the phrase *cut short* means to maim or amputate or cut something short of its expected length. The expected time of three and a half years after the Abomination of Desolation will be cut short by the intervention of the Lord to snatch up (rapture) those who are in a covenant relationship with Him by His sacrificial death on the cross. Then will begin the wrath of God. We don’t know how long the Church all over the world must endure this tribulation or persecution before it is cut short by the intervention of the Lord. Jesus went on to warn us about some other things happening during the Great Tribulation:

²³**At that time** if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. ²⁴For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵See, I have told you ahead of time. ²⁶“So if anyone tells you, ‘There he is, out in the wilderness,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here he is, in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. ²⁷For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ²⁸Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather (Matthew 24:23-28, Emphasis added).

The words “At that time” (v. 23) are the Lord showing us that He was talking chronologically about what will happen during that time. We are to guard our hearts against those who will try to

deceive us, perhaps by suggesting that earth was seeded by supernatural beings from another world, a philosophy that is often pushed by the New Age prophets. There is an agenda behind the supernatural signs purporting to come from aliens or beings from another universe. These will be demonic spirits seeking to deceive, if it were possible, even the elect of God (v. 24), the Body of Christ (the true Church). We must not listen to those who claim to be prophets, telling us that the Lord Jesus has landed in some foreign country. The Lord made it very clear that, when He comes, every eye on Earth will see Him. His coming will brighten the darkness of the time, and there will be no doubt Who Christ is when He comes. Verse 28 speaks of wherever moral corruption is taking place there will be vultures gathering.

Let's now concentrate on the chronological timeline revealed to us as happening at the opening of the sixth seal, for before Christ's coming, there will be cosmic signs:

The Sixth Seal Opened

¹²I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, ¹³and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. ¹⁴The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place (Revelation 6:12-14).

John was describing a picture that would have been very familiar to his Jewish readers. The Jewish prophets and seers saw a time when the earth would be shattered and a tide of destruction would flow over the old world before the new world was born. They saw this as a time when the most reliable things in the universe would become disorderly and chaos would reign.

Are these cosmic signs a result of elite leaders tampering with the earth's atmosphere, or could they be the last warning from God to the unrepentant that the Lord is about to intervene? Could both things be true? What do you think?

When the sixth seal is broken, cosmic signs begin to happen, which leads us to ask three questions about what causes these cosmic signs to occur in the future. At this point in history, we might not be able to understand these events before they take place, but we can be "watchful" and have our eyes open and our hearts prepared as we see end-time events unfold, knowing that Jesus warned us that these things would take place.

1) Are the cosmic signs the result of the leaders of the earth reaping what they have sown?

In the 1950s and 1960s, the US government tested more and more powerful nuclear weapons deep down under the earth's surface. Since then, several countries have done likewise. Can new, more powerful tests cause great earthquakes or seismic activity? Also, weather manipulation has been going on for decades. China recently admitted to seeding the clouds to control the weather during their Communist China Centennial Celebration. It sounds like the stuff of science fiction, but in fact, the first cloud-seeding experiment was performed in 1946! Cloud-seeding is done by shooting silver iodide particles into the clouds to attract water droplets to modify the weather. Some scientists have expressed concerns that altering rainfall distribution could influence weather patterns, causing water scarcity in some places and flooding in others. Do we really know the

consequences of these efforts or how they may be misused for evil intent? The Lord warned us centuries ago about a time that is now here when the Earth itself will be "defiled" by its people:

⁴The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers, the heavens languish with the earth. ⁵**The earth is defiled by its people; they have disobeyed the laws violated the statutes** and broken the everlasting covenant. ⁶Therefore a curse consumes the earth; **its people must bear their guilt** (Isaiah 24:4-6, Emphasis added).

What could be referred to as “the laws and statutes that have been disobeyed” by scientists and evil leaders of the earth? Consider just one of the projects that our leaders have spent more money on than the whole of the US space program. I'm talking about the vast Large Hadron Collider or CERN, as it is often called. It is humanity's largest particle collider, and it is a circular, 17-mile-long (27 kilometers) tunnel, 300 hundred feet under the French-Swiss border, ringed by magnets. The magnets accelerate streams of particles (usually protons, sometimes other things) to enormous speeds, then crash them into one another. Scientists study these collisions, where unusual particles sometimes emerge, to search for as-yet-unseen building blocks of the universe. As of writing (June 2024), the most significant project in human history is still facing difficulties in getting up and running smoothly.

They are looking for the building blocks of life itself, i.e., how creation started and what holds it together, the Higgs-Bosen particle, also referred to as the “god particle.” Outside the main building is a statue of a Hindu god by the name of Shiva, a dancing god of destruction. Steven Hawking, the famous theoretical physicist who was not a Christian, had concerns about this project and made his views known. He warned the hundreds of particle physicists that they were opening Pandora’s Box, and once it was opened, we would not be able to put back in what comes out. Here’s what he wrote in his book:

The Higgs potential has the worrisome feature that it might become metastable at energies above 100bn gigaelectronvolts (GeV). This could mean that the universe could undergo catastrophic vacuum decay, with a bubble of the true vacuum expanding at the speed of light. This could happen at any time, and we wouldn’t see it coming.¹

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kk0Ax6Mlw4w>

<https://www.nbcnews.com/mach/science/huge-new-atom-smasher-would-be-world-s-biggest-far-ncna959071>

The darkening of the sun and the moon turning blood-red could also be the result of air pollution caused by nuclear explosions on earth’s surface during what happens as the second seal is opened—war. In nuclear explosions, vast amounts of dust rise into the upper atmosphere as during the atomic blasts in Hiroshima and Nagasaki when the light of the sun was blocked out.² What about the stars falling? What did John see when he described the stars falling to earth? I always wondered how the stars in the sky could fall to the earth, but John could be seeing showers of

¹ <https://www.themarysue.com/stephen-hawking-god-particle/>

² <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/hiroshima/article35881700/>

asteroids hitting Earth. There is also another theory that ties in with what is happening at this point. The prophet Isaiah wrote:

¹⁹The earth is broken up, **the earth is split asunder**, the earth is thoroughly shaken. ²⁰**The earth reels like a drunkard, it sways like a hut in the wind**; so heavy upon it is the guilt of its rebellion that it falls—never to rise again. ²¹In that day **the LORD will punish the powers in the heavens above and the kings on the earth below**. ²²They will be herded together like prisoners bound in a dungeon; they will be shut up in prison and be punished after many days. ²³**The moon will be abashed, the sun ashamed**; for the LORD Almighty will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before its elders, gloriously (Isaiah 24:19-23).

If a person were standing in the evening at any point on Earth, looking at the horizon, the Earth tottering on its axis (v. 20) would appear as if the stars were falling from the sky. What a terrible and awesome sight! This passage in Isaiah, chapter 24, leads us to the second possibility as to what causes the cosmic signs:

2) **Are these cosmic signs supernatural manifestations** taking place in the heavenly realms as Michael the Archangel casts down Satan and evil angelic forces to the earth? In the passage above, verse 21 says that the Lord will punish the powers in the heavens above and the kings on the earth below. This reminds us of the invisible powers of darkness: “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, **against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms**’ (Ephesians 6:12). Job 38:7, Revelation 1:20, and Isaiah 14:12 likens angels, both evil and good, as stars. Could this reference to the stars being thrown down in our passage in Revelation be a reference to Satan and his angels being cast down? We cannot be dogmatic about such things, but it is possible, for we are told of such a thing happening in Revelation 12. Let’s look at that passage:

⁷Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. ⁸But he was not strong enough, and **they lost their place in heaven**. ⁹The **great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him**. ¹⁰Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, **has been hurled down**. ¹¹**They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death**. ¹²Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury because he knows that his time is short (Revelation 12:10-12. Emphasis added).

When these demonic forces are cast down, it is terrible for earth’s occupants, for Satan knows that he has little time (v. 12) to muster forces against the coming of the Lord.

These cosmic signs are also spoken of as happening just before the Day of the Lord begins, as told in Matthew and Mark's Gospels. Matthew writes in accord with the Book of Revelation about

cosmic signs in the sky, saying that **after** the tribulation or distress (*thlipsis*) of those days and the appearance of the cosmic signs, He would send His angels and gather His elect from all parts of Earth. This gathering by the angels can only be the snatching up of God's people, commonly called the rapture:

²⁹***Immediately after the distress*** [The Great Tribulation] of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken. ³⁰***At that time*** the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. ³¹And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, ***and they will gather his elect*** from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other (Matthew 24:29-31).

After several cosmic signs at the opening of the sixth seal, the angels will gather the elect (everyone who is born again of God, John 3:3), and they will be seen in heaven before the throne (v. 31, Revelation 7).

3) **The third possibility as to the cause of the cosmic signs could be that the wrath of God** is beginning to be released on the earth. We have already seen that at the opening of the fifth seal, those believers who were martyred cried out to God for Him to bring judgment on those who were murdering believers, but God told them to wait a bit longer (Revelation 6:11). These cosmic signs in the sky may be one last warning to Earth's inhabitants before the final seal is opened and the back-to-back event of the rapture and the wrath of God begins to be poured out for the rest of the seven-year period. In an online article, Bible teacher Charles Cooper writes:

The prophet Joel promised that the Day of the Lord (the eschatological wrath of God) begins after the unique portents in the sky and on earth occur. The grouping of these unique events occurs in Revelation 6:12-14 and is specifically named as such. No other occurrence of this unique set of events appears in the Book of Revelation. The portents indicate that the out-breaking of God's wrath is imminent. It is difficult to understand why John would put the indicator of God's imminent wrath five seals later than its actual beginning [If there was a pre-tribulation rapture]. The idea that God's wrath will begin imperceptibly and build to a great climax is an invention of theological necessity without a biblical base.³

Sixth Seal Panicked Anticipation of the Wrath of God

¹⁵Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and everyone else, both slave and free, hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. ¹⁶They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! ¹⁷For the ***great day of their wrath has come***, and who can withstand it?" (Revelation 6:15-17).

In your own words, share about who you think is hiding from God? Why are the mighty and rich mentioned specifically? How will these events level humankind?

³ <https://prewrathrapture.com/the-terminus-a-quo-of-the-day-of-the-lord-a-review/>

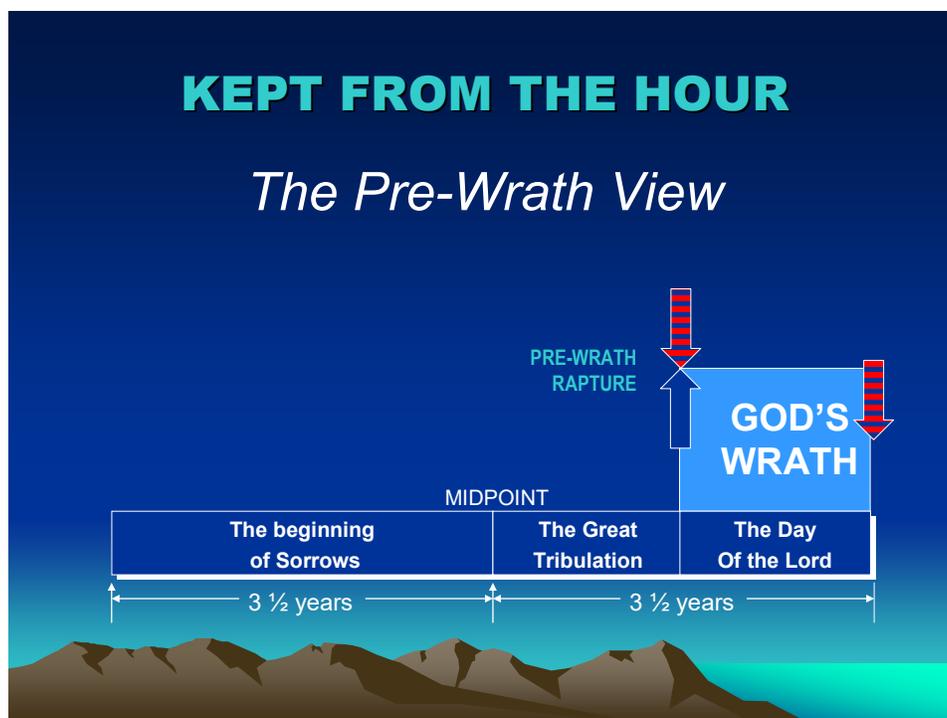
All who have rejected the gospel begin to look for caves in the mountains to hide in—why? From whom are they hiding? They are hiding from their Creator, the Lord God Almighty, Who sits upon the throne, but they are also hiding from the wrath of the Lamb (v.16). The wrath of the Lamb is a paradoxical statement, for we don't normally associate anger and wrath from a Lamb. Many people make the mistake of thinking that Jesus would never bring them into judgment. They have always believed in a meek and mild Savior. They don't anticipate that this same Jesus will be “revealed from heaven with his mighty angels ⁸in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might” (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9). These panicked people have lived their lives in rebellion against God and refuse to repent. Now they would rather die than bend the knee to the Lordship of Christ, for every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Philippians 2:11). What an insult to the One who offers the children of man a complete pardon. The judgment of them shall be terrible. The writer of the Book of Hebrews warns his readers:

²⁶If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, ²⁷but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. ²⁸Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. ²⁹How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? ³⁰For we know him who said, “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” and again, “The Lord will judge his people.” ³¹It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Hebrews 10:26-31).

It is a dreadful and fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God (v. 31), and this has been the problem with humanity from the beginning in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve hid from the Lord. Sin will always cause us to hide from our Creator. The only way to deal with sin is to acknowledge our sin, turn from it, and receive the forgiveness of the Lord (1 John 1:8-9). If we stay in our rebellion and will not bring our sin into the light, our hearts become hardened against the Lord, and we run from His presence, but there is no cave or place to hide from the Lord. He sees all and knows all.

At the breaking of the sixth seal and the cosmic signs, the enemies of God acknowledge that the time of judgment has now come, and they have refused the substitutionary sacrifice for their sins. Now, at the breaking of the seventh seal and the rapture of God's people, the wrath of God and the Day of the Lord will begin. The wrath of God didn't start years previously, as the pre-tribulation teaching would suggest. God's Word says that it begins at the breaking of the seventh seal and right after the sixth seal cosmic signs.

How does one prepare internally for the coming of the Lord and for whatever believers may have to experience in the Last Days? Think in terms of preparing your heart, your values, and your habits. Discuss.



In the diagram above, I had to put the arrow symbolizing the rapture somewhere, but no man knows the day or the hour that Christ will come for those who have entrusted their lives to Him. We don't know at what stage in the second half of the seven years the catching up or rapture will occur. I believe that Jew and Gentile born-again believers will appear together before the Father in heaven at the same time before the throne. There are not two churches, i.e., one composed of Jews and another of Gentiles, or even two Gentile Churches, one going to heaven before others left on earth. I do not give any credence to the End Times view as described in the *Left Behind* series of books, no matter how many books are sold. Jew and Gentile together are made spotless because of the blood covenant Jesus instituted at the cross of Calvary. Believers in Christ are without blame before our God, and He will wipe away our tears (Revelation 21:4).

Our God will not allow us to go through anything that He will not go through with us. He will sustain us and give His grace for whatever is ahead for the saints. A story told by Corrie Ten Boom that comes to mind illustrates this point. Corrie was a Dutch woman whose father owned a watch shop in Haarlem, Holland when World War II broke out. This Christ-like family began providing "hiding places" for persecuted Jews. She lived through many trials and persecution when her family went to a concentration camp because of the help they offered to the Jews.

At one point, Corrie was afraid and did not think she could handle what was ahead. Her father asked her, "Corrie, when you and I go to Amsterdam, when do I give you your ticket?" She replied, "Why, just before we get on the train." "Exactly!" he replied. "And our wise Father in heaven knows when we are going to need things. When the time comes that you need strength, you will look into your heart and find the strength you need, just in time. God will give you what you need when you need it."

We are not to be fearful of the things we read. God has given us His Word because He wants to reveal these things to us so that, when we see them, we know we are approaching the glorious end. We know who wins! He comes to bring justice, peace, and healing to the earth and all creation. We will finally see true justice. The whole creation groans, awaiting His coming. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

Prayer: Father, I thank You that You have chosen me and called me Your child. Whatever trials I may go through, please give me Your enabling power and grace so that I may glorify You with every decision I make. Please mold and shape my character to be all that You want me to be. Amen.

This Bible study is one of [many studies in the Book of Revelation](#).

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