

The Book Of Revelation Study 34

THE FEAR OF THE WRATH TO COME: THE SIXTH SEAL

Revelation 6:12-17 (NKJV)

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.*

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?"*

One of the central prophetic themes in Scripture is the coming of the final day of God's wrath known as the Day of the Lord.

While it is true that "God is angry with the wicked every day"

Psalms 7:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ *God is a just judge, And God is angry with the wicked every day.*

The day of the Lord is an expression used to describe periods when God specially intervenes in human history for judgment.

The phrase "Day of the Lord" appears nineteen times in the Old Testament and four times in the New.

It is a unique time when God's power and holiness are unveiled, bringing terror and death to His enemies.

The Prophets describe the Day of the Lord as;

- a. Destruction from the Almighty;

Isaiah 13:6 (NKJV)

⁶ *Wail, for the day of the Lord is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty.*

Joel 1:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ *Alas for the day! For the day of the Lord is at hand; It shall come as destruction from the Almighty.*

- b. A time of "fury and burning anger"

Isaiah 13:9 (NKJV)

⁹ *Behold, the day of the Lord comes, Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, To lay the land desolate; And He will destroy its sinners from it.*

- c. A "time of doom"

Ezekiel 30:3 (NKJV)

³ *For the day is near, Even the day of the Lord is near; It will be a day of clouds, the time of the Gentiles.*

- d. "great and very awesome"

Joel 2:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ *The Lord gives voice before His army, For His camp is very great; For strong is the One who executes His word. For the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; Who can endure it?*

- e. And "darkness and not light"

Amos 5:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ *Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord! For what good is the day of the Lord to you? It will be darkness, and not light.*

Amos 5:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ *Is not the day of the Lord darkness, and not light? Is it not very dark, with no brightness in it?*

The phrase "the Day of the Lord" is not limited to future, final wrath, but sometimes refers to imminent historical judgments, which occurred during Old Testament history (*Isa 13:6-22; Ezek 30:2-19; Joel 1:15; Amos 5:18-20; Obad. 11:-14; Zeph. 1:14-18*).

These historical Day of the Lord judgments were usually preceded by some preliminary judgments of lesser severity.

They acted as warnings by providing sample previews of the far more devastating judgments to come when the Day actually arrived.

The use of the phrase, that we want to see, is the ones used to describe God's final, eschatological, judgments at the end of human history

This final Day of the Lord will also have its preliminary judgments in the first five seals, before it begins with the opening of the sixth seal,

Revelation 6:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ *For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"*

That day will unfold in two stages;

First, during the Tribulation;

1 Thessalonians 5:2 (NKJV)

² *For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.*

And then at the end of the Millennium;

2 Peter 3:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.*

The two stages are separated by a thousand years.

It is noteworthy that Peter, as if to erase any questions about that separation, reminds the reader that "with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.

2 Peter 3:8 (NKJV)

⁸ *But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*

The most detailed New Testament exposition of the coming Day of the Lord is found in 1 Thess.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-4 (NKJV)

¹ **But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you.**

² **For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.**

³ **For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.**

⁴ **But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.**

It seems as though many of the Thessalonians had asked Paul about the timing, the sequence of events leading up to the coming Day of the Lord.

They were confused, especially about those who had died before Christ's return which they believed would happen in their lifetime.

Having taught them all that God wanted them to know, he cautioned them to live Godly lives in light of God's coming judgments

1 Thessalonians 5:4-8 (NKJV)

⁴ *But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.*

⁵ *You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.*

⁶ *Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.*

⁷ *For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.*

⁸ *But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.*

Paul saw that getting caught up and absorbed with the details of prophetic timing at the expense of growing in grace was (and) is unprofitable.

God has not chosen to disclose the precise time of the final Day of the Lord or the return of Jesus Christ;

Matthew 24:36 (NKJV)

³⁶ *"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.*

Acts 1:7 (NKJV)

⁷ *And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.*

Unfortunately the practice of date setting continues unabated in our own time.

Since the Day of the Lord will come unexpectedly and without warning (like a thief in the night), believers alive during the Tribulation are to live in anticipation and expectation of its imminent arrival.

Every generation must be alert and ready for the Day of the Lord, and in the light of that possibility we should heed Peter's warning

2 Peter 3:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ *Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;*

Even those alive during the Tribulation will not know the precise time that the Day of the Lord will begin. They will be duped by false prophets who will reassure them that judgment is not near; rather "peace and safety" are at hand, just as their predecessors falsely reassured rebellious Israel;

Micah 3:5 (NKJV)

⁵ *Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets Who make my people stray; Who chant "Peace" While they chew with their teeth, But who prepare war against him Who puts nothing into their mouths:*

Jeremiah 6:13-14 (NKJV)

¹³ *"Because from the least of them even to the greatest of them, Everyone is given to covetousness; And from the prophet even to the priest, Everyone deals falsely.*

¹⁴ *They have also healed the hurt of My people slightly, Saying, 'Peace, peace!' When there is no peace.*

Jeremiah 8:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ *For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly, Saying, 'Peace, peace!' When there is no peace.*

These lying deceivers will scoff at the idea that Christ will return,

2 Peter 3:3-4 (NKJV)

³ *knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts,*

⁴ *and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."*

Deceived by the false prophets, the world will plunge blindly into the Day of the Lord and face disastrous, hopeless ruin.

Now like the first four seals, the sixth seal (which introduces the arrival of the Day of the Lord, calling it "the great day of wrath is associated with a force.

That force is fear, a feeling which is among the most powerful of human emotions, capable of seizing control of the mind and will.

Fear can produce everything from cowardice to heroism, strength to weakness, aggression to passivity, reason to confusion, clear thinking to total panic.

Fear can strengthen the heart and make it beat faster, or stop it dead.

People fear all kinds of things, but rarely what they ought to fear most.

Jesus said;

Luke 12:5 (NKJV)

⁵ But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!

The writer of Hebrews adds,

Hebrews 10:29-31 (NKJV)

²⁹ Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?

³⁰ For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The Lord will judge His people."

³¹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

But instead of fearing God, people either view God as some sort of benign grandfather or deny His existence altogether.

One day however, people will have a consuming, debilitating, uncontrollable fear of the judgments of the living God.

Describing that coming day, Jesus spoke of men this way;

Luke 21:26-27 (NKJV)

²⁶ men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken.

²⁷ Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

Another translation says "their hearts fainting from fear, the word here is from the world *apopsucho*, which literally means to stop breathing, or to expire.

When the Day of the Lord comes, sinners will be so terrified that some will faint and others will drop dead.

The sixth seal reveals that the ones who are left will be so terrified that they will cry for the mountains and rocks to hide them from the fury of God's devastating wrath.

Three features describe the overwhelming fear associated with the sixth seal:

- 1st The reason for fear,**
- 2nd The range of fear**
- 3rd The reaction of fear We will study these the next time we meet!**