

## The Book Of Revelation

### Study 35

We have been studying the sixth seal and we remember that the sixth seal is moved by the force of the prayers of the Saints under the throne that had been martyred for their faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. We also found that the great force initiated by the prayers was fear, great fear on the earth by all people on the earth. In this study we want to look at that fear and its three features of the fear that is associated with the sixth seal. They are;

- a. **The reason for the fear**
- b. **The range of the fear**
- c. **The reaction of fear**

#### THE REASON FOR THE FEAR

*Revelation 6:12-14 (NKJV)*

<sup>12</sup> *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.*

<sup>13</sup> *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.*

<sup>14</sup> *Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.*

Unlike the first five seals, each of which involved humans in one way or another (the four horsemen and the saints under the altar), in **the sixth seal** God acts alone.

By the time the seal is opened, the midpoint of the Tribulation has passed and the world is in the final three-and-one-half-year period known as the "*great tribulation*"

*Matthew 24:21 (NKJV)*

<sup>21</sup> *For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.*

By then the final Antichrist has desecrated the temple in Jerusalem ("*the abomination of desolation*"), the world worships him, and a massive persecution of Jews and Christians has broken out.

Incredibly, in the midst of all the turmoil and chaos from the divine judgments on the world, it will be business as usual for most people.

Speaking of this time, Jesus said;

*Matthew 24:37-39 (NKJV)*

<sup>37</sup> *But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.*

<sup>38</sup> *For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark,*

<sup>39</sup> *and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.*

The warnings that the traumatic events of the first five seals are the beginning of God's judgment will go unheeded.

But the events of the sixth seal will be so devastating and terrifying that they will be attributable only to God.

The world will be forced to acknowledge that the Christian preachers' warnings of divine judgment were precisely accurate.

John has recorded six frightening natural disasters associated with the opening of the sixth seal.

1<sup>st</sup> **There was a great earthquake.**

There have been many earthquakes in recorded history and there will be more during the first half of the Tribulation

*Matthew 24:7 (NKJV)*

*<sup>7</sup> For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.*

However the cataclysmic event John saw in this seal is to be far more powerful and devastating than any previous earthquake. In fact, this one will shake more than just the earth

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*<sup>13</sup> 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.*

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The word used here is "*seismos*" (**earthquake**) literally means "a shaking."

In *Matthew 8:24*; it is used in describing a great storm on the Sea of Galilee, and the Septuagint uses it in *Joel 2:10* to describe the heavens trembling.

*Matthew 8:24 (NKJV)*

*<sup>24</sup> And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep.*

*Joel 2:10 (NKJV)*

*<sup>10</sup> The earth quakes before them, The heavens tremble; The sun and moon grow dark, And the stars diminish their brightness.*

God has often made His presence felt in human history by shaking the earth. He did so when He gave the Law to Israel at Mt. Sinai

*Exodus 19:18 (NKJV)*

*<sup>18</sup> Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly.*

*Psalms 68:8 (NKJV)*

*<sup>8</sup> The earth shook; The heavens also dropped rain at the presence of God; Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel.*

Also when Elijah called on Him;

*1 Kings 19:11-12 (NKJV)*

<sup>11</sup> Then He said, "Go out, and stand on the mountain before the Lord." And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake;

<sup>12</sup> and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.

Also at the death of His Son;

*Matthew 27:51 (NKJV)*

<sup>51</sup> Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split,

*Matthew 27:54 (NKJV)*

<sup>54</sup> So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

Also when He released Paul and Silas from jail in Philippi;

*Acts 16:26 (NKJV)*

<sup>26</sup> Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed.

Both Isaiah and Ezekiel associate earthquakes with God's judgment. (*Isa 29:6*) & (*Ezek 38:19*)

This event however, causes far more than the earth to be shaken. It will shake the heavens as well as the earth.

Earthquakes have always frightened people. Many who reside in earthquake country live in constant fear of the "big one".

After experiencing an earthquake some people are so unnerved that they camp outdoors for days, or even weeks, afraid to stay in their houses. Some permanently move out of an earthquake prone area altogether.

The number of appointments in psychiatrist's and psychologist's offices also rise, as those who remain struggle to overcome their fears.

However the fears caused by this earthquake will be incalculably greater than those caused by any previous earthquake.

Not only will this be the most powerful earthquake the world has ever seen, but it will also come at a time of unprecedented troubles.

The people who experience this earthquake will have survived worldwide war, devastating famine, and widespread epidemics of deadly diseases.

The removal of the restrainer, the Holy Spirit, the divine One who has held back Satan and Antichrist until God's appointed season will allow the world to plunge headlong into immorality, vice, wickedness, and godlessness.

Antichrist will be worshiped as God and his false prophet will be proclaiming that Utopia is at hand, just as soon as the believers in the true God are done away with.

In an instant, however, the lie of Satan is exposed and the world's false hopes are shattered by the violent shaking of the very earth under their feet.

2<sup>nd</sup>. **The sun became black as sackcloth made of hair.**

**Sackcloth** was rough cloth worn by Mourners, usually made from the hair of **black** goats.

Following the violent earthquake that devastates the earth, the sun will turn as black as a mourner's robe.

Scientist Dr Henry M. Morris explains what could cause that phenomenon:

*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. Whether the crust consists of great moving plates is a current matter of controversy among geophysicists, so the ultimate cause of earthquakes is still not known. In all likelihood, the entire complex of crustal instabilities is a remnant of the phenomena of the great flood, especially the breakup of the fountains of the great deep.*

*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  
(The Revelation Record [Wheaton, Ill.; Tyndale, 1983],121)*

The prophet Joel spoke of these same phenomena in connection with the Day of the Lord:

*Joel 2:31 (NKJV)*

*<sup>31</sup> The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.*

Darkness is associated with judgment elsewhere in Scripture;

*Exodus 10:21 (NKJV)*

*<sup>21</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness which may even be felt."*

*<sup>22</sup> So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days.*

3<sup>rd</sup>. **The whole moon became like blood.**

There will be vast clouds of ash and smoke spewed out by the volcanic activity associated with the great worldwide earthquake. That ash and smoke will eclipse the moon, coloring it blood-red as it attempts to pierce the smoke-darkened sky.

Isaiah also described this strange and terrifying phenomenon;

*Isaiah 13:10 (NKJV)*

*<sup>10</sup> For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not give their light; The sun will be darkened in its going forth, And the moon will not cause its light to shine.*

Joel adds;

*Joel 2:10 (NKJV)*

*<sup>10</sup> The earth quakes before them, The heavens tremble; The sun and moon grow dark, And the stars diminish their brightness.*

These phenomena will affect every aspect of life as the normal cycle of daylight and darkness is disrupted. The total eclipse of the sun and moon will add more reason for the world to be in panic.

#### 4<sup>th</sup>. **Stars of the sky fell to the earth.**

The word here is "*Asteres (Stars)*" and can refer to actual stars, but can also describe any heavenly body other than the sun and the moon.

Obviously, in this context it does not refer to actual stars, since they are far too large to fall to the earth and would incinerate it long before striking it. Also, the stars are still in place later when the fourth trumpet sounds (*Rev 8:12*). This most likely is a reference to asteroids, comets, and meteors bombarding the earth.

There has been much speculation among scientists recently about the effects of a large asteroid striking the earth. Modern experts believe that the impacts of asteroids, comets, and meteors striking the earth would be devastating and cause unprecedented destruction.

There will be so many such bodies hitting the earth that John, in a vivid analogy, likens the scene to a **fig tree that casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind.**

With the whole earth being pummeled by fiery balls plunging out of the blackness there will be nowhere for people to flee, nowhere for them to hide.

#### 5<sup>th</sup>. **The sky splits apart like a scroll when it is rolled up.**

This is the human perception of the magnitude of this judgment, but is not the final dissolving of heaven which comes later

*Revelation 21:1 (NKJV)*

*<sup>1</sup> Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.*

2 Peter 3:10 (NKJV)

<sup>10</sup> 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.

Here is the culminating feature of the "terrors and great signs from Heaven" that will terrify people.

Luke 21:11 (NKJV)

<sup>11</sup> And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.

John likens the sky to an unrolled scroll that splits in the middle and rolls up on either side.

This vivid picture finds a parallel in Isaiah;

Isaiah 34:4 (NKJV)

<sup>4</sup> All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, And the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll; All their host shall fall down As the leaf falls from the vine, And as fruit falling from a fig tree.

God will strike a blow at the domain of Satan, the "prince of the power of the air" (Eph 2:2)

6<sup>th</sup>. Returning in his vision to events on the earth, John describes a sixth devastating natural phenomenon, noting that **every mountain and island were moved out of their places.**

The whole unstable crust of the earth begins to move and shift.

Dr. Morris also explains how this could happen;

*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"(although strong evidence has been accumulating against any such phenomenon occurring in the present age). Several have published theories of a past naturalistic catastrophism involving what they call "the earth's shifting crust." Some such phenomenon may actually be triggered under this judgment of the sixth seal, dwarfing the damage occasioned by the mighty earthquakes of the past.*

*(The Revelation Record, 123)*

The devastating natural disasters accompanying the sixth seal will be the most terrifying events ever to affect the earth.

Their cumulative impact will be far more destructive than any of the current doomsday scenarios about asteroids hitting the earth. And the even more intense trumpet and bowl judgments are still to come! The total flattening of all mountains will come later at the seventh bowl judgment (Rev 16:20)