

God's Wrath Comes to Earth

Where were you on March 3rd?

Perhaps you were at work, or getting dinner ready, or driving back and forth to your child's practice. Maybe you were shopping or sitting in a movie theater. What you may not be aware of is the near danger you were in that day!

Just 45,000 miles away, a distance a fifth of the distance between the earth and the moon, and only twice as high as satellites in geosynchronous orbit, an asteroid buzzed by!

It was similar in size to an asteroid that exploded in Siberia in 1908 with the force of a thousand atomic bombs, flattening 80 million trees in a swathe of 800 square miles.

Can you imagine what damage that would have caused if it had hit the eastern seaboard of the United States of America?

Watch a little television and scientists tell us it is not a matter of if, but when the big one is going to hit!

One hundred years ago, scoffers mocked at the way Revelation talked about the end of earth as we know it.

But now the scenario shown in Revelation is tame compared with things others present about the end of the world, like the doom presented by Al Gore in his Global Warming movie, or those pointing to the end of the world on December 21, 2012 because of the Mayan Calendar, or movies like *The Day the Earth Stood Still* where aliens come back to redeem the planet!

In contrast to so many recent popular versions where the end comes swiftly and life as we know it is over, The Book of Revelation matter of factly presents a sketch of the last seven years of earth, where the end is really the beginning of a renewed and renovated earth.

Revelation 6 brings us to the time of the tribulation, which the book of Daniel indicates will be seven years in length. The time of singing we saw in Heaven in chapters four and five behind us, now we see ever intensifying difficulties on earth.

Now as you read through Revelation from chapters 6-19, you will need to try and classify how the seals, trumpets and bowls interrelate with each other. See chart on back of notes. I take the telescope view.

I take the seals, trumpets, and bowls to be sequential, with the other chapters being parentheses that give fuller details about events within the tribulation.

Read Revelation 6:1-17 PRAY!

As we look at Revelation chapter 6, the chapter is divided into three sections: Verses 1-8 are the first four seals and are famously known as the 4 horseman of the apocalypse. Verses 9-11 is the fifth seal, as the martyrs in Heaven pray to God about what is happening on earth. Verses 12-17 is the sixth seal, a natural disaster.

One of the most frightening things we read in the Bible is in Romans 1.

When sinners persist in their sinful lifestyle and refuse to repent, what is the judgment of God?

Letting them continue in that sinful lifestyle and reap the consequences that inevitably come by refusing to live by the Designer's plan.

Now how does this apply to the time of the tribulation?

Ever since Jesus Christ has come into the world, an "antichrist" world has been clamoring for a "no God" approach, gnashing its teeth at the exclusive claims of Christianity.

During the tribulation, God will give the world what it says it wants: life without God.

What the world doesn't understand now is how much it benefits from two things it will not have during the tribulation: the difference the church makes in the world as salt and light, and how active the Holy Spirit is in restraining evil in the world.

I believe the Holy Spirit will still be active in salvation during the Tribulation, but not active restraining evil.

As the tribulation unfolds, it would be great to have Dr. Phil ask a world that thought it would be better off without God, "how's that working for you?"

As we will see, it doesn't work at all, but is a disaster as God's wrath on earth begins by letting people experience earth without God's help.

Reminds me of a story Mark Heffner told about one of his neighbors. She was lighting candles to appease ancestors outside her home at a shrine she had created. And Mark could tell she was miserable, so he asked her, “is that working for you?” “No, she said, it makes no difference at all!” Then Mark told her about Jesus and she was saved! The next day she had all of her false idols removed! GLORY!

V. 1-2 The first seal/ white horse: The rise of the Antichrist

Now there are two main options for the identity of the rider on the white horse.

Those of you who are familiar with Revelation know that in Revelation 19 Jesus Christ comes back to earth riding on a white horse to reclaim the earth at what we call His Second Coming, So there have been those who have thought this white rider must also be Jesus Christ.

But in the context, it appears this is not Jesus Christ, but the coming Antichrist, because the four horsemen are connected, and when Jesus comes back, hallelujah, the earth is done experiencing the things described in the following seals.

In the rest of Revelation we will see that Satan loves to imitate God.

So the rider on the white horse representing the Antichrist may be God’s way of poking fun at him. What Satan’s man the antichrist promises earth but can’t deliver, Jesus will deliver when He comes!

Now we are going to see so much more about the Antichrist as we go through Revelation, so we won’t say much more here, but you need to know he is a figure the entire world will turn to for leadership during the tribulation.

There was a time we couldn’t imagine a one world government with one leader everyone looked to for hope and change. But in the last few decades that has all changed, and one world government is coming whether we want it to or not.

And look at this startling statement that is said to have been made by Paul-Henri Spaak, the first President of the United Nations General Assembly:

“We do not need another committee. We have too many already. What we want is a man of sufficient stature to hold the allegiance of all people, and to lift us out of the economic morass into which we are sinking. Send us such a man and be he god or devil, we will receive him.” -Paul-Henri Spaak, quoted in Jeremiah, 65

The tribulation will start with the rise of such a man, the Antichrist.

Now please don’t spend a lot of time trying to guess who the Antichrist is.

It’s a fools’ errand. It always gives the church a black eye!

This is another good reason to think the rapture of the born again church will be before the tribulation!

The spirit of the New Testament is eagerly looking for Christ to come for his church, not trying to figure out who the Antichrist is!

But catch this clearly about the tribulation:

The wrath of God begins by God letting the world have the leader it has clamored for, the leader who promises peace. But what the world doesn't realize is that in getting their anti-God leader they lose God's protection.

V. 3-4 The second seal/ red horse: War

Now one thing that we simply don't know is how much time transpires between each of these seals, trumpets, and bowl judgments.

The Left Behind author thinks that all the seals and the trumpets take place during the first three and a half years of the tribulation, and the bowls happen in the last three and a half years.

An interpreter I like a lot, Robert Jeffress, thinks the first seal will be the entire first three and a half years of the tribulation, and then everything else comes in the last three and a half years.

We don't know!

But we do know that at some point whatever peace the Antichrist has promised will crumble into people slaughtering one another.

Without the Holy Spirit restraining evil, men will go to war with one another. That's the second seal.

V. 5-6 The third seal/ black horse: Famine

As we have seen in so many of the wars in Africa, famine always follows war.

A denarius was a day's wages.

A measure of wheat is approximately what a laboring man would eat in one meal. If he got the cheaper barley instead, he could eat three meals. Either way, no

It's placement here probably means it is the one's just martyred; those who become believers during the tribulation.

That means it's going to be very tough to "come out" as a believer in those days – for many it will mean instant death. It isn't hard to imagine that being the case. It happened during the waves of persecution in Rome. It has happened in communist nations. It is true right now in some Muslim countries.

Now don't think of these martyr's as crammed in the cellar.

The throne is suspended in air, remember?
So here in front and under the altar, the martyr's are crying out to God in prayer.

This gives us great insight into Heaven!

Hebrews 7:25 tells us that Jesus is in Heaven interceding about things on earth. Here we learn that the martyrs in Heaven are able to see what's happening on earth and know that the ones who killed them for their faith are still alive.

They see the bad things happening on earth and pray for God to do something about it!

I think from this we clearly get that people in Heaven know both the good things and bad things happening on earth, and pray to God about them!

"I tell you, in the same way, there is joy in the presence of God's angels over one sinner who repents."
-Luke 15:10

Note it says the rejoicing is not by the angels but in the presence of the angels.

Who is it rejoicing? Those there praying for those sinners to repent!

As far as we know, Paul Bolt was out of it his last couple of years on earth. But now, in Heaven he is able to pray with a fuller knowledge than he has ever known for Carole and his children and others.

I can also see there the just killed pastor in Illinois, rejoicing that he was the only one to die, and people that he preached to for 20 years finally got right with his martyrdom!

Isn't it neat how even in the midst of the troubles of the tribulation on earth, here in Revelation 6 we are given a great insight into prayer in Heaven!

Now we know we are supposed to pray for people to be saved. From this passage we see it is very appropriate to also pray for wicked acts to be brought to justice. This is not a contradiction for us, but a call to pray in a more rounded way.

V. 12-17 The sixth seal Asteroids and earthquake

When it says the stars of heaven fall, it is the word we get asteroids from.

God normally not only protects us from doing all the harm we could do to each other, but also sustains us from space debris hitting us.

During this part of the tribulation, in response to man's desire to be left alone by God, He'll not stop the big asteroids from hitting.

With the asteroids striking will come the kind of things Siberia saw in 1908. It will probably create tidal waves, tsunamis, earthquakes, and volcanoes.

Dr. Robert Thieme tells of the eruption on August 27, 1883, of Krakatau on an island in the Dutch East Indies. The explosion was heard in Rodriguez, South America, three thousand miles away. As a result of the volcano, the sun was blotted out. Volcanic ash makes the moon look red and blots out the sun, for after the eruption of Krakatau, it is said that the sun was blotted from view at Batavia, a hundred miles away. At Bondune, 150 miles away, the sun was blotted out and the moon appeared red. Tidal waves travelled as far as Cape Horn, seven thousand miles away, and in all 36,000 people were killed. LaHaye, 146-147

One thing that is very interesting is that people that call themselves atheists are still quick to blame God when bad things happen.

Have you ever noticed that? They don't believe in Him, but often blame Him!

Well, in verse 17 these events are so severe that men who have wanted to be free from God now acknowledge that what has happened is His wrath.

But I thought you guys rejected the idea that there was a God?

No, deep down, everyone knows there is a God!

Trying to live without Him only brings chaos, with Him comes life and peace.

Next week we will see that even during this time, the gospel will go forth for those who will turn to God rather than reject His rightful place in their life.

Sinner's Prayer