

Revelation 06 - Opening the Seals; The Four Horseman of the Apocalypse; 5th Seal (Martyrs); 6th Seal (Cosmic Changes)

IV. After These Things (Rev 4:1–22:21)

- (2) During the Tribulation (Rev 6:1–19:21)
 - (A) The Six Seal Judgments (6:1-17)
 - (a) 1st Seal: Advent of the Antichrist (6:1-2)
 - (b) 2nd Seal: War (6:3-4)
 - (c) 3rd Seal: Famine (6:5-6)
 - (d) 4th Seal: Death (6:7-8)
 - (e) 5th Seal: Martyrdoms (6:9-11)
 - (f) 6th Seal: Cosmic Disturbances (6:12-17)

Revelation 6

- (2) During the Tribulation (Rev 6:1–19:21)
 - (A) The Six Seal Judgments (Rev 6:1-17)
 - (a) 1st Seal: Advent of the Antichrist (6:1-2) (Cf. Matt 24:4-5; Mark 13:5-6; Luke 21:8)

1 Then **I saw** when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the **four living creatures** saying as *with a voice of thunder*, “**Come!**”

1 Then I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, “Come.”

1 Then I saw the lamb open the first of the seven seals. I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, “Go!”

1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four living creatures, Come and see.

– “...I saw” – a continuation of what John had seen that Rev 4-5 recorded

— John actually saw these events happening, like action scenes in a movie rather than as words from the pages of a book; these are not visions or dreams

– "...four living creatures" – the first four seals are each announced by a different one of the four living creatures (Cf. v3,5,7)

- "...voice of thunder" - when the Lamb broke the first of the seven seals on the scroll He had taken from God, one of the four living creatures loudly invited someone to "Come"
- This isn't just a voice, it's a scream. Heaven just can't control itself any more, almost like it's ready to get things moving toward the end.
- "...Come!" - *erchomai*, proceed, follow; the middle voice of a primary verb: to come from one place to another, used of persons arriving; to appear, come forth, to go, to follow one.
- When the Lamb broke the first of the seven seals on the scroll, one of the four living creatures screams for someone to "Come." Each of the four living creatures says "Come" after each of the first four seals are opened. The living creature is calling forth the first horseman.

Note: When the subject concerns heaven, the Elders speak. When it concerns the earth, the living creatures speak.

The Beginning of Sorrows - The 1st Half of the Tribulation

MATT 24 / REV 6 PARALLELS		
Prediction	Birth pangs (Matt 24)	Seal judgments (Rev 6)
False Christ	24:5	6:2
War	24:6	6:3-4
Famine	24:7	6:5-6
Death	24:6-7	6:7-8
Martyrs	24:9-13	6:9-11
Earthquakes	24:7	6:12-17
Evangelism	24:14	7:1-9

2 I looked, and behold, a **white horse**, and the one who sat on it had a **bow**; and a **crown was given** to him, and he went out **conquering and to conquer**.

2 I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

2 Then I looked, and there was a white horse! Its rider had a bow, and a victor's crown had been given to him. He went out as a conqueror to conquer.

2 And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

- "...white horse" - symbolizes victory, righteousness, holiness; Roman conquerors rode white horses in a triumphant procession

— Why would the Antichrist arrive riding a white horse? Because Satan's *modus operandi* is to copy or mimic God; Satan comes as "an angel of light"; the Antichrist is a counterfeit Messiah. Satan copies God. Satan doesn't give us 0% truth, he gives us 98% truth with 2% lies.

— We see a satanic trinity throughout Revelation: Satan, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet

— "white" - symbolizes victory, righteousness, holiness; a Roman conqueror typically rode a white horse in a triumphant procession

— White gives the appearance of purity, but it doesn't mean the rider is righteous

— We should not be surprised that the Antichrist is mounted on the same color horse as Christ. This fits the entire picture of evil in Revelation; the satanic powers, especially the Antichrist, are seen as perverted imitations of God and Christ.

— "horse" - a horse was a machine of war in John's day (Cf. Job 39:19-25; Ps 76:5-6; Prov 21:31)

- "...the one who sat on it" - many people wrongly identify this rider as Jesus Christ, because of the fact that he's riding on a white horse; the rider *resembles* Christ, but is not Christ

- Differences between the riders of the white horses:

- Christ returns with a sword (judgment); rider here carries a "bow" (peace)
- Christ wears royal crowns (*diamata*) (plural) at His return (19:12); the rider here wears a victor's wreath (*stephanos*) (singular)
- Christ is in heaven, removing the seals and opening the scroll; cannot also be riding white horse
- The context of this passage is not the victory of Christ, but rather the wrath of God
- Jesus is called "faithful and true"; this rider's goal is unjust conquest
- Jesus will return literally on a white horse; this rider is purely symbolic
- Jesus Christ has no resemblance or similarities whatsoever with the following three horsemen. He is out of place with this company.
- The passage parallel to this one in (Matt 24:4-5) indicates that the rider is Antichrist (false christ)

— To bolster the argument of those who interpret this rider as Christ, every feature of this vision is found elsewhere in Scripture in connection with Jesus, including the fact that the

first horseman in Zechariah's vision is the pre-Incarnate Christ.

- "...a bow" - the illusion of peace; Jesus will not return with a bow, but with a sword
- The Antichrist will come to power bringing peace; the event that begins the Tribulation period is a peace treaty with Israel (Dan 9:27)
- This will put the nation of Israel in a state of security (Ezek 38:8) and at rest (Ezek 38:11), living without walls, bars or gates
- The walls and gates and security that are so critical for the survival of Israel today will all be gone...Israel will be so deceived by the peace brought in by the Antichrist and this peace treaty (Isaiah calls it a contract with hell, Is 28:18) that they will lower their defenses and begin to live in (artificial) comfort and safety.
- Through this peace treaty, the Antichrist will solve the problem of Zech 12:2-3, where God says He will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling that will send all nations reeling
- The Antichrist will give people what deep down they have always wanted...to fix the world and usher in peace. Problem is, the peace will be short-lived because you can't have lasting peace without spiritual peace, which only comes through the Prince of Peace.
- The Antichrist will meet this deep need of people, but without changing their human heart through spiritual rebirth. Jesus told Nicodemus, You must be born again. Think of the following that would be developed if the Antichrist offered world peace without the need to be born again. He will fix climate change, healthcare, terrorism, poverty...all of the world's problems, without making any demand of an internal change in people, no moral or spiritual requirements at all. No mention of the sin nature.
- When he comes to power, he is going to offer peace. People will think that the millennium has arrived, but it will actually be a time of trouble such as the world has never before seen (Cf. Dan 12:1; Matt 24:21).
- "...crown" - *stephanos*, the victor's crown, not a *diademata*, ruler's crown; notice that the this rider (the Antichrist) is wearing one crown; Jesus, at the Second Coming, will wear "many" crowns
- Christ will wear a *diademata*, the crown of a sovereign, reigning monarch (19:12)
- "...was given" - *edothē*, speaks of divine permission for evil powers to carry out their wicked mission (Cf. 9:1,3,5; 13:5,7,14,15)
- John sees this whole process of judgment under the control of God. The conqueror has only what Almighty God allows him to have.
- "...conquering and to conquer" - this rider conquered, and was also bent on future conquests
- He seeks to conquer the entire earth (13:7-8), especially "the saints" (13:7)
- He apparently has unchecked victory at first; the moment he appears, he conquers. He wins the battle without the carnage brought by the second horseman.

[OT reference: Zech 1:8; 6:3]

The man on the white horse is such a good imposter that many scholars think it's Christ. However, Christ is the One opening the seal, not on the white horse; if this is Christ, He's riding in bad company. The "man" on the white horse could be interpreted as being the Antichrist, but also could be understood as false messiahs and prophets.

Other conjectures as to the identity of the rider include a Roman emperor, the Parthian invasion of the Roman Empire, Messiah, the Word of God, a personification of judgment, the victorious course of the gospel, warfare in general, triumphant militarism, or the personification of ungodly movements.

The view that the first horseman is the Antichrist is to be preferred for these reasons:

1. Besides the white horses, the riders in Rev 6 and 19 are different. In Rev 19 our Lord has a sword that characterizes Him as the judge of the Church and the world. And He has royal crowns (*diadems*). The rider in Rev 6, however, has a bow and a victor's wreath (*stephanos*).
2. The rider cannot be Christ, because Christ is already symbolized by another figure in the scene, namely, the Lamb.
3. The rider on the white horse is part of a group that brings devastating calamities and destruction upon the earth. It seems unlikely that he would bring good when the others bring woe. The picture here is not of the victory of Christ but of the wrath of God.
4. The passage parallel to this one in (Matt 24) indicates that the rider is Antichrist.

The rider cannot symbolize the gospel, for the gospel had already been sent out over the earth some 50 years before the Revelation was written. The rider, then, is "triumphant militarism" personified in the Antichrist of the end time. Those who identify the rider on the white horse in Rev 6 as Christ make the mistake of interpreting Rev 6 in view of Rev 19. Instead, the rider of Rev 19 should be interpreted in view of Rev 6. From Rev 6-18 we read of the havoc, chaos, and destruction caused by the false christ. Then, in Rev 19, the Apostle John introduces the true Christ, the true rider on the white horse, the true ruler of this world.

Dan 8:25: "And through his shrewdness He will make deceit a success by his influence; And he will make himself great in his own mind, And he will destroy many while *they are at ease*. He will even oppose the Prince of princes, But he will be broken without human agency.

Dan 9:27: And he will confirm a covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations *will come* the one who makes desolate, until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, gushes forth on the one who makes desolate."

Characteristics of the Antichrist (Dan 8:23-25)

23 "Toward the end of their (the 10 king confederacy) rule, as the desecrations proceed, an **insolent** king will arise, **proficient at deception**.

- He will be intelligent and persuasive; an intellectual genius
- "...insolent" - boldly rude, insulting
- "...proficient at deception" - "skilled at intrigue" - he will be a person of such unusual caliber and so skilled at what he is able to do that the entire world will gravitate toward him

24 Mighty will be his skills, but **not from his own abilities**. He'll be **remarkably destructive, will succeed**, and will **do whatever he wants**, destroying mighty men and the **holy people**.

- "not from his own abilities" - he will be controlled by Satan
- "remarkably destructive, will succeed" - he will achieve great power by subduing others militarily
- "do whatever he wants" - he will do his own will, not God's will
- "holy people" - he will be an enemy to Israel and do much harm

25 Through his **skill** he'll cause **deceit to prosper** under his leadership. **He'll promote himself** and will **destroy many while they are secure**. He'll **take a stand against the Prince of Princes**, yet he'll be **crushed without human help**.

- "skill" - he will be a shrewd politician
- "he'll cause deceit to prosper" - he will have a huge capacity to deceive people
 - Never underestimate the power of Satan's deception
 - He deceived 1/3 of angels, who were in heaven
 - He deceived Adam & Eve in Garden, without a sin nature
- "He'll promote himself" - he's all about himself; pride
- "destroy many while they are secure" - he will rise to power by promising false security
 - When they let down their guard and least expect it, he will destroy them
- "take a stand against the Prince of Princes" - he will rise up in opposition to "the Prince of princes," the Lord Jesus Christ
- "crushed without human help" - his rule will be terminated by divine judgment

Other Characteristics

- **An intellectual genius, persuasive orator (Dan 7:20; 8:23)**

Dan 7:20: and *the meaning* of the ten horns that *were* on its head, and the other *horn* which came up, and before which *three of the horns* fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a **mouth uttering great boasts**, and which was larger in appearance than its associates.

- "...a mouth uttering great *boasts*" - this is the third mention of the 11th horn speaking pompously (v8,11,20,25; Rev 13:5-6)

- **A unifying religious guru (2 Thess 2:4; Rev 13:3,14-15)**

2 Thess 2:3-4:

3 No one is to deceive you in any way! For *it will not come* unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,

4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.

- "man of lawlessness" & "son of destruction"

- He "opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship

He will rise from the dead!

Rev 13:3: *I saw one of his heads as if it had been fatally wounded, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast;*

Rev 13:14-15:

14 And **he deceives those who live on the earth** because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who live on the earth to make an image to the beast who *had the wound of the sword and has come to life.

15 And **it was given to him** to give **breath** to the image of the beast, so that **the image of the beast** would even speak and cause **all who** do not worship the image of the beast to be **killed**.

MATT 24 / REV 6 PARALLELS

Prediction	Birth pangs (Matt 24)	Seal judgments (Rev 6)
False Christ	24:5	6:2
War	24:6	6:3-4
Famine	24:7	6:5-6
Death	24:6-7	6:7-8
Martyrs	24:9-13	6:9-11
Earthquakes	24:7	6:12-17
Evangelism	24:14	7:1-9

(b) 2nd Seal: War (6:3-4) (Cf. Matt 24:6-7; Mark 13:7-8a; Luke 21:9-10)

- 3 When He broke the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come!"
- 3 When He broke the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come."
- 3 When the lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Go!"
- 3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.

- 4 And another, a **red** horse, went out; and to him who sat on it, it was granted to **take peace from the earth**, and that *people* would kill one another; and a **large sword** was given to him.
- 4 And another, a red horse, went out; and to him who sat on it, it was granted to take peace from the earth, and that *men* would slay one another; and a great sword was given to him.
- 4 A second horse went out. It was fiery red, and its rider was given permission to take peace away from the earth and to make people slaughter one another. So he was given a large sword.
- 4 And there went out another horse *that was red*: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

- "...red" - associated with bloodshed and war: the red dragon (12:3) and the red beast (17:3; Cf. Matt 24:6-7; Mark 13:7-8; Luke 21:9-10; Dan 11:36)
- "...it was granted" - *edothē aut*, the rider is an agent appointed by God for a specific purpose
- "...take peace from the earth" - whatever restraint on war has existed up to this point, this rider is charged with removing them
- if peace was "taken" it must have been present beforehand; you can't take peace unless it was already established
- This was the pseudo-peace or false peace that the Antichrist brought in primarily through his covenant with Israel that begins the seven-year Tribulation period (Dan 9:27); utopia has disappeared in a flash (1 Thess 5:3)

Dan 11:21: "'In his place there will arise a despicable person, upon whom no royal authority has been conferred, but **he'll invade in a time of tranquility**, taking over the kingdom through deception.

Dan 8:25: Through his skill he'll cause deceit to prosper under his leadership. He'll promote himself and will **destroy many while they are secure (at peace)**. He'll take a stand against the Prince of Princes, yet he'll be crushed without human help.

1 Thess 5:3: While they are saying, **"Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction will come upon them** like labor pains upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

- The peace that the Antichrist brought in is short-lived...only Jesus can bring in lasting peace (see note on v2)
- This is likely where the Magog Invasion takes place (Ezek 38); Ezek 38:8,11 describes a time of peace in Israel, which is then thrown into war by this massive invasion
- "...large sword" - *machaira megale*, represents the authority to kill people (Ezek 38:21; Jer 25:15-33 [esp v29]; Micah 7; Dan 11:33)
- Slaughter and bloodshed on the earth will follow the manifestation of the Antichrist
- In 2 Thess 2, Paul says that God's restraining work ends and implies that a period of general lawlessness breaks out

[OT reference: Zech 1:8; 6:2]



Matt 24:6 is the parallel passage to the 2nd Seal. The purpose of the rider of the red horse is to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another (v4). Many perceive the first half of the Tribulation as a time of great peace. That is not so. The Antichrist will be perceived as a man of peace because of his great deceptive ability, but the fact is that he comes to power and stays in power because of war (Dan 7:8,24).

Revelation prophesies many wars (6:3; 16:12-15; 17:14; 19:1ff; 20:8). These will not only be invasions of Israel (Dan 9:26-27; 11:40-45; Zech 12:2-11; Rev 12:9-17).

(c) 3rd Seal: Famine (6:5-6) (Cf. Matt 24:7-8; Mark 13:8b; Luke 21:10-11)

5 When He broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, "Come!" I looked, and behold, a **blackhorse**, and the one who sat on it had **a pair of scales** in his hand.

5 When He broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, "Come." I looked, and behold, a black horse; and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand.

5 When the lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Go!" I looked, and there was a black horse! Its rider held a scale in his hand.

5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

— "...black horse" - ominous; refers to lamentation and mourning; portends something bad is going to happen; this represents worldwide economic collapse

— "black" - is often connected with famine (Lam 4:4-8; 5:10; Jer 14:1-2)

— "...a pair of scales" - *zygon*, a "balance"; represents commerce and scarcity, indicating the Antichrist's control of commodity prices

— Weighing food is a prophetic announcement of famine

— The wars that the Antichrist (or his ungodly leaders) start will surely reduce the food supply and hamper or cut off international trade of commodities

[OT reference: Zech 6:2]

6 And I heard *something* like a **voice** in the center of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat **for a denarius**, and three **quarts** of barley **for a denarius**; and **do not damage the oil and the wine.**"

6 And I heard *something* like a voice in the center of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not damage the oil and the wine."

6 I heard what sounded like a voice from among the four living creatures, saying, "One day's ration of wheat for a day's wage, or three day's ration of barley for a day's wage! But don't damage the olive oil or the wine!"

6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

— "...a voice" - from the midst of the four living creatures, this must be the voice of God, since He is the ultimate source of these judgments (v11)

— The general location from which the voice comes, the middle of the four living creatures, is where the throne is (Cf. 5:6). So the voice is either from the Lamb, or more likely God the Father.

— "...A quart...quarts" - *choinix*, less than one quart; enough wheat for a one-person meal

— "To eat bread by weight" is a Jewish expression indicating that food is scarce (Lev 26:25-33; Cf. Ezek 4:10-11,16)

— "...for a denarius" [2x] - *denarion*, or "denarius" (Matt 20:2,9-11); a day's wage

— With the opening of the 3rd Seal, a denarius is only able to buy 1 quart of wheat and three quarts of barley; it only has one-tenth of its previous purchasing power. The currency has been decimated and de-valued.

— Rampant inflation and currency devaluation will devastate economies around the world. Part of the cause of this could be warfare, led by the Magog Invasion of Israel as well as other regional conflicts, and the resulting loss of economic activity and exports that follow.

- Cause: war, led by the Magog Invasion of Israel as well as other regional conflicts, and the resulting loss of economic activity and exports that follow.
- The world system today, through massive debt funding artificial prosperity, is being set up for this collapse. Our national debt now exceeds \$35 trillion; we borrow \$6 billion per day.
 - A collapse of this magnitude doesn't happen overnight...there are years, even decades, of stage setting for these catastrophic judgments
 - If you study famines, they almost always are the result of political problems, not scarcity; they are typically caused by abuse and political expediency instead of a lack of food
 - "...do not damage" - do not tamper with; reflects the strict control over prices that the ungodly rulers under the Antichrist's leadership will have over the global economy at this time
 - "...the oil and the wine" - equivalent in our culture to toiletries, beauty aids and liquor; luxuries
 - This implies that during a worldwide famine, there will be the rich who will continue to indulge in luxuries, which will be in abundant supply, while most of the population is suffering scarcity and struggling to survive
 - Social inequities will continue into the Tribulation period; paying for the necessities of life further impoverishes the poor, while the luxuries of the rich continue
 - As the Tribulation grows worse, the rich as well as the poor will suffer, but at this early stage, the poor will suffer more than the rich
 - This is more than famine alone—it describes global rationing and controls; the Coming World Leader will control the global economy (13:17)
 - Amos 8:11 references a different type of famine not in view here...a famine of the Word of God. When people are starving, they will eat anything; the same thing is true spiritually. It's concerning how many churches don't teach expositively.

(d) 4th Seal: Death (6:7-8) (Cf. Matt 24:7; Luke 21:11)

7 When *the Lamb* broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come!"

7 When the Lamb broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come."

7 When the lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Go!"

7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

- Each of the three Seal judgments have progressively gotten worse. In the fourth Seal judgment, the intensity of the judgment is raised exponentially.

8 I looked, and behold, an **ashenhorse**; and the one who sat on it had the name **Death**, **and Hades** was following with him. **Authority was given** to them over **a fourth of the earth**, to **kill with sword**, and **famine**, and **plague**, and by the **wild animals of the earth**.

8 I looked, and behold, an ashen horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him. Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth.

8 I looked, and there was a pale green horse! Its rider's name was Death, and Hades followed him. They were given authority over one-fourth of the earth to kill people using wars, famines, plagues, and the wild animals of the earth.

8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

— "...ashen horse" - *chlōros*, pale green; depicts the disease and plague that will come upon one-quarter of the earth's population

— In Leviticus, it is the color of leprosy (Cf. Mark 6:39; Rev 8:7; 9:4)

— "...Death" - *thanatos*, same word translated "plague" (aka "pestilence") later in the verse

— "...Hades" - follows behind to retrieve the souls of those who are killed; death claims the body, Hell [*Hades*] claims the soul

— Hades is a temporary abode for unbelievers waiting for the Great White Throne Judgment (20:13); it's a place of torment. Jesus said in 1:18 that He has the keys to death and Hades.

— John saw these enemies going forth to claim their prey, armed with the weapons of the sword, hunger, pestilence (death) and wild beasts

— Perhaps John saw Hades following Death like a man on foot following a mounted warrior, grimly gathering in his victims, or as a hearse following a horse

— "...Authority was given" - God gave Death and Hades the authority to take one-fourth of the world's population

— This is evidently the number that will die as a result of all the catastrophes predicted so far

— "...a fourth of the earth" - how does 25% of the earth's population die? through war (2nd Seal) and through famine (3rd Seal); but God adds a few judgments in the 4th Seal as well...

— During the 6th Trumpet judgment (9:18), one-third of mankind is killed; once that judgment is finished, one-half (1/4 + 1/3) of the world's population will have died

— "...kill with the sword" - 2nd Seal judgment

— "...famine" - 3rd Seal judgment

— "...plague" - *thanatos*, translated as "Death" earlier in the verse

- Covid-20? Some type of worldwide disease or plague, much worse than Covid-19, will infect the earth and contribute to the demise of one-fourth of the population
- "...wild animals of the earth" - this horseman is assisted in his campaign of death by wild beasts. If too many people are killed by war and its aftermath, the population of wild beasts grow because there are not enough people to kill them off.
- Jews in the 1st century were thrown to the lions for sport in the Roman Colosseum; isn't it ironic that God will put these unbelievers through the very same judgment
- We tend to think of beasts as 4-legged animals, but some of the most dangerous "beasts" are microscopic (Cf. Lev 26:21-26; Ezek 14:12-23)

[OT reference: Jer 15:2-3; 24:10; 29:17; Ezek 14:21; Hosea 13:14; Zech 6:3]

Ezek 14:21: For this is what the Lord GOD says: "How much more when I send My four severe judgments against Jerusalem: sword, famine, vicious animals, and plague to eliminate human and animal *life* from it!"

Historical Events with Highest Death Toll

- WWII - 85 million (mostly China and Soviet Union)
- The Black Death - 2nd pandemic of bubonic plague - 200 million people (1334-1353)
- Spanish Flu - 100 million
- Bubonic plague - (plague of Justinian) - 50 million (541 AD)
- 1918 Flu - 100 million (1918-1920)
- HIV/AIDS - 43 million
- Covid-19 -17 million people (2020-24)

Top 7 deadliest events in world history: 600 million people died

- Current world population (2024) - 8.16 billion (+71 million per year)
- Christians raptured - ~2.16 billion
- 6 billion "earth dwellers" remaining, 25% death = ~1.5 billion people will die

(e) 5th Seal: Persecution/Martyrdoms (6:9-11) (Cf. Matt 24:9; Mark 13:9-13)

9 When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the **souls** of those who had been **killed** because of the **word of God**, and because of the **testimony which they had maintained**;

9 When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained;

9 When the lamb opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slaughtered because of the word of God and the testimony they had given.

9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

- The scene now shifts back to heaven. There are no more horsemen, and the living creatures in heaven are not announcing the opening of these seals. The 5th Seal is unlike the first four, and the 6th Seal.
- The inclusion of martyrdom is appropriate because it often accompanies political, economic and social chaos as depicted under the first four Seals
- "...souls" - *psyche*, lives; under the altar were the lives of those who were martyred for their faith; they died for their faith in God and their testimony of Him
- This scene pictures the life-blood of the martyrs poured out as an offering and a sacrifice to God (Cf. Lev 4:7; Phil 2:17; 2 Tim 4:6)
- All believers will be taken off the earth at the Rapture, leaving no believers remaining on earth. The vast number of believers described here will come to knowledge of the gospel because of this ministry of the 144,000.
- John did not see their resurrected bodies because God has not resurrected them yet; the resurrection of Tribulation Saints will not occur until just before the inauguration of the messianic kingdom
- Amillennialists believe these martyrs are all Christians who die for their faith during the entire Church Age, from the Ascension to the Second Coming. Preterists believe these are Christians who died in the first century.
- "...killed" - *sphazō*, slain; killed with violence; method of death: beheading (20:4)
- John is clear on the reasons why these believers were "killed with violence": because of the word of God (*logos*) and because of their testimony
- "...word of God" - these martyrs stood on the Word of God; they believed and lived God's revealed revelation in Scripture
- "...testimony which they had maintained" - they spoke up about Christ; they testified to those who would listen (Cf. 12:11)
- They knew how the world system would react to their testimony, but the Word of God and their relationship with Christ was more important to them than their physical lives (Cf. 2 Tim 3:12)

Parallel passage - Matt 24:9: **"Then they will hand you over to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name.**

- "Then" - *toute*, links the persecution, killing, and hatred with the famines, earthquakes and wars. The temporal adverb means that v9 will happen simultaneously with the events that occur in v4-8.

Not sure how the post-Tribulational view can harmonize their belief that the Church will go through the Tribulation, but be protected during it, based on this verse (Cf. 7:13-14; 13:10).

10 and they **cried outwith a loud voice**, saying, "**How long, O Lord**, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on **those who live on the earth?**"

10 and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"

10 They cried out in a loud voice, "Holy and true Sovereign, how long will it be before you judge and take revenge on those living on the earth who shed our blood?"

10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

- In v9 John saw the souls of the martyrs who were under the altar; in v10 John hears their request...

- "...cried out with a loud voice" - this isn't a silent prayer or a simple request...this is a "megaphone" request of these martyrs to the Lord Himself

— We often think God doesn't hear us or doesn't care when our loud cries out for justice are not answered

— "...How long, O Lord" - has been the cry of God's suffering people throughout the ages (Cf. Ps 74:9-10; 79:5; 89:46; 94:3-4; Hab 1:2)

— This prayer is in contrast with Stephen's prayer in Acts 7:60: "...Lord, do not hold this against them." In this case, these believers are calling on Jesus for retribution against the "earth dwellers." The difference is that God's long-suffering has now ended and He has begun to pour out His wrath on sinners.

- "...those who live on the earth" - *tōn katoikountōn epi tēs gēs*, a semi-technical designation for mankind in their hostility toward God (unbelievers; objects of God's judgment)

— These are a whole race of people in open rebellion and dead set on removing (killing) as many of God's servants as possible

— They are referred to as "those who dwell on the earth" because they have no home but earth and they don't want a home other than the earth.

— Used 11x in Rev: 3:10; 6:10; 8:13; 11:10 [2x]; 13:8,12,14; 14:6; 17:2,8. See [Earth Dwellers](#) for more info.

— Here, the "earth dwellers" are the primary ones killing Tribulation believers. It seems to denote a type of vigilantism by the earth dwellers.

- In essence, this is an imprecatory prayer by the "heaven dwellers" (12:12; 13:6) against their opponents, the earth dwellers

— These two groups are at war, lead by the Lamb on one side and the Antichrist on the other

- All humanity will move to one side or the other as the events of judgment unfold, but victory for the Lamb is already assured
- Souls are conscious, not "sleeping" (1 Thess 4:14-16; 2 Cor 5:8; Phil 1:23)
 - What do you notice about the appeal of the martyrs to God?
 - They are not telling God what He must do and when He must do it
 - They are growing impatient (How long, O Lord), but not in a sinful manner
 - They have ultimate reference (holy and true)
 - They simply ask a question of how long He will refrain from judging (selecting) the unrighteous and avenging (executing justice) the blood of the righteous
 - They are petitioning God, through a question, to identify/find those who spilled their blood, and execute justice for their actions
- The prayer of the martyrs are answered in 8:13 (the 4th-6th Trumpets). Could also be answered in 10:6, beginning with the 7th Trumpet, when the angel says that "there will no longer be a delay."

This Seal judgment doesn't *produce* martyrdom, it *describes the result* of what has already taken place, and continues to take place, on the earth (martyrdom).

- How is the martyrdom of believers a judgment against the earth dwellers?
 - The cry of the martyrs (v10)...their prayers for God's vengeance against the earth dwellers are heard, and certain vindication is more fully assured
 - The earth dwellers have already had a taste of suffering under the first four Seal judgments, but the worst for them is yet to come
 - These prayers of the saints make the earth dweller's dismal future even more frightening because of the intercession of those especially precious in His sight

The interpretation that the time period here points to the indefinite future, to allow for an interpretation of the martyrs as not Tribulation Martyrs but martyrs from throughout history, is demeaning to the martyrs. Indefiniteness in such a situation is worse than no reply at all.

These are Tribulation martyrs because they pray/cry out to God to take vengeance upon the earth dwellers. If the martyrs represent someone in the distant past who was martyred, their prayers would be pointless because those who martyred them would already be dead.

11 And a **white robe** was **given** to each of them; and **they were told that they were to rest for a little while longer**, until *the number* of their fellow servants and their brothers and sisters who were to be killed even as they *had been*, was **completed** also.

11 And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until *the number* of their fellow servants and their brethren who

were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also.

11 Each of them was given a white robe. They were told to rest a little longer until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers was completed, who would be killed as they themselves had been.

11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

- God's immediate response to the martyr's appeal for vengeance is a symbolic act, followed by words of comfort...

- "...white robe" - *stolē leukē*, a symbolic act, a reward of grace; it's a symbol of God honoring these martyrs, who died because of their faith in Christ (v9)

— If these souls were given white robes, did they have bodies in which to wear them? No, because Tribulation Saints/Martyrs are not resurrected until after the Second Coming (20:4).

— If the fact that God gave them robes means that they had resurrected bodies, John would not have seen "souls" (v9), and God would've given them white robes at the time of their death, not after their cry out for God to take vengeance.

- "...given" - doesn't say they were "wearing" or "clothed in" the white robes

— Some interpreters see these martyrs as having some sort of intermediate body, but that's unlikely. The 24 Elders (4:4) were "clothed in" white garments.

- "...they were told that they were to rest" - acknowledgement of their prayers for justice, but also told to "rest"—abstain from your cry for vengeance and rest from your toil and pain. It's an admonition to rest in their heavenly benefits.

- The fact that these martyrs were upset/angered to see justice carried out is understandable, but God tells them that they are living beneath their privileges
- He wants them to rest in their heavenly privileges, not worry about things that God has promised to deal with

- "...a little while longer" - *eti chronon mikron*, the extent of the proposed rest; God's justice is not denied, it's just delayed

- We often confuse God's delay in answering our prayers with a denial (No). We pray for a long period of time, begging God to do something that is obviously in His will and desire to do, with no answer. No movement in a positive direction.
- When that happens, it's easy to become depressed or despondent, feeling like you're wasting your time. It's even easy to get mad at God for His seeming lack of attention to our prayers and the time we've "wasted" by praying with no results.
- But we cannot confuse delay with denial. This is likely how the martyred souls under the alter felt until, in the providence of God, an angel from that very altar was dispatched by God to answer their request.

- Because of impatience, we begin to discount the power of prayer. But we need to remember that God hears our prayers...in fact they surround God's throne in a golden bowl of incense.
- There are some things in our lives that God is only going to do through prayer. He won't do it any other way. If we don't pray for it, it will never happen.
- Cf. the Parable of the Persistent Widow/Unjust Judge (Luke 18:1-8)
- The identical expression was given by Jesus 2x (John 7:33; 12:35); also used to describe Satan's brief period of freedom after the millennial kingdom. In the former case (John's Gospel), the time period is not more than a year. In the latter, not more than a few days. Thus, it's highly unlikely that this refers to a time period of centuries
 - "...completed" - *plēroō*, to make full; to fill up, to render full
- These martyrs were instructed to be patient because other martyred Tribulation Saints will join them (11:7; 12:11; 14:13; 20:4-5) before God will unleash His wrath in vengeance for their treatment. God will begin to mete out the justice these martyrs are screaming for once all of the people who will eventually be martyred for their faith in Christ have arrived in heaven.
- It is not personal revenge they seek, but vindication of God's holiness and the establishment of God's justice

Avenging the Blood of the Saints

- Rev 6:10: "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"
- Rev 16:6: "...for they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink"
- Rev 17:6: "And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus..."
- Rev 18:20: "...for God hath avenged you on her"
- Rev 18:24: "...and in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth"
- Rev 19:2: "...and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand."

(f) 6th Seal: Cosmic Disturbances (6:12-17)

12 And I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was **a great earthquake**; and **thesun became as black as sackcloth** made of hair, and **the whole moon** became **like blood**;

12 I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth *made* of hair, and the whole moon became like blood;

12 Then I saw the lamb open the sixth seal. There was a powerful earthquake. The sun turned as black as sackcloth made of hair, and the full moon turned as red as blood.

12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;

- The scene now shifts back to earth...

— The language in these verses (v12-14) is semi-poetic and hyperbolic. The falling of the stars and rolling up of the heaven are only apparent, describing how these things will look when people on earth view them (John uses similes to describe all of the cosmic disturbances).

- "...a great earthquake" - earthquakes are present in judgment throughout Revelation (6:12; 8:5; 11:13,19); localized earthquakes in Israel (11:13); earthquakes in heaven (8:5), and worldwide earthquakes (6:12; 16:18)

— There are two major earthquakes in Revelation: here, and the greatest earthquake in world history (16:18). God will now send a planet-sized earthquake(s) that will rock the entire world (Cf. Luke 21:11).

— The earthquake in 16:18 will be unparalleled in human history; as severe as this earthquake (v12) will be, it's only a preliminary foreshadowing of the 16:18 earthquake

— We should understand this earthquake to be literal because Jesus used the same language in the Olivet Discourse (Cf. Matt 24:7; Mark 13:8)

— In all the accounts of Jesus' listing of events during the "beginning of birth pains," earthquakes come at the end or toward the end (Matt 24:7; Mark 13:8), but before the Abomination of Desolation (midpoint of the Tribulation)

— Neither Matthew or Mark mention the other phenomena of this seal; Luke mentions "massive earthquakes" (plural) and "terrible sights and great signs from heaven" (Luke 21:11)

— The three results of this huge earthquake include:

1. The sun is darkened
2. The moon turns red as blood (Cf. Joel 2:31; Acts 2:20)
3. Stars falling to the earth (a meteor shower?) (v13)

- "...as...like" - John uses similes to try to describe the events that he is seeing; he is analogizing what he is seeing to things from his own time period

- "...the sun became as black as sackcloth" - darkening of the sun is an OT precursor to judgment (Is 13:10; Ezek 32:7-8; Joel 2:10,31; Amos 8:9; Cf. Matt 24:29; Mark 13:24-25; Luke 21:25)

- "...the whole moon" - the reddish color of the moon is probably from the copper color of the moon during an eclipse; since the "whole moon" is affected, this is a total eclipse [OT reference: Is 50:3; Joel 2:10]

In 2011 there was a magnitude 9.0 earthquake off coast of Japan - shifted earth's axis by 6.5 inches and shortened the length of a day by 1.8 micro (millionth) of a second.

13 and the **stars** of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind.

13 and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind.

13 The stars in the sky fell to the earth like a fig tree drops its fruit when it is shaken by a strong wind.

13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

- "...stars" - *asteres*, includes large heavenly bodies such as the sun, but can also include smaller space objects such as stars, planets, comets, or meteors

— This phenomenon is at such a large scale that it appears from man's perspective that the stars are falling when in reality it is likely a large meteor shower

— This can't be literal because the stars are still in place in 8:12; 16:10

— This is another aspect of the "terrible sights and great signs from heaven" (Luke 21:11)

[OT reference: Is 34:4]

14 The sky was **split apart like a scroll** when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was **removed from its place**.

14 The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

14 The sky vanished like a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved from its place.

14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

- Non-literal elements in v12-13 are evident because John uses similes ("like" or "as", v12 [2x], v13; v14a); no such similes are used in v14b to describe the geological or geographical changes to the earth's surface

— A similar but much larger change geophysical change of the earth's surface occurs in 16:20 as a result of the greatest earthquake in world history

Rev 16:20: And every island fled, and no mountains were found.

- "...split apart like a scroll" - heaven will appear to split apart and roll back in two opposite directions

— This describes John's perception of what is happening and the magnitude of it; it is not the ultimate passage of the heavens (20:11; 21:1; Cf. Ps 102:25-26; Matt 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33; 2 Peter 3:10)

- John's impression is that the universe is coming apart...
- "...removed from its place" - doesn't mean the mountains and islands were eradicated because in v15 the kings and other important people were hiding in caves and the rocks of the mountains
- It means that the world geography shifted in a significant way, such that mountains and islands were relocated or moved in relation to where they currently reside
- This is God showing that He is bigger and more powerful than the largest, most immovable objects on planet earth

[OT reference: Is 34:4; Nahum 1:5]

If the moving of mountains and islands from their places were universal and complete, there would be no hiding places left for men to seek (v15-16). At the same time, the phenomena are so severe that they are unparalleled in human history. The earthquakes are shattering enough to leave human beings with the full impression that the ultimate end has arrived, but they are not comprehensive enough to amount to a total destruction of creation's order. Human life continues after these disruptions.

Verses 15-17 is an overall report on the human response to God's judgment...

15 Then the kings of the earth and the eminent people, and the commanders and the wealthy and the strong, and every slave and free person hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains;

15 Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains;

15 Then the kings of the earth, the important people, the generals, the rich, the powerful, and all the slaves and free people concealed themselves in caves and among the rocks in the mountains.

15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

- The resulting impact of the six-part upheaval upon human beings will be nothing short of devastating; the reaction of every category of humanity is terror (a similar evaluation is recorded after the Trumpet judgments in 9:20-21)
- The six-fold upheaval leveled by the 6th Seal judgment...
 1. great earthquake (v12)
 2. sun blackened (v12)
 3. whole moon turned red (v12)
 4. stars of sky fell to the earth (v13)

- 5. sky split apart (like a scroll) (v14)
- 6. every mountain and island removed from its place (v14)
- Affecting every strata of human society:
 - 1. "kings of the earth" - highest rulers, heads of state
 - 2. "eminent people" - high-ranking officials; civil officials implementing government
 - 3. "commanders" - military commanders
 - 4. "wealthy" - controllers of commerce/business
 - 5. "strong" - those who exercise influence over significant number of people
 - 6. "every slave person" - both (6) and (7) make up lower classes of society, without significant influence or economic might
 - 7. "every free person"

* In this list, special attention seems to be focused on the upper classes of society

- Every category of society will respond in the same way: they will seek shelter and safety from the collapse of the natural world. The uniqueness of what they saw and experienced told them that the routine cycles of nature that they had become accustomed to was coming to an end.
- It's irrational to hide in mountains and caves that are being shaken by earthquakes, but this shows that all rational thought and behavior is gone
- The unbeliever's (earth dwellers) perception of God, and the wrath of the Lamb, will be far more terrifying to them than the physical consequences of this judgment

[OT reference: Ps 48:4-6; Is 2:10-12,19]

- 16 and **they** *said to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and **hide** us from the sight of Him who sits on the throne, and from the **wrath of the Lamb**;
- 16 and they *said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the sight of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb;
- 16 They told the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of the one who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the lamb.
- 16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:
 - "...they" - the people speaking in v16-17 are the earth dwellers (unbelievers)...
 - Everyone on earth will know that they are experiencing divine judgment, and they will seek their own death in order to hide from God
 - They rationalized that it was better to die in a cave than stand up and face the One sitting on the throne and the wrath of the Lamb
 - They will choose suicide over staying alive and enduring God's wrath
 - "...hide" - the kings and prominent people will hide in caves and mountains (v15), and desire for rocks to cover them to better hide themselves from the wrath of God

- What sinners dread most is not death, but having to stand before a holy and righteous God
- Here early in the Tribulation, people attempt to hide from God; as time goes on and the judgments continue, we see the hardening of the hearts of the earth dwellers (Cf. 9:20; 19:19)
- "...wrath of the Lamb" - *orgē*, God's divine wrath or judgment; the earth dwellers recognize that God is the Author of these judgments
- The word *orgē* is used 5x in Revelation: 6:17; 11:18; 14:10; 16:19; 19:15
- The fact that panic-stricken people would recognize the Lamb's role in inflicting their misery is remarkable

[OT reference: Hosea 10:8]



Rev. 6:16-17

Robert L. Thomas, Revelation 1–7: An Exegetical Commentary,
ed. Kenneth Barker (Chicago: Moody, 1992), 457-58.

"Mankind in his rebellion correctly analyzes the cosmic and terrestrial disturbances as a part of the great end-time day of wrath from the one sitting on the throne and from the Lamb. The verb *ēlethen* ('has come') is aorist indicative, referring to a previous arrival of wrath, not something that is about to take place. Men see the arrival of this day at least as early as the cosmic upheavals that characterize the sixth seal (6:12-14), but upon reflection they probably recognize that it was already in effect with the death of one-fourth of the population (6:7-8), the worldwide famine (6:5-6), and the global warfare (6:3-4). The rapid sequence of all of these events could not escape notice, but the light of their true explanation does not dawn upon human consciousness until the severe phenomena of the sixth seal arrive."

17 for the great day of Their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"
17 for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

17 For the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to endure it?"
17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

- "...the great day of Their wrath" - the Tribulation period; this verse does not start the seven-year Tribulation, it is a symbolic quote from unbelievers that they recognize that God's wrath has already begun to be poured out
- The entire Tribulation period is a time of God's wrath (6:16-17; 11:18; 14:10; 15:1,7; 16:1,9; 19:15). In Rev 5, Jesus takes the seven-sealed scroll from the Father, which transfers authority from the Father to the Son, who begins the process of evicting Satan from the earth (once all seven seals are opened). In 6:1, Jesus breaks the first Seal, which begins the wrath of God.
- It doesn't matter if the word "wrath" is mentioned in 6:1 or not (the concept of wrath is certainly there), God's wrath, Satan's eviction process, has begun. Was the Flood God's wrath? Of course it was, but you never see the word "wrath" associated with it. Same with any other part of Scripture that refers to the Flood. Just because the word "wrath" isn't used, doesn't mean the concept isn't there. In this way of thinking, the Flood didn't represent the wrath of God.
- The cumulative effect of these events produces the inevitable conclusion by the earth dwellers that God's wrath is being poured out
- "...has come" - *ēlthen*, aorist tense, indicative mood, referring to a previous arrival of wrath, not something that is about to take place. The aorist indicative always refers to a past action, not to a future event [H.E. Dana and Julius R Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: Macmillan, 1950), p178].
- *ēlthen* looks to the past, not the future; it's not imminent, it is *already in progress*, and the earth dwellers hiding in their caves are beginning to recognize it as such
- It is a major error of interpretation (made by Pre-Wrath rapture proponents) to force the translation to declare that the "great day of the Lord *will come*."
- Obviously the earth dwellers quoted here are responding to past and current judgment, not judgments yet to come
- Men see the arrival of this day at least as early as the cosmic upheavals that characterize the sixth seal (v12-14), but they are probably recognizing it in the death of one-fourth of the population (v7-8), the worldwide famine (v5-6), and global warfare (v3-4). However, the light of their true explanation does not dawn upon their consciousness until the severity of the sixth Seal.
- In Seal judgments #1-4 (v1,3,5,7), the living creature says, "Come." In v17, the earth dwellers recognize that God's wrath "has come"
- Mankind in his rebellion correctly analyzes the cosmic and terrestrial disturbances as a part of the great end-time day of God's wrath
- The rapid sequence of these events likely causes human consciousness to understand that by the time of the 6th Seal, the world is undergoing the wrath of God

- "...who is able to stand?" - witnessing what these people witnessed, and understanding that it is clearly the wrath of God, they question how they could survive
- How could they remain on the earth and maintain an existence and a life with the hardships they have experienced so far, knowing that they will get worse in scope and intensity
- The question itself is rhetorical and is an unequivocal admission that no one could possibly survive (Nahum 1:6). The despair of mankind is complete.

Matt 24:8: **But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pains.**

[OT reference: Ps 76:7; Jer 30:7; Nahum 1:6; Zeph 1:14-18; Mal 3:2]

Joshua vs. Revelation Joshua as a "Type" of Revelation

The book of Joshua appears to be an anticipatory model of the book of Revelation in some surprising ways:

- *Yehoshua* is a variant of *Yeshua*
 - A military commander dispossessing the land from the usurpers/occupiers
 - 7-year campaign, against 7 (of an original 10) nations
- Torah is completely ignored during battle of Jericho:
 - Sabbath ignored - not supposed to work on Sabbath...instead they march around 7x
 - Levites - not supposed to go to war...instead they lead the procession
- First sent in "Two Witnesses"
- Seven Trumpet Events:
 - They marched around 1x/day for 6 days silently
 - They marched 6x on 7th day silently
 - 7th time on 7th day they shout, blow trumpets and the walls come down
 - Preceded by "silence in heaven for ½ hour"
- Enemies confederated under a leader in Jerusalem - *Adoni-Zedek*, "Lord of Righteousness"
- Ultimately defeated with:
 - Hailstones and fire from heaven
 - Signs in the Sun, Moon, etc. - Long Day of Joshua - Joshua 10
- Kings hide in caves ("Rocks fall on us...")

The Beginning of Sorrows - The 1st Half of the Tribulation

In each of the major series of "sevens"—the seals, trumpets, and bowls—we notice that there always appears to be an inserted *parenthetical* passage between the 6th and 7th of

each series. Having completed 6 of the 7 seals, Rev 7 pauses for some amplification before we continue with the 7th seal in Rev 8.

Israel is the centerpiece in the OT; and it now re-emerges as the centerpiece of God's climax in Revelation. It is also the centerpiece in the NT, but there is a lot of misunderstanding just how.

Violence and God's Wrath

While reading the Book of Revelation, and many prophetic passages throughout the rest of Scripture, you quickly see a picture of global violence during the end times. During the Tribulation, over half of the people on the planet will be killed: some will die at the hand of other men (6:8), while others will be killed through an angelic event (9:15). Nevertheless, this entire 7-year time is called the wrath of God (6:15-17); 14:10,19; 15:1,7; 16:1,19; 19:15). Zech 13:8 notes that two-thirds of the Jews will be killed during the Tribulation, but does not indicate how many through divine or human agency.

The events of the Tribulation are merely preparation for the slaughter at Armageddon (16:16; Joel 3:2,9-17), followed by the judgment that will be executed by our Lord upon His descent to earth (Matt 24:29-31; Rev 19:11-21). During the 75-day interval between the Second Coming and the start of the Millennium (Dan 12:11-12), every remaining unbeliever will be judged and destroyed (Matt 13:40-43; 25:31-46).

Evil Cannot be Removed without God's Violence

Many people question why God allows wars, suffering, and violence in the world. However, such a question betrays a misunderstanding of evil and violence. Evil, death, and violence entered the world as a result of man's sin (Rom 5:12-21; 1 Cor 15:20-22), through Satan and his fallen angels (Is 14:1-23; Ezek 28:1-19; Rev 12:4). God's creation of man and angels are responsible for introducing evil into the perfect creation. God's judgment of evil through the violent means of death and other sorrows is the only response that a truly holy, righteous, and just Being could put forth.

For God to not allow evil in His universe requires a violent judgment to separate evil from good. The request to remove evil from the universe is a petition for the end of history, when God removes evil through His righteous judgment. This is what heaven and hell are about: the eternal separation of good and evil. There will not be violence in heaven, but hell will surely be a place of ceaseless violence. Paul told the Thessalonians that they could relax and not think that they had to seek revenge against those who were the source of the "persecutions and afflictions which you endure" (2 Thess 1:4). Why? Because, God would take care of the problem when He returns in judgment (2 Thess 1:6-10). The separation of good from evil will require violence to accomplish. Such violence will be good and righteous, because it rights some of the wrongs of history. God is a righteous and just God.

