

The Book of Revelation
Revelation 6:12-17 (NIV)
“The Sixth Seal - The Day of The Lord”

Introduction

I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. The heavens receded like a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and everyone else, both slave and free, hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of Their wrath has come, and who can withstand it?”

As we have previously discussed, the opening of the fifth seal will occur at the midpoint (end of the first 3 1/2 years) of the tribulation. When the sixth seal from the scroll is opened, the last 3 1/2 years of this “Day of The LORD”, known as “The Great Tribulation”, shall begin. The first five seal judgments will be terrible, but upon the opening of the final two seals the wrath of God shall intensify to levels of horror the likes of which this world has never seen before. There will be an inescapable barrage of judgments raining down from heaven that will cause mankind to either repent, or pray for death. This will literally become a time of hell upon the earth.

So, how can we know that the events described after the opening of the sixth seal mark the last half of the tribulation? By reading the prophesies given by Daniel and the LORD Jesus, we can discern the timeline of these events. Daniel tells us that in “the middle of the seven” the antichrist will break his covenant with Israel and set up an image of himself in the temple to be worshipped.

He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven’. In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.
Daniel 9:27

Now let us look to the words of Jesus, which describe the events of the sixth seal in relation with the image of the antichrist (the abomination of desolation) which Daniel described.

“So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel — let the reader understand — then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let no one on the housetop go down to take anything out of the house. Let no one in the field go back to get their cloak. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now — and never to be equaled again.

“If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect, those days will be shortened. At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah!’ or ‘There He is!’ do not believe it. For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible,

even the elect. See, I have told you ahead of time. So if anyone tells you, 'There He is, out in the wilderness', do not go out; or, 'Here He is, in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of The Son of Man. Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather. Immediately after the distress of those days, 'the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.' **Matthew 24:15-29**

So you see, it is Christ Himself that arranges these eschatological events chronologically for us, so that we can know the timing of their occurrence during the seven year tribulation period. That is why it is so important for us to interpret the Scripture in light of other Scriptures. To fully understand the events identified by the opening of the sixth seal, it is imperative that we become familiar with both the writings of the Prophet Daniel, as well as, those of Matthew the Apostle.

Now let us look together at the terrible time of testing that will begin with the opening of the sixth seal from earth's title deed, as the Tribulation reaches its climax and this world finally realizes the full shock and awe of "The Great and Terrible Day of The LORD."

The Day of The Lord

The prophets throughout *The Bible* have referred to a time of wrath coming upon the whole world called The Day of the Lord. The Day of the Lord is mentioned 19 times in *The Old Testament* and 4 times in *The New Testament*.

Isaiah 34:8 says, **"For the Lord has a day of vengeance, a year of retribution, to uphold Zion's cause."**

Joel 2:31 says, **"The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord."**

Jesus says in **Luke 21:25-26**; **There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken.**

2 Peter 3:10 says, **"But the Day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar, the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare."**

Since the opening of the 6th seal will correspond with the last half of the tribulation, this will occur immediately following the time when the anti-Christ will break his covenant with Israel and set up an image of himself in the temple. Those who refuse to worship the image will be slaughtered (explaining the martyrs of the 5th seal). Now the stage is set for the final 3 1/2 year period, known as the Great Tribulation. The first 4 seals will bring the type of naturally occurring hardships that the world *has* experienced before; wars, strife, famine, and disease. But after this, shall come a series of never-before-seen disasters, occurring one after another with indescribable destruction and force, much like a rapid trip-hammer raining down successive blows upon molten steel. All who live on the earth will be terrified. These events could not be produced by anyone or anything upon earth, but can only be attributed to the wrath of God (**Rev. 6:17**).

The Six Disasters of the 6th Seal

As we see the devastating events unfolding from the sixth seal, many have attempted to describe them as symbolic in nature, rather than actual literal events. The reason being is that the world has never seen such supernatural phenomenon being unleashed upon the planet. However, it would be a mistake to describe these events as symbolic, rather than using a literal interpretation. The prophetic Scriptures are very clear that each and every occurrence immediately following the opening of the sixth seal will quite literally take place upon the earth. And the effects will be catastrophic.

1) A Global earthquake.

The first thing that will occur upon the opening of the sixth seal is a devastating worldwide earthquake. Throughout Scripture, earthquakes have been used as a symbol of divine visitation. (**Exodus 19:16-19; Matthew 27:51-53**). Jesus has said that as the time draws closer to His second coming, earthquakes will be on the increase (**Matthew 24:7**), much like the birth pangs a woman experiences before the actual birthing event. The massive earthquake that will occur during the sixth seal judgment, however, is like no other in all of history. It is a violent **global** shaking. Every nation on the earth will be shaken by the awesome power of Almighty God (**Joel 2:10-11. Haggai 2:6. 2:21-25**).

2) The sun will turn black.

Scientists claim there are 6 “super volcanoes” in different locations around the earth (Yellowstone is one of these 6). If all, or any number, of these volcanoes were to erupt, the entire planet would be covered in an ash cloud that would darken the sun for years. The ash cloud from Yellowstone alone, would block the sun over most of the U.S. This is only one scenario that could darken the sun.

It is, therefore, quite possible that the great earthquake along with the eruptions of super volcanoes is what is being described in **Revelation 6**. Whatever the cause, this world’s obsession with “global warming” will be the least of its concerns when the sun, along with its warming heat, will be partially blocked by the intense smoke and pollution that rises to fill the heavens. And this darkening will also have an effect upon the anxiety of all mankind. For many exhaustive studies have shown that a decrease in sunlight brings about an increase in depression.

These events, one upon another, will have a tremendous impact upon the world’s mental stability. The world will shift from its previous misguided suppositions of “peace and stability” to an overwhelming sense of panic and irresolution. Poll after poll being taken in this present age in the US tell us that many believe that our country is headed in the wrong direction. They all know that “something” is wrong, they just aren’t exactly sure what it is. Just imagine then, what it will be like when the disillusioned masses of this world realize that the era of peace and prosperity that had been promised by the antichrist was nothing more than an empty campaign slogan. For when they look in every direction, they will see a world literally falling apart!

While people are saying ‘Peace and safety,’ destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 1 Thessalonians 5:3

3) The moon will turn blood red.

The darkening of the sun and moon are related incidents. It stands to reason that if ash clouds obscure the sun, then the clouds will also obscure the moon as well. Jesus predicted this in **Matt 24**. Also, **Isaiah 13:9-13** predicts these events. Whatever the cause, *The Bible* gives general references to the darkening of the sun and moon, when the Day of the Lord comes (**Joel 2:31; Matt. 24:29; Mark 13:24-25; Luke 21:25; Acts 2:19-2**).

4) The “stars” will fall to earth.

The word used for stars (Aster - Greek) can mean any heavenly body, other than the sun and moon. This could actually be describing a major meteor shower, or possibly fiery debris raining down from the erupting volcano(s). We know that these are not literal stars, because the stars in the heavens are mentioned again in **Revelation 8:12**. We do know that as a result of the worldwide quake, some type of fiery material will pummel the earth (**Mark 13:25-26**).

5) *The sky will roll up.*

Much speculation has been given to this phenomenon. It could very well be the ash clouds rolling across the horizon that would make it appear as if the sky is rolling back. We can only speculate, but the effect will be dramatic and terrifying.

Others have speculated that due to the violent shaking of the earth in conjunction with the meteors pummeling the planet, that the earth's crust will actually begin to slide over its own mantle, literally causing the ground to shift underneath the feet of its inhabitants. This movement of the ground would cause the sky to appear to be moving in the opposite direction, as if it were rolling away. What an unsettling sight this will be to those who are left behind to face the horror of the Tribulation!

6) *Every mountain and island will be removed.*

The severity of the earthquake and meteor strikes will serve to flatten the landscape of the entire planet. Mountains everywhere will crumble and fall. Just imagine if every mountain range in the world collapsed at once. (The Rockies, the Himalayas, the Alps, Urals, etc.) Needless to say, if these mountains crumble, so does every man made structure around the globe. No wonder the clouds of dust will obscure the sun and moon. What utter devastation will accompany the opening of the 6th seal!

World Wide Panic

With the first 4 seals, people will still be able to deny the existence of God. We have all seen wars, famines, and plagues before, but the events described with the opening of the sixth seal will be unprecedented. And everyone will recognize these things for what they are, the wrath of Almighty God. Atheism will cease to exist, for everyone will know that only God could unleash this level of destructive force upon the earth.

The real tragedy we see in this text is that even though the people of this world will recognize these events as God's judgment, many will still choose death over repentance! Mankind has fallen very far indeed, when he would rather die, as be reconciled to God. They will pray for the mountains to fall on them, hoping they will escape the Day of the Lord (**vs. 16-17**). What they do not realize is that death will not deliver them. They must still face God Almighty and be judged by Him even after death (**Rev. 20:11-15**). The Scriptures tell us that all men will die and after this face judgment. But Christ's offer of salvation remains to those who will repent and be saved.

Just as people are destined to die once, and after that face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and He will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him.

Hebrews 9:27-28

The main purpose of the Tribulation is so that those who are wise enough to acknowledge Christ as King will repent, rather than, perish with the wicked. Sadly, multitudes of people will choose rebellion over repentance, as the sixth seal is opened and God's wrath is poured out from heaven upon the earth. However, we will see in the coming chapters, that not all men are so foolish and bent upon destruction. Some will indeed repent from their sin and turn to Christ during those awful days. Jesus has called them "the elect", and for their sakes, God will see to it that they are given a means of escape from that great day of judgment to come after the Tribulation. A very large number of those elect will be martyred for their faith. But it is far better to die in The LORD, than to spend eternity forever separated from a holy and righteous God. Jesus is coming soon. The question is... Will you be ready?

And let all those who are resting in Him say... TRUTH!!