

# Revelation 6 - The Tribulation Period Begins

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Let's get into the Word tonight. We're in the Book of Revelation, so open your Bible please to Revelation chapter six, Revelation 6. In the previous chapters, you'll remember that we kind of had an opportunity to listen in as the Apostle John was taken up in the spirit, into the very throne room of heaven where he heard and saw amazing things. One of which was he saw a scroll that had seven seals on it.

And the seals, the way they used to seal scrolls back in those days was they would tie a string around it and then they would put some like hot wax-type subject or stuff on there and then usually imprint it with something. But that was a way of kind of sealing it so that you would know whether it had been read or not.

And the seals had to be broken. One of the things that John heard was a mighty voice in heaven saying who is worthy to break open the seals and read what is inside.

And there was one who was able, who came forward, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Jesus himself, who took the scroll from the one sitting on the throne. And that's where we pick it up here in chapter six. So, before we read the chapter, let's pray.

Father, as always, as we get into your word tonight, we ask for your Holy Spirit to lead us. We ask, Lord, for grace to understand and insight into the mysteries and wisdom and revelations that you have brought to us here in this book. And we thank you, Father God, for the opportunity to study your word and to open our hearts further to what it says. And we thank you, Father, that you've not kept these things from your servants, but you have revealed your plan and your purpose, your program for the redemption of mankind and also the judgment of the world. So, we ask you to guide us in all that we study tonight and learn about, in Jesus' precious name. Amen. Amen.

We're going to read through the whole chapter, chapter six, and then we're going to go back and kind of take things piece by piece. So, let's read through it. It goes like this:

<sup>1</sup>*“Now I watched when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, “Come!”* <sup>2</sup>*And I looked, and behold, a white horse! And its rider had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer.*

<sup>3</sup>*When he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, “Come!”* <sup>4</sup>*And out came another horse, bright red. Its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth, so that people should slay one another, and he was given a great sword.*

<sup>5</sup>*When he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come!”* *And I looked, and behold, a black horse! And its rider had a pair of scales in his hand.* <sup>6</sup>*And I heard what seemed to be a voice in the midst of the four living creatures, saying, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius, and do not harm the oil and wine!”*

<sup>7</sup>*When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, “Come!”* <sup>8</sup>*And I looked, and behold, a pale horse! And its rider's name was Death, and Hades followed him. And they were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by wild beasts of the earth.*

<sup>9</sup>*When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne.* <sup>10</sup>*They cried out with a loud voice, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”* <sup>11</sup>*Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.*

<sup>12</sup>*When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood,* <sup>13</sup>*and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale.* <sup>14</sup>*The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.* <sup>15</sup>*Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and*

*everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains,<sup>16</sup> calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb,<sup>17</sup> for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"*(ESV)

Wow. Well, so these are the opening of the first six seals of the scroll. And we haven't even gotten into the scroll. But these seals bring various events that we're going to be talking about here tonight. But with the opening of the seals of the scroll, we enter into that time period that we refer to as the Great Tribulation.

It is a time period that I believe is kicked off by the catching away of the body of Christ or, if you will, the bride of Christ, what we refer to as the rapture. The rapture of the church is an interesting teaching in the Bible. It is given to us in the book of 1 Thessalonians. The Apostle Paul speaks of it, and I'd like to show it to you on the screen here. It goes like this:

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### **1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 (ESV)**

Paul says, *"<sup>13</sup> But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep,"* (And that means those who have passed away. And he's talking about those who have died in faith.) *"that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. <sup>15</sup> For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive, who are left,"* (And that means believers on the earth at the time of the rapture.) *"will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord."*

This is what we refer to as the catching away of the church or the rapture. There's a lot of people who object to this doctrine because they say, well, you can't make a doctrine out of something where the word isn't in the Bible. You're not going to find the word rapture in the Bible. Well, where we get our word, and I'll show you this on the screen, it is from the Greek word, harpazo, which means caught up.

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Where do we get our word "Rapture?"

"caught up (Greek) harpazo; to seizure, catch up, snatch away:-carry off.

Latin: rapturo

And the word, harpazo, in the Greek, means to seize, or to catch up, or to snatch away or carry off. Now, in the Latin translation of the New Testament, this is the word, rapturo. And that is where we get our word rapture. And you've heard the word to become enraptured by something, which means to be caught up in something.

You can be caught up in music or caught up in nature, and somebody might say he's just caught up in the love of animals or something like that. He's become enraptured by this sort of a thing. It means to be caught up to something. But it can literally refer to a physical catching up or snatching away. And the Greek word even can carry the idea of being caught away by force, all right?

This is where we get our idea, from 1 Thessalonians, where Paul says that we will be caught up or raptured to be with the Lord. And you'll notice that he said, we will be with the Lord in the air. We will meet him in the air.

So, this is not the second coming. The second coming is when Jesus comes to earth. What He does first is He comes for his bride and the bride is caught up to meet the Lord in the air, as Paul says. And then later, Jesus comes to the earth, and that is what we refer to as the second coming.

And there's one other thing that I want to explain. You'll remember that as we read through that passage, in 1 Thessalonians, Paul made reference to those who had fallen asleep. And I want to be careful that you understand what that term means because it doesn't literally refer to sleep. It is simply a way of describing those who have died in Christ, but it's referring to their bodies.

Whenever we talk about rapture or being caught up or resurrection, we're referring to the bodies of those individuals being raised or resurrected. The soul is not resurrected. The soul and the spirit go to be with the Lord upon death. That's why Paul said, we're absent, we're confident of this, when we're absent from the body, we're present with the Lord.

So, our spirit, our soul is immediately with the Lord. But when the Lord returns, our spirit and soul, for those who have passed on before, will be joined with their body. The body will be raised incorruptible, and those who are on earth at the time, let's hope it's us when the Lord comes back again, Paul says, we will be just transformed in the twinkling of an eye.

In other words, you'll be standing there one minute with your corruptible body and the next minute you'll have your incorruptible body, and you will be raised to meet the Lord in the air. What a trip that will be.

I remember when one of my kids was little, he asked if he could hold hands on the way up, when he was about three. And I said, yeah, you bet you we can, bud. Now he's got his own little boy to hold hands with.

But, anyway, so now you got to see the difference there. And you see the idea of where we get this idea of the rapture of the church or the rapture of the body of Christ. I believe that it is the catching away of the church that kicks off the events that begin now in Revelation chapter six with the breaking of the first seal and the significance of what begins to take place at that time.

I want you to read with me again in verse two. Can you bring me up just a hair on there, on the mic? I want you to notice what it says in verse two. Look with me again there in your Bible. *<sup>2</sup>"And I looked, and behold, a white horse! And its rider had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer."*

So, the first thing we look at or we see as the first seal is opened on the scroll is this rider who comes on a white horse. Now, you might read this and you might wonder if perhaps John is being given a prophetic image of the coming of Jesus. But we have to really look at this to make sure.

I think one of the things that might cause someone to think, well, maybe this is Jesus, is because he's riding on a white horse. And the fact of the matter is we see

Jesus actually coming later in the Book of Revelation, and in fact, he's riding on a white horse. We'll get to that when we get to Revelation chapter 19. But, actually, when we compare Jesus coming in Revelation 19 on a white horse and this rider, who appears with the first breaking of the seal on a white horse, we notice some very significant differences between the two. For example, in chapter 19, Jesus rides forth with a sword, which we're told is the word of God. Did you notice that this rider comes forth with a bow.

So, right away we notice that there's a difference. There's a different weapon that is given to each rider. And the next thing we're told about this first rider is that a crown was given to him. Did you notice that? A crown was given to him. I want you to notice that it's crown singular. When we compare that with Jesus, who is described in Revelation 19, the Bible tells us that He has on His head many crowns and none of them are given to Him. They are simply His.

But with this first rider, a crown is given, all right? And then lastly, we're told that this first rider came out conquering and to conquer. And that means this rider is given dominion over the earth. Well, you think, okay, given dominion over the earth, I suppose that could refer to Jesus.

So how do we know it's not, other than the things that I've already brought up, the fact that he has a crown, singular. Oh, and by the way, the word for crown in this first rider is a different Greek word than the word for crown as it relates to Jesus in Revelation chapter 19. And we know that there's some different things like the weapon and so on, and so on, and so on.

So how are we going to find out if this is in fact someone other than Jesus? Well, it actually comes by looking at the result or what follows. In other words, if Jesus comes at this time, we expect certain things to follow with him. And if it is someone else, we would expect other things to follow. Let's see what follows.

Look at verse three. It says, <sup>3</sup> *When he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!"* <sup>4</sup> *And out came another horse, bright red. Its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth, so that people should slay one another, and he was given a great sword."*

So, what do we have following the first rider? We have a second rider who takes peace away from the earth. The removal of peace. Does that sound like something Jesus or what would follow the coming of Jesus? Jesus is the prince of peace. When He comes, He brings peace. But it says, with this person, following right on the heels of this rider on the white horse is the removal of peace.

Now let's see what else is kind of following. <sup>5</sup> *When he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!"* *And I looked, and behold, a black horse! And its rider had a pair of scales in his hand.* <sup>6</sup> *And I heard what seemed to be a voice in the midst of the four living creatures, saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius, and do not harm the oil and wine!"*

What do we see here with this next rider? We see that he has scales that he's holding in his hand, and the scale is a symbol of measurement. In this case, he's measuring and rationing food. And we can see that the result of this third seal is that the world is thrust into a time of limited food supplies.

And then the fourth seal, verse 7, <sup>7</sup> *When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!"* <sup>8</sup> *And I looked, and behold, a pale horse! And its rider's name was Death, and Hades followed him. And they were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by wild beasts of the earth."*

So what do we see following with this rider? Well, violence, famine, pestilence. We know all about pestilence ever since 2020. I mean, personally, we've read about pestilence throughout the history of humanity. Many times, issues of pestilence have arisen and much worse than what we just experienced in the last three years.

But still, it says here that, and raging wild animals are going to be part of what follows the opening of this fourth seal. So based on what is happening after the rider on the white horse, which kicks off this whole thing, you can see that there's

absolutely no way that we can interpret this as the coming of Jesus or the Messiah at all because of everything that follows.

This is none other than the satanically inspired dictator that is to come upon the earth or to be revealed, and I believe will be revealed immediately after the church is taken away. And that is that person known as the anti-Christ.

Now, you might ask yourself the question, if it's the anti-Christ, why is he riding on a white horse? I thought white was reserved for the good guys. Isn't that the way it was in all the Westerns you ever saw? The bad guy never had a white hat. It was always Roy Rogers, right? Or whoever the good guy happened to be. He had the white hat and even sometimes a white horse. And we all knew, even with our black and white TVs. Anybody remember those? We knew who the good guys were. We knew who the bad guys were.

So, why is the anti-Christ riding in on a white horse? Well, it's because he comes to deceive. He comes to deceive the people of the earth as one who has the answers. And I believe that the anti-Christ is going to be very popular at first, very much accepted by the people of the earth as the man with the plan. He's going to have the answers to many of the world's problems.

And I believe that even the Jews are going to specifically put their trust in the anti-Christ who will appear to have the answers for them. In fact, I believe that during that first half of the great tribulation period, that through the work of the anti-Christ, I believe that the Jews will be enabled to rebuild their temple very quickly and even begin to once again reinstitute the sacrificial system in the temple.

But midway through the great tribulation period, the anti-Christ is going to go back on all of his promises and all the things he said to particularly the Jews. And he is going to, at that time, set up his own image in the temple and he will demand of the world to be worshiped as God. And this is a prophecy that is given to us in the book of Daniel.

Let me put this up on the screen for you, from Daniel chapter nine. It says:

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**Daniel 9:27 (ESV)**



*“<sup>27</sup>And he shall make a strong covenant (or pact, if you will) with many for one week, (And that week, by the way, is a reference to a seven-year period of time) and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.”*

And what Daniel is foretelling here is the coming of anti-Christ to make a deal with the Jews. And it will be a seven-year deal, but halfway through he will go back on that covenant that he makes with them. And that's going to create a very challenging time, particularly for the Jews during the time of the great tribulation. And this is precisely what Jesus foretold would happen as is recorded in Matthew Chapter 24. Up on the screen for you, once again, look at this.

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**Matthew 24:15-21 (ESV)**

Jesus says, *“<sup>15</sup>So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, (And he's referring to the passage we just read) standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), <sup>16</sup>then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. (He says, those who are in Judea. He's specifically referring to the difficult times that will come upon the Jews at this particular moment in time. And he says,) <sup>17</sup>Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, <sup>18</sup>and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. <sup>19</sup>And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! <sup>20</sup>Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. (Notice the reference to the Sabbath, which once again tells you this is a prophecy pertaining to the Jews. Okay? He's already mentioned Judea and the Sabbath, all right? Because he goes on to say, and this is very important, the last part of this prophecy, it says,) <sup>21</sup>For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.”*

What does Jesus tell you from the last part of that prophecy? He tells you that this time period, that we call the great tribulation, is going to be a time unlike any other time in human history in that the difficulty and the suffering that will take place will be greater than any other time period before it.

And that's saying a lot because we've been through some pretty stinky time periods of suffering in human history. But this one is going to top them all, and Jesus makes that very clear. Now, I need to tell you that the last time I taught through the

Book of Revelation, which was about 165 years ago. I'm kidding, it was about 12 years ago, I think, something like that. It feels like a long time. When I watch the video, and I don't usually, I look like it was about 165 years ago.

But I spent an entire week last time just going through Daniel chapter nine. We actually stopped our study in Revelation, and I took an entire week and we went through Daniel chapter nine and we talked about what it means and how it applies to the book of Revelation. I thought seriously about whether I wanted to do that again, and I decided not to. But this time what I'm going to do, is I'm going to encourage you, perhaps even this coming week, to go to our website. In fact, let me put the page on the screen for you.

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The screenshot shows the website [ccontario.com/daniel](http://ccontario.com/daniel). At the top left is a book cover for 'The Book of DANIEL' with the year '2022'. To the right of the cover is the text 'The Book of DANIEL'. Below the cover is a red button with a download icon and the text 'Click to download the complete series on MP3'. The main content area is titled 'ccontario.com/daniel' and contains a list of chapters. Each chapter entry has a 'WATCH' button with a play icon and a 'LISTEN' button with a speaker icon. The entries are: Daniel 1 • The first deportation to Babylon; Daniel 2 • The Lord reveals and interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream; Daniel 3 • The fiery furnace, a test of real faith; Daniel 4 • The humbling of King Nebuchadnezzar; Daniel 5 • The handwriting on the wall; Daniel 6 • Daniel in the den of lions; Daniel 7 • Daniel's vision of the four beasts; Daniel 8 • An amazing prophecy of things to come; Daniel 9 • The Seventy Weeks of Daniel; Daniel 10-12 • The Final Revelation. The 'Daniel 9' entry is highlighted with a red rectangular box. To the right of the list is a dark button with the text 'The 70 Weeks of Daniel by Sir Robert Anderson (PDF)'.

You can see the address there. It's [ccontario.com/daniel](http://ccontario.com/daniel). And I particularly want you to listen to Daniel chapter nine. We'll kind of put a box around it there so that you can see that study down there toward the bottom.

If you go to the next slide there, it. And it's called the 70 Weeks of Daniel. And I want to really encourage you this week to go there and listen to that study because

that is going to give you a great deal more contextual information for understanding this whole idea of the great tribulation because this is part of what Daniel is given in this revelation.

And, people have asked me before, how do we know that the great tribulation is going to last for seven years? Well, it's all in Daniel. That's how we know. It's not mentioned anywhere else, but in Daniel. And, so, if you will go there, if you'll listen to that study, I believe that will really help bring a lot of things into greater clarity.

So, let's look at the rest of the chapter here. Look with me in verse nine. It says, *"When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne."*

Now, so suddenly John has shown all these people who'd been martyred for their faith. Now, we know that the anti-Christ is going to slay many people who refuse to bow the knee to him, to worship him. He's going to kill many people during the great tribulation who will be martyred for their faith in Jesus. But, it seems more likely that these martyrs that John is being shown at this time are those who have died spanning the years of perhaps both the Old and the New Testament time periods, who have given their life for their faith in God.

And it says here that they cried out to the Lord asking when their blood would be avenged. And in verse 11, they were simply given white robes and told to rest or wait, if you will, a little bit longer until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.

And, I believe we're going to see some of the rest of those people as we go on in our study of Revelation. In fact, in the next chapter, we're going to learn about an in-gathering of people into the kingdom during the great tribulation that is going to have a huge impact on this very thing. But you'll notice, at this point, the avenging of their blood had not yet taken place.

Verse 12: *"When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth,"* Probably not, there's no mistake given here that it is described as being black as sackcloth. Sackcloth and the blackness of sackcloth reminds us of mourning. That was the garment of mourning. And the creation is literally in mourning at this time.

And that's how he describes the sun being darkened after this immense earthquake. He says that the *“moon became like blood, <sup>13</sup>and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. <sup>14</sup>The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.”*

So, this earthquake that takes place is so powerful it literally levels mountains and apparently islands. It says they're removed from their place. I don't know exactly what that means, but it's obviously a cataclysmic sort of a deal. And that's what we see when this seal is opened. Literally, these events shake the world.

And, by the way, I don't believe that these are just symbols. There's a lot of people who read through the book of Revelation and they spiritualize it. And they'll try to think of some huge political event from the past that could be described as a great earthquake or the leveling of mountains.

They'll say, well, a mountain is symbolic of the strength of man or the strength of government. And, so, the leveling of the mountains is the toppling of governments. Well, boy, when you start that sort of an approach, an interpretive approach to the things that are given to you in the book of Revelation, where does it end? Where does it stop?

When you begin to spiritualize, where does it end? You could come up with any sort of explanation for what these things mean. even though poetic language is used here, and there's no doubt about that, there is poetic language that is being employed, I believe that we're talking here about literal things.

When he talks about the stars of the sky falling to the earth, we don't know exactly what he's describing. Are the stars literally falling? Quite possibly. I don't know, a meteor shower. We don't know. There's something cataclysmic going on in the heavens that appears to John to be stars falling from the sky.

There's something happening in the sky that appears as if it is being rolled up like a scroll. What exactly is it? We don't know. But there's something literal going on that is powerful and cataclysmic. And the reason that I believe these things are more than just spiritualizations or symbolic pictures is because they are spoken of elsewhere in the Bible.

There are several Old Testament prophets that make reference to these cataclysmic judgments happening during, specifically, the day of the Lord. Let me show you just a few. First of all from Joel chapter two.

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**Joel 2:10-11 (ESV)**

Joel writes, *“<sup>10</sup>The earth quakes before them; the heavens tremble. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining. <sup>11</sup>The LORD utters his voice before his army, for his camp is exceedingly great; he who executes his word is powerful. For the day of the LORD is great and very awesome; who can endure it?”*

Then, let me show you Zephaniah chapter one.

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**Zephaniah 1:14-15 (ESV)**

*“<sup>14</sup>The great day of the LORD is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter; the mighty man cries aloud there. <sup>15</sup>A day of wrath is that day, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness,”*

And then finally, Isaiah chapter 34. These are just three examples.

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**Isaiah 34:4 (ESV)**

*“<sup>4</sup>All the host of heaven shall rot away, and the skies roll up like a scroll. All their host shall fall, as leaves fall from the vine, like leaves falling from the fig tree.”*

So, once again, you see the same sort of poetic language, the same sort of descriptive understanding of these cataclysmic events in the skies with the stars, the moon and the sun that take place during this time.

Verse 15, look with me there again. Then we're told that *“<sup>15</sup>the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals, And the rich and the powerful, and everyone's slave and free”* responded to all of these cataclysmic judgments by, it says, *“they hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains.”* In fact, even to

the point of “<sup>16</sup>calling to the mountains and rocks,” saying, “fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb, <sup>17</sup>for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”

And this is what the people of the earth are saying. They are cognizantly aware of the fact that this is a time of wrath. They know it, they're saying it. And they know that they've got to get someplace where they can get shelter. And it says they're going to go find the rocks in the caves, in the mountains to hide themselves.

But even there, they're going to be so fearful that they're going to call upon the mountains and the rocks to literally take their lives because they would rather die than face the wrath of He who sits on the throne and the Lamb, not knowing, of course, that death isn't going to do them any good. They're still going to stand before the judgment seat of God.

And again, this same response of the people of the earth is foretold by the Old Testament prophets. Let me show you Isaiah chapter two. It says:

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**Isaiah 2:20-21 (ESV)**

*“<sup>20</sup>In that day mankind will cast away their idols of silver and their idols of gold, which they made for themselves to worship, to the moles and to the bats, <sup>21</sup>to enter the caverns of the rocks and the clefts of the cliffs, from before the terror of the LORD, and from the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to terrify the earth.”*

That's a very clear passage, isn't it, from Isaiah? What is God going to do? He's going to rise and pour out his wrath, which will terrify the earth in such a way that these people are going to run for their lives.

And then Hosea chapter 10. The last part of this verse says:

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**Hosea 10:8b (ESV)**

*“Thorn and thistle shall grow up on their altars, and they shall say to the mountains, “Cover us,” and to the hills, “Fall on us.”*

And again, the reason is because they are terrified. So, where's the church during this time? We are with the Lord. Why do we know that? Because the Bible tells us that we have not been appointed under wrath. And this is a time of wrath. This is a time when God is pouring out his wrath.

Now, I've had Christians say to me,

“Well, Pastor Paul, isn't it possible for God to simply take care of the church during this time so that they don't suffer the wrath of God while the rest of the world does well?”

“Yeah sure, sure.”

And I've had people say to me, “Hasn't it always been the role or the privilege of the body of Christ to suffer for the cause of Christ?”

“Yes, it has.”

But this is not suffering for the cause of Christ. This is suffering the wrath of God. We are privileged during the church age to suffer for the cause of Christ. We suffer at the hands of the wrath of man. But we will not suffer under the wrath of God because the one whom we believe in has already born the wrath of God for us.

Jesus Christ took the wrath of God on Himself so that we wouldn't have to. So, this is why I believe that we are with the Lord during this time, and that we will return with him when He comes to the earth at the end or at the conclusion of the great tribulation period.

Now, we're not going to get into Revelation chapter seven. But I'm going to tell you as kind of a little bit of a preview that chapter seven is for us, an interlude. We're not going to get to the seventh seal until we get to chapter eight. All of chapter seven is an interlude, which is about an in-gathering. And we're going to read about that.

And even during this time of the outpouring of God's wrath upon the earth, God cares for people to come to faith. And He's going to give people an opportunity to come to faith in Jesus Christ during that time. Even during the great tribulation, even when the church is absent, people will be coming to Christ and making Him Lord and Savior.

And we're going to read about that in chapter seven. And then we'll get into chapter eight where we will see the opening of the seventh seal, which will then usher in the trumpet judgements at that time. And it just goes from there, let me tell you.

So that's where we're going to stop for tonight. So let us pray.

Heavenly Father, I thank you, Lord, for sending your son Jesus Christ to take the wrath for us, the wrath of God poured out on Him so that the word could say, concerning us, we have not been appointed under wrath, but unto salvation. I thank you for that, my Father. I thank you that for us, that judgment of sins is passed. Lord, as we read about these things, as we study them, as we recognize the signs of the times in our own day and we know that the time draws near for the fulfillment of all of these things, I pray, my Father God, that we would be busy doing what you've called us to do, sharing the gospel, loving the lost, declaring who Jesus is and the work of the cross, that those who are willing might come and put their faith in Jesus. Lord, you made us salt, you made us light. And I pray that until that day comes when you catch your church away that we would continue to be salt and light, even in a culture and society that seems like it's becoming darker by the day.

Lord, we pray for personal revivals. We pray for the outbreak of real true in-gatherings. We pray for college campuses right now across this country and around the world that are opening their hearts to Jesus. We pray for the people who are longing for the word of God and seeking to know what the scriptures have to say. We pray in Jesus name that this would continue more and more until the day that you come for your body.

Help us to be ready, Lord. Help us to be alert. Keep us where we need to be. Keep us with our eyes on you. We thank you and praise you for the time that you've given us tonight. Now, we ask you, Lord, to bless our time of fellowship as we encourage one another.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.