

The Vengeance Of The Lamb

Revelation 6:1-16

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I want to start with a question. Why study the book of Revelation? There is a lot of buzz around that says that Revelation is too hard to understand, it's a prophetic book, there are too many symbols and no one really understands the book of Revelation. But I want to give you three reasons why a series should be studied and preached from the book of Revelation. Number one, it's part of Scripture, and thus it is profitable. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 is the classic passage on the inspiration of Scripture, where Paul says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man..."—or "woman"—"...of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." So the first reason we study Revelation is because it's in the Bible; it's part of the canon of Scripture, and it's given by inspiration of God. And in Revelation 1:3, there is a promised blessing to those who read and hear and those who keep the prophecy of this book.

Number two, the book of Revelation encourages us to live in purity, holiness and godliness. In 1 John 3:3, the Bible says, "Everyone who has this hope in Him..."—of Christ coming—"...purifies himself, just as He..."—that is, "Christ"—"...is pure." If anything will wake you and shake you and sober you to holy, godly living, it's the book of Revelation. When you see God's wrath poured out on this Christ-rejecting world and understand that God is holy, just and will punish sinners, then you will be motivated to live for God, to evangelize, to witness to your friends and to live a holy life.

Number three, it helps us to gain an eternal perspective. If there is anything we need today, in this wicked, materialistic, sensual world, it's an eternal perspective. It is said of Abraham that he lived looking for "the city...whose builder and maker is God." We need to have the same vision. In 2 Corinthians 4:17-18, the Bible says, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

So the book of Revelation has a way of opening our eyes to the spiritual realities of what life is all about. "And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever," 1 John 2:17.

Now I want to back up and give you a mega-picture of the whole Bible before we zero in on the book of Revelation and on chapter 6.

As far as the Bible is concerned, there are 66 books in the Bible, written by 40 different human authors over a 1,600-year period. But there is one central message throughout the Bible: God's purpose and plan of redemption through His Son, Jesus Christ.

In the Old Testament, we have what is called "anticipation." The prophets foretold, anticipated

and were looking for the coming of the Messiah. In the New Testament Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, we have the “manifestation”; “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” God became a man and manifested Himself among us. Then we have the book of Acts, in which we have “proclamation.” They went into all the world and proclaimed the Gospel. In the epistles of the New Testament, we have the “explanation,” where they explained who Christ is, His death on the Cross and in Romans, Paul delineates the doctrine of justification by faith. Then Revelation is a book of prophecy. I would point out that we then have “culmination.” So we have anticipation in the Old Testament, manifestation in the New Testament Gospels, proclamation in Acts, explanation in the epistles and culmination in Revelation.

The book of Revelation is the Grand Central Station of all Scripture; everything culminates in the book of Revelation. It is the culmination of God’s plan of redemption for mankind and planet earth and the punishment He’ll bring upon the Christ-rejecting world.

In Revelation 1:1, the title of the book is “the revelation of Jesus Christ.” It’s not the revelation of St. John the Divine, who is the human author who wrote from the island of Patmos. It’s the unveiling of Jesus Christ. The word “revelation” is a transliteration of “the Apocalypse.” It literally means “to unveil.” So the Bible, in Revelation, is unveiling the person of Jesus.

In chapter 1, we saw the vision of Christ; in chapters 2-3, we read about the voice of Christ speaking to the seven churches; in chapters 4-5, we saw the victory of Christ; and now as we begin chapter 6, through chapter 19, we will see the vengeance of Christ and of the Lamb being poured out upon the world. In chapter 6, verse 16, it says the wicked, who lived on the earth at the time of the tribulation, will cry “to the mountains and rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!’” So we move now from the worship of the Lamb, chapters 4-5, which was a prelude or a parenthetical section of Revelation, to the wrath of the Lamb on earth, in chapters 6-19. The scene goes from heaven, in chapters 4-5, to God’s wrath on the earth being poured out, in chapters 6-19.

This time period that begins in chapter 6 is the tribulation period. It is seven years long. The Bible tells us that in Daniel 9. Daniel uses the Hebrew “hepta” or “one week.” So it is one week of years or seven years. The seven-year period of the tribulation is divided into two parts, each three-and-a-half years, with “the abomination of desolation” in the middle of the seven-year period. We will see all this as we progress through the book of Revelation. This period is also known as “the Great Tribulation” and also known as “the Day of the Lord.” In Jeremiah 30:7, it’s called “the time of Jacob’s trouble,” which indicates one of the purposes of the tribulation occurring during the last, seven-year period of Daniel’s 70-year prophecy is to bring Israel to repentance and turn them back to be ready for Messiah’s Second Coming. When Christ returns, “They shall look on Him whom they pierced,” so many in Israel will be saved. Then the tribulation of seven years of man’s rebellion on earth will come to an end.

Chapter 7 is a parenthesis or a pause where God seals 144,000 Jews, who evangelize during this seven-year period. So it’s interesting that God is even going to save after, I believe, the church is raptured and “caught up...to meet the Lord.” So I believe in a pre-tribulation rapture.

Now the book of Revelation is not in chronological order. You have a chronological flow through a chapter, and then you have a pause in a couple of chapters where it goes back to the narrative in more detail. I'll lay it out for you as we go through the book of Revelation.

More space is given to the subject of the tribulation in Scripture than any other subject except for salvation through Christ and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. A large portion of Scripture deals with this subject that we're covering in just a few chapters of the Bible.

The tribulation starts with the revelation of the Antichrist, in Revelation 6:1-2, and it ends with the return of Jesus Christ. The Antichrist comes on the scene and makes a covenant with Israel for seven years, and it ends with Jesus Christ returning, bringing an end to the Antichrist, setting up His kingdom for 1,000 years and there's a new heaven and a new earth and the eternal state that we know of as heaven.

The book of Revelation revolves around seven judgments: seven seal judgments, seven trumpet judgments and seven bowl judgments. And in between those judgments, you have parenthetical sections, which go into detail about this time of wrath. We start with the seven seal judgments, the first four of which are the horsemen of the Apocalypse. Then out of the seventh seal comes the first trumpet judgment followed by the other six trumpet judgments. And out of the seventh trumpet judgment comes the first bowl or "vile" or "picture" judgment, as the King James calls it. It is a bowl of God's wrath being poured out upon this world. Sequentially these judgments are in order; seals, trumpets and bowls of God's wrath.

Before the Antichrist is revealed, though, and the tribulation begins, the church will be "caught up...to meet the Lord in the air," Revelation 4:1. It doesn't use the word "rapture," but John hears a voice in heaven saying, "Come up here." John is caught up to heaven, and the church is in the heavenly scene.

In chapters 2 and 3, you will see the repeated phrase, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." Now, when you go from chapters 6-19, we see the phrase, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says"; there is no reference to the church. So the church is never seen on earth during the tribulation. Saints are seen, because they turn to Christ and are saved during the tribulation. So they are "tribulation saints," but they're not part of the church which has already been raptured and "caught up...to meet the Lord in the air."

What will characterize this time of trouble during the tribulation? In Jesus' Olivet Discourse, in Matthew 24:21, it says, "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be." So think of all the wars, all the disease, all the death, all the tragedy, all the cataclysmic events on the earth, and none of it begins to equal and it pales in comparison to this future time. The earth as we know it now is going to go through seven years of the worst time in human history. And it is because God Himself is going to pour out His wrath upon this Christ-rejecting world. Jesus said it would be like no other time in human history. And Jesus said, "Unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved" on planet earth.

Now let's look at the first six of the seven judgments of the seals. The seventh seal does not appear until Revelation 8:1. The first six seals are in chapter 6.

What I want to point out in these six seals are the characteristics that will exist on the earth during the time of the tribulation. Number one, it will be characterized by deception and seduction, in Revelation 6:1-2. John says, "Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder..."—there's a storm coming—"... 'Come and see.' And I looked, and behold, a white horse." This is the first horse of the Apocalypse. "He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer."

Now notice that John says, "Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals." This takes us immediately back to chapter 5. In chapter 5:1-7, John sees God the Father on the throne, and He's holding in his right hand a scroll, which is written on the inside and outside, sealed with seven seals. Then one of the elders cries out, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?" The Bible says they search heaven and earth, and no one in the whole universe was worthy to take the scroll and loose the seals. So John begins to weep and sob convulsively. Then one of the elders came to him and said, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals." It's a reference to Jesus Christ, of the tribe of Judah, who takes the scroll, the title deed to the earth, and He looses the seals thereof. The wrath of the Lamb is then poured out on the earth as these seals are unleashed upon planet earth.

Jesus is the only one in the entire universe who is worthy to redeem planet earth. God is not only going to redeem sinners, but He is going to redeem the earth. He will reverse the curse. For 1,000 years we'll live on the earth in glorified bodies reigning with Christ as "King of kings and Lord of lords."

This reference to the Lamb is to Jesus Christ, who opens the first two seals. When He had opened the first seal, John said, "And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer." I believe this rider on the white horse represents the Antichrist. He is also known as "the man of sin," "the son of perdition," "the man with a mouth speaking great words"—I call him Mr. Bigmouth—and as "the beast," in Revelation 13. He will have great oratory ability, he sways the world, the world becomes one and he offers peace, but it's a pseudo, deceptive peace. The Bible says, "For when they say, 'Peace and safety!' then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape."

So I believe this white-horse rider is not Jesus Christ—some mistakenly have said that it is. In verse 1, Jesus is described as "the Lamb," who opened the seal, and not the rider on the white horse.

If you're going to have an Antichrist or a counterfeit Christ—the word "anti" means "against" and "instead of," so he opposes Christ and takes the place of Christ—you want him to look like

Christ. So don't all good guys ride white horses? You know the old westerns. When a guy rides into town on a white horse, you know that's the good guy. If you created a fake \$20 bill in counterfeit money—I'm not recommending that—you want to make it look as much like the real thing as you can. And in Revelation 19, Jesus comes on a white horse.

But the Antichrist comes as a "pseudo-Christ," as a savior of the world. The whole world is influenced by him. He basically brings a one-world government. The fact that in our culture today we see a great push, a great move toward a one-world government, the globalization of the world and the interesting things that are happening globally right now is an indication that we're living in the last days. The world will become one, and we have this man of sin, the son of perdition. We'll find out more about him in Revelation 13.

Christ does have a crown, Revelation 19, and He comes riding a white horse. But Jesus actually comes wearing "many crowns," plural. The word "crown" in Revelation 6:2 worn by the Antichrist is the Greek word "stephanos." That means "a victor's crown." It would be a laurel wreath that sat on your head when you won a game in the Olympics. But in Revelation 19, where it says Christ came as "King of kings" wearing "many crowns," the word "crown" here means "diadems" or "kingly crowns." Jesus comes back as the universal king, the "King of kings and Lord of lords." So the rider in Revelation 6 is not Jesus Christ but the Antichrist, and he will deceive many.

Now Jesus, in His Olivet Discourse, which parallels Revelation 6, said in Matthew 24:4-5, "Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many." So leading up to the tribulation, and during the tribulation, it will culminate in one individual, Satan's man of the hour or the Antichrist. He will deceive and seduce the entire world. People will reject the truth, and they will hook-line-and-sinker believe the lie.

And today we see the world being set up for spiritual deception. We see demonic influences at work. We are becoming more secular, more spiritual but not becoming Christians or believing in Christ. They think more spiritually, but it's the spirit of Antichrist at work, and it's deceptive.

So we must read our Bibles, be grounded in the Word and not be deceived by the false teachers and the false christs. I believe the church will be "caught up...to meet the Lord in the air" before this deception of the Antichrist comes upon the earth.

Beside the deception of a time of peace, the second characteristic of the tribulation, to be brought in by the Antichrist, is war, in verses 3-4 in the second seal. "When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, 'Come and see.'"

These living creatures go back to Revelation 4:7, where it says they are living, angelic beings, and one of them has the face of "a lion," another the face of "a calf," another the face of "a man" and another the face of "a flying eagle." Some see in them the Gospels: Mark would be the lion, Matthew would be the calf, Luke would be the man and John would be the flying eagle.

These living creatures are involved with the four horsemen of the Apocalypse. Verse 4 says,

“Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.” So the Antichrist deceives with peace, but soon afterwards, he brings war. This red horse and its rider take peace from the earth. People are deceived.

It's like some politicians. “I won't do this, and I won't do that.” Then when they get elected, they immediately do everything they said they wouldn't do—and more.

So the Antichrist first comes with a bow but no arrows. Notice the absence of arrows. He comes to bring the world together by peaceful diplomacy; not by war and not by fighting but by diplomacy. But soon afterwards, he plunges the world into war, which will result in famine, as we will see.

Again, Jesus spoke about this in Matthew 24:7. He said, “For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.” In World War I there were 17 million deaths. In World War II there were 73 million deaths. In the Vietnam War there were 3 million deaths. In those three wars alone, not counting the multitude of other wars, there were a total of 93 million deaths. How tragic.

It has been calculated that for every one minute of peace in man's history, we have four hours of war. We live in a very troubled world. Man is sinful, desperately wicked and he messes up everything he gets his hands on. That's why Jesus has to come back to judge the wicked, to judge the unrighteous and to set up His eternal kingdom.

Satan comes as this red-horse rider “to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.” It's interesting that later in the Apocalypse, Satan is called “a great red dragon.” Now he is the red-horse rider.

The third characteristic of the tribulation period is famine. This is what is happening with these horse riders. Verses 5-6 say, “When He had opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, ‘Come and see.’ So I looked, and behold, a black horse and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand.” This is how they would weight money and food products, so this is speaking of a time of famine. Continuing, “And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, ‘A quart of wheat for a denarius...’—or “a penny”—“...and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine.” This conveys a time of famine. We know that following war is often a time of famine.

I did a study of life conditions after World War II. I was completely shocked at how hard and difficult it was for Europe to get back on its feet and how much people suffered as a result of the devastating wars that Hitler brought to that part of the world.

So the Antichrist comes with a deceptive peace, then he brings war and then he brings famine to the world. The war in the world is very tragic.

In the past week in this world, there were 143,000 who died from hunger or hunger-related sicknesses. Ninety million die every year of hunger and hunger-related diseases, more than

AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined. Globally 822 million people suffer from malnutrition, and 3.1 million children die of poor nutrition every year. One in nine people go to bed every night hungry.

Sometimes we'll say, "Let's stop at In-N-Out; I'm starving to death." No you're not starving to death. But there really are people in the world who are starving to death.

So these are birth pains that will culminate during the tribulation, and they will give birth to the coming of Christ in His Second Coming and in the new heaven and the new earth. How tragic the tribulation will be.

Again, Jesus spoke of it in Matthew 24:7. "There will be famines, pestilences." We know that to be true in our time.

The fourth characteristic of the tribulation, in verses 7-8, coming with the fourth horse and its rider, is death. So we have deception, war, famine and death. "When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, 'Come and see.'"

Now if I were John at this time, I'd say, "No, thank you. I've seen enough!" As I was reading this and the whole book of Revelation this week, it just shook me to the core to think that the world has yet to face this terrible time of trouble.

Verse 8, "So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth."

The word for this pale horse in the Greek is "chloros" and we get our word "chlorine" from it. The color of the horse is believed to be a yellowish-green. It's kind of the color of a body that is decomposing. So this horse is given the name of Death and Hades or Hell. The rider on this horse kills a fourth part of the earth, or 1.8 billion people in one swoop, based on our current population. How tragic that is. Satan comes "to steal, and to kill, and to destroy." But God comes to save and to redeem.

So Satan does this with the sword—and we already have with war—and he does it with hunger or famine, death and hell and with the beasts of the earth. There will be wild animals attacking people. Some say this may be an infestation of rats and the diseases that they bring.

Now notice Satan is described there as "Death and Hades." The word "death" is describing the separation of the soul and spirit from the physical body. When you die, you don't stop existing; you just move out. And you either go to heaven or you go to hell. These people during the tribulation went to hell.

The word "hell" is the Greek word "Hades." In the Old Testament Hebrew, it was called "she'ol." At the end of the book of Revelation where we see the great white throne judgment at the end of the millennium, all the wicked dead are in hell or Hades and will be resurrected. Then they

will be thrown into the lake of fire, which is called “the second death”; in the Greek, it’s (“Gehinnom.” This is eternal punishment and eternal hell. So not only do we read about God pouring out His wrath upon the is world that rejected Him, but we also see that God will send the wicked to hell and they will be there forever with the false prophet and the Antichrist.

But I want to mention the fact that when you die, there are only two places you could go. Where you go depends on your relationship to God and Christ. And you can’t be rightly related to God without being a believer in Jesus Christ; if you reject the Son, you don’t have the Father. So Jesus told Nicodemus, “You must be born again.” You have to be born again to see the kingdom of heaven. And if you’re born again, you’re a Christian, you’re a child of God and when you die, you’ll go to heaven. The Bible says, “To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.” So you go immediately into the presence of the Lord.

That’s why, when you become a Christian, you’re not afraid anymore to die. You can start enjoying life. You don’t have to live in fear. You know where you’re going. Paul said, “For me to die is gain,” because he was a child of God. The same thing is true of us.

But these verses are a reference to unbelievers. They’ll be taken in death, which is the physical body, and their soul and spirit will be thrown into hell or Hades. And a fourth part of the earth will be destroyed.

Now there are only four horsemen of the Apocalypse. The first four seals are the four horse riders. Now we will see a heavenly scene, and that brings us to characteristic number five, in verses 9-11, which is martyrdom. “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 testimony which they held.” So we have seen people who were killed and have gone to hell, but now we see people who have died and are now in heaven under the altar. Their souls were slain for two reasons: “for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.” These saints were martyred for their faith in Jesus Christ during the tribulation period by the vengeance and wrath of the Antichrist.

These slain individuals under the altar of God in heaven are given white robes. They are tribulation saints. Don’t be confused between tribulation saints and the church saints. The church exists between Pentecost and the rapture. After the rapture and during the tribulation, people will be saved, so they are saints and will go to heaven, but they’re not part of the raptured church, the bride of Christ, that is with Him in heaven.

John says the very same thing about these tribulation saints in John 1:6-8, as to why he was exiled to the island of Patmos where he received this revelation. He was exiled because of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Continuing with verses 10-11, “And they cried with a loud voice, saying, ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?’ Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as

they were, was completed.” These saints didn’t ask if God would judge and avenge them but how long before God would avenge them and judge the wicked.

Not only are we seeing in our world today a rise of antisemitism—so the stage is set—but we also see that anti-Christian sentiment such as anger, hatred and hostility is on the rise. Not just in the last few weeks, but I think we’ll see it more in the next few years; there will be persecution of Bible-believing Christians. There will be hostility toward Christians—governments wanting to close down the churches and control what we say, what we think and what we do. Christians will become the problem. And I believe it will continue and worsen and will come to its apex and completion during the tribulation through the Antichrist.

So these tribulation saints were persecuted because they believed in the Word of God—they stood on the Bible—and for their testimony of Jesus Christ. They lived godly and holy lives, and they preached the Gospel by their works and by their words. They were put to death because they held on to their Bibles, and they testified of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The church has been built on the blood of the martyrs. It’s the seed of the church.

And should we expect, in the United States—which I believe is crumbling right before our very eyes—that “Must I be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease, while others fought to win the prize and sailed through bloody seas?” You had better get sound and strong in the Bible. You had better get grounded in the Word, because dark times are coming for America.

Now I still believe in a pretribulation rapture. I don’t believe that the Antichrist can even be revealed until the restraining force of the church, through the Holy Spirit, is removed from the earth. But that doesn’t mean that it’s not going to get dark and hard and that the church isn’t going to face persecution. Jesus said, “In the world you will have trouble,” and its source is from the world, the flesh and the devil. That’s who we contend with right now. Then Jesus said, “But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” But we’ll read that the source of “the Great Tribulation” or “the Day of the Lord,” comes from God Himself and from the wrath of the Lamb.

The second point I want to make in verse 11 is that the Lord speaks to them and says, “Rest a little while longer, until...” All these statements mean that God is in control. God is not freaking out, God’s not biting His fingernails and He isn’t stressed. God has a plan and a purpose. “Their fellow servants and their brethren [should] be killed” as it will be fulfilled.

So this is profound. What’s it’s saying here is that God is in control. Yes, believers are martyred. Yes, believers die. But again, “To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.” The Bible says, “Do not fear those who kill the body...”—after that there’s no more they can do to you—“...but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” So God is in control, even though they were persecuted, martyred and died. It’s all in God’s time, it’s all in God’s plan and it all serves God’s purpose. God has a purpose and plan for those who die during the tribulation.

I believe the same is true of us right now. We can rest in the fact that God is in control, He has

a purpose and He has a plan. How important that is.

Now I want you to note that the last seal in this chapter, seal number six, is marked by terror. So we have deception, war, famine, death, martyrdom and terror. This basically describes these cataclysmic events that will happen in the world.

The whole universe is shaken by this judgment of the Lamb, verse 12. "I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood." So there really was an earthquake, possibly a volcanic eruption. We know that when there are earthquakes and volcanoes erupt that the sky can become black with ash, the sun can be darkened and the moon can become blood red.

By the way, those who are focusing on the blood moon are wasting their time. Our eyes are to be fixed on Jesus Christ and on Him alone. We're not going to be here when these things happen; the church is going to be in heaven with Christ.

Verse 13, "And the stars of heaven fell to the earth," so perhaps there will be meteorite showers. There is devastation that can take place when a meteorite or asteroid hits planet earth. Continuing, "...as a fig tree drops its late..."—or "unripe"—"...figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind." Have you ever gone out after a big wind and seen the fruit from the tree all over the ground? That's how the stars are going to fall from heaven.

Verses 14-17, "Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place." Then we see the reaction of the wicked on the earth. "And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men..."—most of them living in the silicon valley in California—"...every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains." So these people lived in their multi-million dollar homes, but they will run to the hills and hide under the rocks. Their money cannot save them. "...and said to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us...'—man's foolish endeavor to run from God and to hide from God—"...from the face of Him who sits on the throne..."—that's God the Father—"...and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come..."—and here's a rhetorical question that expects no answer—"...and who is able to stand?"

Now what we see here in these six seals is the very wrath of the Lamb. What an expression: "wrath of the Lamb." Whoever would run from a lamb? When we think of a lamb, we think of something meek, mild, precious and that we don't have to be afraid of it. They're cute and cuddly. But the Lamb is now pouring out His wrath. He is "the Lion of the tribe of Judah."

When I read the book of Revelation my heart is stirred to sadness to realize all the people who will die, all the people who will go to hell and all the people who will be lost. Even families, friends and acquaintances will be here for the tribulation period. So if anything, it should motivate us Christians to not only see an eternal perspective but to be evangelistic in our

perspective; to tell our family and our neighbors that they can believe in Jesus Christ and be saved from the wrath that is to come.

They might think you're crazy. They thought Noah was crazy. For over 100 years he was preaching to the wicked, building a boat and saying, "It's going to rain!" But they said, "You're crazy, you old man!" But when it started to rain, they were pounding on that ark; they wanted in.

God's judgment is coming. God destroyed the earth by flood, gave us a rainbow to say He wouldn't flood the earth again, but He didn't say He wouldn't use fire, earthquakes, famines, wars and pestilence the next time.

And Jesus said, "These are the beginning of sorrows." The word "sorrows" here are "birth pains." These things are the beginning of labor pains. So what we see now in the world are just birth pains or "the beginning of sorrows." It will all culminate in the time known as "the Day of the Lord" or "the Great Tribulation."

In Matthew 24:29, Jesus said it like this: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken." All these are "the beginning of sorrows" or "birth pains."

You ask, "Well, Pastor John, is there any way we can be protected from this time of tribulation?"

Yes. Repent of your sin and believe in Jesus Christ. Turn to Him today. The Bible says, "Now is the accepted time...now is the day of salvation." The Bible says, "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts." Don't just dismiss this as some crazy preacher talking about judgment and wrath. It's going to happen. The more you look at the world today, the more reality sets in that Jesus Christ is coming soon.

There is only one ark of safety, and that's Jesus Christ, who took our punishment on the Cross. He was buried and rose from the dead. He paid for your sin and conquered the death of the grave. The Bible says that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..."—His only unique Son—"...that whoever believes in Him..."—puts their faith and trust in Him—"...should not perish but have everlasting life."

If you haven't trusted Christ, you need to do that today.