

The Sixth Seal of Revelation

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Revelation: How It All Ends

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Bible Text: Revelation 6:12-18

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Revelation 6:12 says, “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.” So, we’re talking about the six seals, the six things that are going to happen that God releases on the earth during this time in the book of Revelation. “And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake.” As I study this, there is a lot I went into and I don’t know about you, but when I see, especially in the center of many of your Bibles you have verses that reference other verses, cross references I guess they are called for other verses, usually I look at those and then, “Oh, that’s great.” Those are things if I really wanted to get into the study then I could study those cross references and see how they related but I encourage you any time you see those and you want to know more about the passage you’re in, please look at those cross references where either the same word in Greek has been used or the same Hebrew word, whichever if you’re in the Old Testament. Either the same thought came up again somewhere else or, in this case, John is writing something that’s already been predicted. I don’t want to spend too much time in the Old Testament today but I am going to read to you a lot of verses that have to deal with things that have been talked about already and this is John’s revelation of things that he saw but apparently Jeremiah, Isaiah, and many of the other prophets like Daniel, have seen it before him or some version of it. So, this is kind of revealing it a little bit more so let’s let Scripture interpret Scripture.

Go ahead and turn ahead to Revelation 11. The best place to look for an interpretation of a passage is in the same passage or in the same book so we’re going to interpret this passage with this passage, 11:12 and it says, “And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted.” I would be affrighted too if I was still on the earth during a great earthquake. That’s an Old English term but it’s definitely what was going on, I’d be affrighted. I’d come up with new words like that too probably. “And I gave glory to God in heaven.”

It’s pretty amazing that at this time when this great earthquake happens, yes, there is a remnant or there is people on earth that survive it but they’re giving glory to God. Now, I

don't know if that means that everybody that is left has figured out what? Maybe there is a God? Or does that mean that there are Christians left on the earth and they are praising God because they are spared from the great earthquake? I'd like to take that even another step further, verse 12, "And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven," so still this great earthquake, it's the same language that we just used in our verse, "great earthquake," appears to have a coming up hither right before it so I'll let you interpret that as you see fit here but let's take it another step and look at 11:19 just a couple of verses ahead. It says, "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail."

So, just remember that great hail portion and see if we can compare that and see if we can talk about the same great earthquake again. The real question is: are we talking about the same great earthquake? Because we have earthquakes on earth today. Are they the great earthquake? No, I believe there is definitely going to be a great earthquake some day and we haven't seen it yet but there have been many great earthquakes. Just like I read in the Bible about the antichrist, are there antichrists today? Sure, anyone that is against Christ is an antichrist but I don't believe *the* antichrist has come yet so keep that in mind when we're comparing these: is this *the* great earthquake or is this a great earthquake? And so far, because of the comparison between the words "great earthquake" translated exactly the same way and in the verse we read earlier, 6:12, "great earthquake" I think it's the same one based on those two things.

But let's make sure. I don't want to make my interpretation Bible when the Bible has something to say about itself. Revelation 16:17 says, "And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done." Keep reading in verse 18, "And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake," same language, "such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great." Okay, this isn't just an earthquake, this is a great earthquake. It's not just a great earthquake, it's one that's never happened before. It's not just a great earthquake that's never happened before but it's a mighty earthquake and so great, putting emphasis on this is the worst one ever.

You don't have to turn there, I've got Hebrews 12:26 and let me read it for you unless you want to turn there you can. Hebrews 12:26, "Whose voice then shook the earth," earth shook, earthquake, "but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven." Imagine an earthquake so big that it affects the heavens or the sky or the space around it. Verse 27, "And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain." That sounds like it's talking about a great earthquake yet once more that hasn't happened yet and then we just read about an earthquake that hadn't happened yet and it will be so big because it's never happened before this big. That's my only comparison there.

Let's see if this is the same passage or not when we turn to Matthew 24. I do want everyone to turn to this one, this is a good passage. Matthew 24:29 and don't worry, there is a point to all this turning here. Your fingers might get tired today but I hope your brain gets bigger. You know, if we don't use our brain muscle it gets weaker and I don't want that to happen. Matthew 24:29, the tribulation, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened," like sackcloth? Is that darkened? Comparison there. "And the moon shall not give her light," well, if the moon turns red, it's probably not as bright as it once was because it did say that the moon was supposed to turn to blood. And it says, "and the stars shall fall from heaven," is that a heavy hail? Is that something falling out of the sky? Is it a literal star that's coming up and falling down from the sky or is it what we would call today a shooting star which isn't really a star at all, it's more of a meteorite or a meteor that's entering our atmosphere. Something is falling from the sky, it's great, it's big, it's on fire, it's causing damage, it's scary. I think that's a third comparison. And then it says, "and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." Shaken not stirred is correct. If it was only stirred, I don't think it would shake the whole earth, that's for sure. It wouldn't cause as much damage, wouldn't divide the cities.

I would like to think that that shaken, that great hail, that sun being darkened and the moon not giving us light anymore like it used to, well, that sounds like the same great earthquake that we've been talking about before. We need to compare these great earthquakes and to tell us what is this great earthquake? What is the significance? When was it? And how does it affect us? Because Scripture actually has relation to us today. This isn't just something that's going to happen in the future; this isn't just some prophecy that, "Oh, that's great. That's a great interpretation. That's true. It will happen some day," but how does that affect me? Well, I want you to see that everything in the Bible affects us, every way, shape or form and by the end of this passage today, you'll even see God's plan for the gospel at the end of time from the beginning and it's all in this passage.

Okay, this is the end with the great earthquake here, at least the end of the tribulation. I think that's our time frame that we're fitting into here. There's a great earthquake. There is a Second Coming here which we might see in the next verse. There is a darkening of the sun. There is a darkening of the moon or at least it turning blood red, it says. There is a great earthquake. There is a great hail. All these different things are going to happen and then, how does that affect salvation? How does that affect me? Well, let's keep that in mind while we keep going here.

You don't have to turn there, back to Isaiah 50:3, it says, "I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering." "I clothe the heavens with blackness," put a blanket over them so they're dark, which would include the sun because the sun is in the heavens, "and make sackcloth their covering." Remember what we read in our verse today: sackcloth was how the sun looked, like it was covered with darkness. That comes all the way back from Isaiah 50:3.

So, maybe Isaiah has something to show us today. Maybe we should turn to Isaiah a little bit more to compare with these verses. Let's see: we need to go back to Revelation 6, so

if you're not already there, please turn back to Revelation 6 and then I'll let you stay there while I read ahead unless, of course, you want to turn with me to the verses that we're going to flip back and forth to. As we interpret each section of Scripture, where else in Scripture does it talk about that Scripture? Where else did that event happen? Again, I was amazed, there are a lot of cross references in my Bible next to each verse and usually I completely ignore them, I'll be honest. They're not important to me but I'm encouraging you. Hey, if you don't understand something, look at these cross references because those are amazing interlaced inferences of what we're talking about.

So, let me encourage you to look those up and I'm going to look at Isaiah here in a minute but let's read Revelation 6:13. It says, "And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth," kind of like a great hail or shooting star or meteorite or meteor, however you want to look at it, "even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind." Picturing a tree, it's Fall time or maybe even springtime after has gone and it has dead figs, its untimely figs, and at the end of it when it gets shaken, everything falls. If there is a great shake on the earth so much that it shakes heavens, that things fall from heaven, that's going to have a relation to what we're talking about here. Particularly the fig illustration here, let's stick with the fig tree. In Isaiah 34:4 it says, "And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll," we're going to see that later in this verse, "and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree."

I don't want you to think that John was really smart, John knew his Old Testament, he knew Isaiah, he knew Jeremiah, he knew all these passages. That's true but I would like to think that our God is so great that he could even understand that whether or not John knew those Scriptures, God's going to use the same illustration in John's writing in 30 AD, 70 AD, whenever he wrote this, that he used way back thousands, many years ago, maybe not thousands but at least hundreds of years ago when Isaiah and Jeremiah wrote it for the first time. How common is a fig tree illustration? I don't know. Well, it's a fig tree, like a leaf falling from a vine, all of the hosts of heaven shall fall down and it says they will be dissolved and rolled together like a scroll. We're talking about the end of time here. Where else are we going to see that passage? Skies rolled up? That leads us to our next Scripture.

If you're still in Revelation 6:14, read this along with me. It says, "And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places." If you believe the flood was a worldwide flood as we've studied before in this Scripture when we talked about Genesis, which it had to have been to cause this great calamity and possibly even followed by an ice age afterward. I mean, many of the evolutionists will agree with me today that there was a great ice age and I believe there was one too because if you cover the whole earth in water, then it's going to get kind of cold and as it receded, it would cause glaciers and those glaciers are still receding today. We find evidence of those glaciers as far south as North Carolina. There were glaciers in North Carolina? Yes, there was an ice age. We agree with that. Probably caused by a great flood. Well, that great flood caused the mountains to be formed, I think. Now, were there mountains back before then? Before Noah's time in Adam's day?

Possibly but I don't think they were as extreme as they are today. Think about Japan and the plates here and I love to compare science with this, sorry if I'm boring you with the science lesson here. Japan is on a mountain of sorts, it's on an earthquake plate and when the plate goes under Japan, it lifts Japan up. We get mountains like Mount Fuji which is a huge mountain also caused by a volcano related to earthquakes and that earthquake that's been happening for a long time has caused the mountain to raise, or caused the land to rise and the land below it to go under and cause things like tsunamis that we've had before.

That's what's happening here: the heavens departed as a scroll and rolled together as we read back in Isaiah. Just like it said, and the host of heaven shall be dissolved and they shall be rolled together as a scroll. That's the same exact language we're using here and "every mountain and island were moved out of their places." Well, let's see: can we find that anywhere else in Scripture? Yes, we can, I believe we can. In Isaiah 54:10, it says, "For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee." I think Isaiah is prophesying the same prophecy that we are just talking about. We've already given you 4-5 Isaiah passages that kind of talk about the same thing that we're talking about here in John's version of the Revelation.

So, if Isaiah is talking about the same prophecy, is there something that we can get from this passage? Something that I can apply to me? One of my favorite passages here is Isaiah 54:10. Let me read it again and see if you get comfort from it like I do. "For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee." Does God care about the people on the earth even during this great earthquake? Sure he does. Does he care about the people on the earth before the great earthquake? Of course he does. Does he care about the people that survive the great earthquake though they might be a little banged up? Of course he does. God has grace. The whole reason that God tortures the earth is because he's giving people one last chance to say, "Hey, I'm here. I want your attention. I want you to accept me. I want you to have a little bit more mercy," and I stress the word "mercy" because it's not something anybody deserves, "a little bit more mercy even in these hard times."

So, God is sparing some people. There is a remnant of people. God comforts them to say, "my peace shall not be removed." We can still have peace. I'm trying to apply this to my life; I'm trying to figure out how this is. No matter how much the great earthquake comes in my life, I can still have the peace of God that passes all understanding as another verse says.

Let's look ahead here: we're still talking about mountains, the mountains in Jeremiah 4:23. It says, "I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void." That kind of sounds like the creation story. Remember back when we first talked about the earth being created? It was without form and void. But that's not what we're talking about here. "And the heavens, and they had no light." Remember that, that there was light created on the first day and the sun, moon and stars were created on the fourth day so there was light

before there was the sun and the heavens were not giving off the light. It still sounds like creation. Verse 24 says, "I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled," so there were mountains and they were trembling. Are we still talking about the creation? I don't think so. "And all the hills moved lightly." I can't pick up a hill and carry it on my back because it's not light but the hills moved like they were light, they were tossed. "I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled." So, you're looking down at the earth and you don't see anybody, you don't even see the birds. Why? Why don't you see the birds? Why don't you see people walking around? "I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness." Do you know those farms over there that we see? They're not there. They are wilderness. "And all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the LORD, and by his fierce anger." Again, we're going to come back to the word "wrath" here in a minute. This is that great earthquake. This is that time when the Lord is angry. He does have to punish sin and there is much sin going on by the end of the tribulation. We've already talked about the antichrist coming and all of the different things that are happening. So, by his fierce anger, he's showing some mercy to a remnant but for the most part, God is destroying the earth with a great earthquake.

Let's talk more about the wrath here. In Ezekiel 38:20 it says, "So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground." We can't be talking about creation anymore; we can't be talking about the beginning of time. We have to be talking about somewhere after man has built walls. For a wall to fall down, it has to have been built. So, we're talking about the end of time here, at least the end of the tribulation when God is shaking the earth and there is a great calamity going on. So much that the birds and the fishes and the beasts, they notice.

And then probably my favorite passage here. If you'd like to turn, I'd suggest you do, is Nahum 1:5. Not only because we never turn to Nahum, I can't remember the last time I turned to Nahum for any reason whatsoever but when I read Nahum when I was studying this, I thought, "Wow, Nahum had it. He understood what was going on at the end of the tribulation." Now, wait a second: "I thought the Old Testament was about for the Jews and the New Testament was for the Gentiles?" Isn't that how we've always been taught? That the Old Testament, that's for the Jews. It doesn't necessarily affect us very much but the New Testament, that's for us. That's we need to study. That's what I've always been raised to believe. In fact, I've always thought probably up until college years, that the way they got saved in the Old Testament was completely different from the way that they got saved in the New Testament and oh, my friend, I am asking you to believe this: it's so not true. That the Old Testament, they got saved the same way that we get saved today except that we know Jesus. They didn't know Jesus back then, they had to actively act on sacrifices, offer sacrifices for their sins in looking forward to someone that was going to pay for their sins in shedding their blood. They trusted in the Messiah, we trust in Jesus which we know today is one and the same thing. Messiah and Jesus, one and the same thing. They got saved the same way.

In Nahum, verse 1:5, the Old Testament and when I think Nahum, I think, “Alright, no reason to turn there. That’s Old Testament.” Well, read this: it says, “The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him.” Who can stand? Who can stand during this great earthquake when the mountains are tossed about? Who can stand? Who can survive that?

Let’s turn back in our Revelation passage to chapter 6. Let’s go back to verse 15 here and see how does this all relate. Again, we want to apply it to ourselves. Revelation 6:15 says, “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.” You might say the Bible is redundant. No, I think the Bible is thorough. Who does this include on the earth? Everybody. Well, if it’s every free man and every bondman and all the mighty men and the chief captains and the rich men and the great men and everyone else, every man hid themselves in dens and in the rocks of the mountains. That’s interesting since the rocks of the mountains have just been knocked over. I imagine they still found some crevices in there to hide themselves but let’s look at that. In Isaiah it says, 2:19, “And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats.” I think they figured out that there’s a God in heaven. If they’re taking their idols that they used to worship, their little golden Buddha, and they’re saying, “You can have it, bats. Bury it in the ground, the moles can have it because I need to run for my life and hide in the caves because there is a God in heaven.” They’ll figure it out, it says, some day they’ll all know, “To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.”

Again, just in case you weren’t thinking about the same earthquake that we’re talking about before, to shake the earth terribly? Why are they running to the mountains? Because they’ve been knocked over, because they’ve realized that there is a God in heaven? Interesting. So, people are hiding in the ground.

Revelation 6, verse 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.” Remember I said that wrath was coming. God does have wrath. What we’re talking about here, it says, “Fall on us, hide us from the face of the wrath of the Lamb.” The Lamb is a paradox, by the way. When we’re studying Revelation so much, we hear the Lamb all the time and we think, “Oh, Lamb, not a big deal.” The Lamb is a big deal. Does the Lamb usually have wrath? Have you met a lamb before? They’re really fierce. Jagged teeth. No. That’s a paradox here.

(...seven horns.) That’s true and that would be a pretty scary looking lamb but we’re talking about a lamb here because God created, now listen to this, this blows your mind if

you really think on it: God created the lamb to be something sweet and harmless and loveable to suffer the sins of the world from before the beginning of time. Because I know that God knew that Jesus was going to come and die on a cross before he even created the earth. That means that he created the lamb full well knowing that some day he's going to use the Lamb of God, the illustration of a sweet, cuddly, loving, little lamb to die for the sins of the world and then the paradox, the wrath of the Lamb will come. That's a big deal to think about that: God created something that's supposed to be loveable and harmless to do harm in the end and yet still loving enough to die for the sins of the world to give them one last chance.

Well, have we seen this anywhere else in the Bible about the rocks falling on us? Real quickly here, Hosea 10:8. It says, "The high places also of Aven, the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed: the thorn and the thistle shall come up on their altars," so this is talking about back then and then all of a sudden we shift into a prophecy and it says, "and they shall say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us." Out of all the different things that are possibly happening here, then end in Luke 23:30. It says, "Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us." So, just in case you didn't compare those two passages there: Hosea 10:8 says "cover us and fall on us," Luke 23:30 says "cover us and fall on us," and our passage today says "from the wrath of the Lamb, fall on us." It's the same language. The same things are going on. True, I think it had a significance to the people that read it in the day that it was written in Hosea but it also has a significance today as does all the Bible.