

## The Revelation of Jesus Christ 6:9-17

### Sermon Notes

#### The Second Coming in Chapter 6?

The Lamb opens the sixth seal to reveal his second coming and the great judgment day (6:12-17). And yet we haven't reached the end of the book. What's going on here?

The main body of Revelation contains cycles of visions: the seven seals (6:1-8:5), the seven trumpets (8:6-11:19), the unnumbered visions (12:1-14:20), and the seven bowls (15:1-16:21). Each of these cycles covers different aspects of the end times, which is the entire period between the first and second comings of Jesus. And each of these cycles culminates in a vision of the second coming of Christ and/or the final judgment. Interestingly, there's a repeated image at the end of each cycle that signals final judgment: lightning, thunder, and earthquake (see 8:5; 11:19; 16:18).

So the visionary cycles of Revelation are *repetitive*, not *chronological*. Revelation's visions do not present a strict timeline, but a series of overlapping and complementary timelines. The seals and trumpets, for instance, deal with the same time period and similar matter, just from different angles and with different imagery. And both end with a vision of the day of the Lord. This type of repetition or "recapitulation" is common in prophetic literature (for example, compare Daniel 2 and Daniel 7).

#### Old Testament Images of Coming Cosmic Cataclysm

Go into the rocks; hide in the ground from dread of the LORD, and the splendor of his majesty! The eyes of the arrogant man will be humbled and the pride of men brought low; the LORD Almighty alone will be exalted on that day. . . Men will flee to caves in the rocks and to hold sin the ground from dread of the LORD and the splendor of his majesty when he rises to shake the earth. In that day men will throw away to the rodents and bats their idols of silver and idols of gold which they made to worship. They will flee to caverns in the rocks and to the overhanging crags from dread of the LORD and the splendor of his majesty when he rises to shake the earth. Isaiah 2:10-11, 19-21

See, the day of the LORD is coming—a cruel day with wrath and fierce anger—to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it. The

stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light. I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins. I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless. I will make man scarcer than pure gold, more rare than the gold of Ophir. Therefore I will make the heavens tremble and the earth will shake from its place at the wrath of the LORD Almighty in the day of his burning anger. Isaiah 13:10-13

The LORD is angry with all nations; his wrath is upon all their armies. He will totally destroy them; he will give them over to slaughter. Their slain will be thrown out, their dead bodies will send up a stench; the mountains will be soaked with their blood. All the stars of the heavens will be dissolved, and the sky rolled up like a scroll; all the starry host will fall like withered leaves from the vines, like shriveled figs from the fig tree. Isaiah 34:2-4

Before them the earth shakes, the sky trembles, the sun and moon are darkened and the stars no longer shine. The LORD thunders at the head of his army, his forces are beyond number and mighty are those who obey his command. The day of the LORD is great; it is dreadful. Who can endure it? Joel 2:10-11

I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. Joel 2:20-21 (see Acts 2:19-20)

The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD takes vengeance and is filled with wrath. The LORD takes vengeance on his foes and maintains his wrath against his enemies. The LORD is slow to anger and great in power; the LORD will not leave the guilty unpunished. His way is in the whirlwind and the storm and clouds are the dust of his feet. He rebukes the sea and dries it up; he makes all the rivers run dry. Bashan and Carmel wither and the blossoms of Lebanon fade. The mountains quake before him and the hills melt away. The earth trembles at his presence, the world and all who live in it. Who can withstand his indignation? Who can endure his fierce anger? His wrath is poured out like fire; the rocks are shattered before him. Nahum 1:1-6

(For more examples, see Isaiah 24:1-3, 19-23; Ezekiel 28:20; Hosea 10:8; Joel 3:15-16)