

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Fear of the Wrath to Come, Part 1

Scripture: Revelation 6:12-14

Code: 66-26

Open your Bible now to the sixth chapter of Revelation. Revelation chapter 6 and we'll be looking at verses 12 through 17. As I noted for you earlier in the service, I don't believe we can get all the way through these verses in tonight's message, there's just too much here. So we're not going to press for that. But I want to read this text to you, Revelation 6:12 through 17.

"And I looked when He broke the sixth seal and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood; and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. And the sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, `Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come; and who is able to stand?'"

Here we have recorded the description of the sixth seal out of seven. If we were to title the message, we might title it "Scared to death." The sixth seal opens another force. Now remember, there is a seven-sealed book, or scroll, that contains the information about Christ taking over the universe. As each seal is broken, another scene develops. These seven seals unfold in a seven-year period yet to come in the future that we know as the time of tribulation, the time of Jacob's trouble, Daniel's seventieth week. And during this period of time, the Lamb, the Son of God is unrolling the scroll because He has both the authority to do so as the heir of everything and the power to do so as God a very God.

So, the Lamb of God, the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ here in this vision that John sees is unrolling this scroll which describes the events as He takes over the universe from Satan and the demons and sinners who occupy it and control it. The first force we saw was false peace. The second force we saw was war. The third force we saw was famine. The fourth force was pestilence which could also include natural disasters, as described by the Lord, including an earthquake. The fifth force we saw was vengeance, which is articulated in the fifth seal as those who have been martyred for the sake of Christ, pray that God would bring about vengeance.

The force being exemplified and described in the sixth seal is fear...fear. Fear is a powerful emotion, powerful enough in this scene for people to begin the world's largest prayer meeting, only they don't pray to God, they pray to the mountains and the rocks. And they pray for the mountains and the rocks to fall on them. A prayer for suicide, a prayer for destruction. They're so afraid, they would rather die than face the wrath of God, the wrath of the Lamb.

Fear is a powerful emotion. Sometimes it is an overpowering feeling that takes control of the mind and makes one desire what is irrational. It takes control sometimes of the will and makes people behave in ways that are inexplicable. Fear, frankly, can create all kinds of responses, everything from cowardice to heroism, from strength to weakness, aggression to passivity, reason to confusion, clear thinking to total panic. Fear can strengthen the heart and make it beat faster. Fear can stop it dead. Fear can lead a person to have a total change in what he thinks and feels and does.

Fear is certainly a part of the human factor. It's a part of life. There are normal fears that all of us have, and God has given us the capacity to fear certain things for the sake of self-preservation and the protection of others. Normal fears that everybody has like the fear of disease, the fear of injury, the fear of the loss of family or the loss of love, the loss of a job, the loss of money, fear of death. And then as some tests have indicated, the most dominant fear, the fear of public speaking. Such common fears are usually handled somewhat adequately by most people.

If a person can't handle normal fear, we say that person has a phobia. By phobia we basically mean an abnormal response to a normal fear, or the invention of an abnormal and bizarre fear. A phobia is fear exaggerated. It is fear that disables a person. It is fear that is uncontrollable and unconquerable, it is fear that totally takes control of a person so that they cannot function normally. Such phobia leads to paranoia, panic attacks, and various kinds of deviant and anti-social behavior.

When you look at people and examine what they're afraid of, it's quite amazing. Ann Landers, interestingly enough, through all the years accumulating her mail, has listed what people are afraid of. She's got a list of the things people fear most. She says, "First of all, there are very bizarre fears about which people have written me, such as the fear of falling into the toilet, the fear of certain colors, the fear of being buried alive, or the fear of calling someone by his given name. But the most common fears, according to my mail...she said...are the following: animals, bees, being alone, being stared at, blood, blushing, cancer, cats, choking, corpses, crowds, darkness, death, deformity, demons, dirt, dogs, dreams, elevators, enclosed space, flying, germs, height, horses, illness, insanity, insects, lightning, mice, nakedness, noise, pain, poverty, pregnancy, robbers, school, sexual intercourse, sleep, smothering, snakes, spiders, strangers, surgical operations, syphilis, thunder, travel, vomiting, work and worms."

Frankly, that list is a list of fairly normal things, just stuff that's part of life. But it is amazing how people have phobias about normal things as well as inventing bizarre things like fearing certain colors and so

forth. People all fear all kinds of things. They fear normal things abnormally and they fear abnormal things. But rarely are they afraid of what they really ought to be afraid of...rarely.

In Hebrews chapter 10, let me read you a verse, you don't need to look it up, Hebrews 10:31. "It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God." The prior verse says, "God said vengeance is Mine, I will repay, the Lord will judge His people." Now that is something people ought to be afraid of. Cats and dogs and mice and lightning and noise and pain and pregnancy, those are minimal, those are the normal issues of life. If people are going to have a phobia, if they're going to have an uncontrollable, debilitating, disabling, exaggerated, unconquerable fear, let it be the fear of falling into the hands of the living God.

In Luke chapter 12 there is a familiar statement that follows this same thought. Luke 12:5, "I will warn you whom to fear." Jesus is talking. I want to tell you who to fear. In the verse before He said, "Don't be afraid of those who kill the body, don't be afraid of anything that could harm you physically, let me tell you who to fear. Fear the One who after He has killed has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear Him." Who's that? That's God. Fear God. With all of the phobias and all of the fears that people have, here's one they rarely have, but should have.

And, in fact, I sometimes wonder if the church isn't busy today trying to make sure they don't have it. Trying to make them feel that God is a benign grandfather who is this all time, ultimate, cosmic good guy. Jesus knew His Father well, He said fear Him. Because after He's killed, He has the authority to cast you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear Him.

Let me tell you something. We just read, you can go back to Revelation 6, we just read about a day when everybody will have that fear. They'll have it to the phobia category. It will be the ultimate paranoia, it will be the universal panic attack. There is coming a day when the world will all have the same debilitating, uncontrollable, disabling, unconquerable phobia, a fear so overpowering that they will be scared to death.

What do you mean by that? Jesus said of that coming day, in Luke 21:26, you want to write that down, Luke 21:26, Jesus said, "Men will faint from fear." Men will faint from fear. The word "faint," *apopsucho* in Greek, appears only in that verse. You know what it means? To die...to literally breathe out their last. When that day comes there will be such fear that people will be scared to death. Some will die on the spot. They will die from sheer terror because they will realize they have fallen into the hands of the living God, it is His day of wrath and that is so terrifying it will stop their hearts. And those who survive the initial fear will cry for the rocks to crush them to death before they have to face God, as if that could be a means of escape.

What is it that could cause this level of panic? It is the sixth seal being opened. And the dominant force you see here is fear. Now at least for tonight I want to speak to you about the reason for fear.

Why are they so afraid? And the answer comes in verses 12 to 14. Then we'll talk about the range of fear, and then we'll talk about the response of fear.

But first of all, the reason for fear. Let's see the reason for their fear, verse 12, John, you'll remember, is in a vision. God is revealing these things to him. And he sees visions that dramatize the future scenes. "I looked when He broke the sixth seal and there was a great earthquake and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair and the whole moon became like blood and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind, and the sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up and every mountain and island removed out of their places." Absolutely unbelievable scenario.

Let's start at the beginning, "I looked when He broke the sixth seal." The Lamb who has the seven-sealed scroll, you'll remember, the scroll first appeared back in chapters 4 and 5 when we were in heaven with John. The scroll showed up in the Father's hand, the end of chapter 5, He hands it to His Son in chapter 6 saying to Him, "The world and the universe is Yours, unroll this scroll, it gives You the title deed to it, and describes the action that must take place as You take it back."

As each of the seals have been broken we have seen what is to come. First there is a false peace, orchestrated by false prophets and false christs, led by the Antichrist, leading the world to an imaginary utopia which is immediately shattered by the second seal which is war, worldwide war, war all over the globe, followed by famine, the very obvious result of war, the scarcity of food, followed by death through pestilence and disaster so that one fourth of the population of the whole world perish in a very brief time. And then we saw the fifth, the breaking out of persecution. And then we saw the martyrs praying for God's vengeance.

All of those first five, mark this, had an element of human agency. There were human agents in orchestrating the peace. There are human agents involved in the war, the famine, the death that comes through pestilence. There are human beings involved even in the vengeance as there are believers praying for this to come. They, of course, are men and women, even though glorified at that point.

Now when you come to the sixth seal, God acts without men. You've come to a level of intervention by God that is holy and solely His own. And the paralyzing terrifying act is inconceivable and devastating. Obviously by this time, as we have learned in chapter 6, the world has been filled with ongoing violence. The world has been filled with disaster after disaster, with death everywhere since the false peace was shattered.

This thing is moving rapidly, faster and faster, more intense with greater and greater holocaust, as the birth pains increase toward the big event. All through this time believers have been proclaiming the Word of God. They have been telling the world what you're seeing and what you're experiencing is

written in the Scripture. It's all in the Scripture. They've also been preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ because it was for the testimony of Christ and the Word of God, verse 9 says, that they were killed in the first place. So as all of these events are unfolding, those who believe are explaining to the world, this is in the Scripture, this is in the Scripture, we can show it to you, see what's happening, see what's going on, and here is the saving gospel of Jesus Christ that can deliver you.

But what does the world do? It does everything it can to massacre the Christians and massacre the preachers and all who follow Christ. And the world follows Antichrist. They are deceived by Satan, they follow the deception, they disbelieve the Bible, they disbelieve the gospel, they believe the Antichrist. Even though they've heard the preaching of the testimony of the witnessing martyrs that they have killed, they will not believe. And they will believe Antichrist.

Look at chapter 13, for a moment, so that you can see how this happens. In verse 5 of 13 it says that the Antichrist speaks arrogant words and blasphemies and he operates for forty-two months, that's the last three and a half years of this time period. "He opened his mouth in blasphemies against God to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, he blasphemes even those who dwell in heaven. He makes war with the saints. He overcomes them. He has authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation." Verse 8, "All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain." The whole world follows this guy. They all go after him.

He has a partner, another beast in verse 11 comes along. In verse 13 he performs great signs, fire comes down from heaven. And verse 14, "He deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given to him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life." Here comes one known as the false prophet and he does these wondrous things and calls the whole world to worship the Antichrist and they buy the deception. In spite of what is going on all around them, the terrors, the judgments, in spite of all of this, they believe the Antichrist, they believe the false prophet and they just carry on business as usual. In fact, there are prophets running all over the place, even at the time all of this starts to happen, at the time of the war and the famine and the pestilence and death, at the time that all of that persecution and slaughter is going on of believers and of Jews and they're crying out the gospel, in the midst of all of this stuff these people will be just going along, life as usual.

You say, "How do you know that?" Because Jesus said it in Matthew chapter 24, listen to what He said. "As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man, they will be eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and they didn't understand it till the Flood came and took them all away. So it will be at the coming of the Son of Man." Just like in Noah's day, no matter what he said, and he preached righteousness for 120 years, no matter how many warnings he gave them, no matter what he told them, they just went on eating,

drinking, marrying, giving in marriage, like life as usual and they didn't know until it hit and they were drowned. And that's how it's going to be at the coming of the Son of Man. In spite of all of this, the world is going to be deceived, they're not going to believe what Christians are saying. The deception will carry right to the end.

Kind of exacerbating that deception is going to be a plethora of false prophets, false Christs Jesus says will be all over the place. One will be saying I'm over here, and another will be saying I'm over here and another will be saying I'm over here, I'm the true Christ, I'm the true Christ, they'll be all over giving answers and telling what's happening and explaining it and giving their opinions and their message is going to be pretty much the same. Verse 3 of 1 Thessalonians 5, "While they're saying peace and safety." They're going to say, "Listen, folks, we're going to work this out, peace is coming, the utopia is around the corner, don't worry about this, we're going to take care of it." And you know what they're going to be saying? "As soon as we have massacred all these Christians, we'll get our utopia." Right? We just got to get rid of them. And then peace and safety. And while they're saying it, 1 Thessalonians 5:3 says, "Destruction will come on them suddenly like birth pains on a woman with child and they shall not escape." The final birth pains will come excruciating and sudden.

And when it hits, back to Revelation 6, when it hits for the first time the world knows the Christians were right. You say, "How do you know that?" Because in verse 16 they say, "Hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come." What does that tell you? It tells you the whole world has been told that the wrath of God and the wrath of the Lamb is coming. They've heard it. They've heard it. And they've heard the gospel because it will be preached to the ends of the earth, Jesus said in the Olivet Discourse. And that everlasting angel will make sure everybody hears as he flies through the sky, but not until the sixth seal, after they've tried to silence all the Christians by massacring them will they suddenly wake up to the fact that what those Christians were saying was true. And what hits is unavoidably attributable only to God. And a more frightening scene and realization couldn't even be imagined.

By the way, as a footnote, this sequence in Revelation 6 also fits exactly with the sequence in Matthew 24 because it follows the same chronology. You come through Matthew 24, you come to verse 29. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days, all the things they've been suffering," I don't take it there the tribulation is some technical term, "even after all that they've been suffering, the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from the sky, the powers of the heavens will be shaken and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky." It's the same event. And the phenomena described in Revelation 6 about the sky is similar to the phenomena Jesus spoke of in Matthew 24, it's the same sequence. You'll notice just prior to that in verse 24 of Matthew 24, the false Christs and the false prophets come along again and they say, "Here I am, Here I am, Here I am," and, of course, they're promising the utopia if we can just continue to get rid of the believers and along with them the Jews. Luke 21 follows the same pattern, the same sequence, and that's verse 25 that says, "There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars and upon the earth

dismay among nations, perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves," and then it says, "men will die from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming on the world for the powers of the heavens will be shaken and then they will see the Son of Man coming." Same pattern.

Joel the prophet saw it. Take the time to go back and study Joel chapter 2, looking clear from the Old Testament, Joel saw it. In Joel 2 he described this day as a day of darkness, verse 2, a day of gloom, a day of clouds, thick darkness. Down in verse 10, a time when the earth quakes and the heavens tremble and the sun and the moon grow dark and the stars lose their brightness. Verse 30, wonders in the sky, wonders on the earth, blood, fire, columns of smoke, the sun turned to darkness, the moon to blood before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. Same event and Joel saw it.

Isaiah saw it. He writes about it in chapter 29 in just a brief statement in verse 6, "The Lord of hosts will come and you will be punished with thunder and earthquake and loud noise, whirlwind tempest and the flame of a consuming fire.

Now, this particular scene really cannot be described. We can make an attempt at it. And I believe that we should because the Scripture outlines six frightening features, and the detail here is given by the Lord in order that we might understand something of the horror of this day. Let's take the first of the six and maybe we won't even go beyond this one.

Verse 12, "I looked when He broke the sixth seal and there was a great earthquake," stop there. First of all, he says there was an earthquake. There have always been earthquakes, they come now and then, here and there. Even in the first half of this time of tribulation, the time known as the beginning of birth pains, according to Matthew 24:7, there were to be earthquakes. So they've experienced some earthquakes, more than they would be used to. But this isn't really talking about just an earthquake. I know that's the way the word is translated, and interestingly enough it's probably as close a translation as you can get because there isn't really an English equivalent.

The cataclysm that comes here as the Great Tribulation has begun, the second half, is more powerful and more intense and more destructive than all the earthquakes of all time put together. It is a single massive final event, God's wrath at full operation. Now God at His own discretion likes to shake the world now and then. He shook it at Sinai when He gave the law. He shook it when Elijah called on Him. He shook it when Jesus, His Son, was murdered before Him. He shook it when He wanted to release Paul and Silas from jail. And He shakes it now and then through history for His own purposes. But this is more than any earthquake, like any of those that God Himself did, this is something beyond that. You'll be interested to know that the Greek word is *seismos* from which we get the English word *seismograph* which is an instrument to measure shaking. It means a quaking, a shaking, an agitating. But the word "earth" is not here. The word "earth" is not here.

It would have been better to translate it "and there was a great shaking," because frankly it isn't just the earth, the first thing he mentions is the sun and then the moon and then the stars careening out of the sky, and then the sky splitting apart like a scroll and only then does he say every mountain and island start to move. This is a shaking more than an earthquake, this is a seismos in the universe.

Matthew 8 translates this same word, seismos, tempest, to describe what happened on the sea of Galilee. It's a shaking, an agitation, a severe agitation. Joel 2 uses this same word in the Septuagint, which is the Greek version of the Old Testament. In the prophet Haggai, that small little prophecy, chapter 2 verse 6 and 7 describes the same event, listen to what it says, "For thus says the Lord of host, once more in a little while I'm going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land and I will shake all peoples."

Earthquakes frighten people. They create phobias, believe me. We constantly are being told about the big one out here in California. We've been told for years that one day we're going to shake right off into the ocean. And we have a sort of fear of that. I mean, our population fears that. Every time there's a little shake, all the appointments in the psychological, psychiatric offices go up as people run there to deal with their phobias and their fears. But whatever little shakings we experience are nothing to be compared with this, this is more erratic a shaking than anything imaginable.

But you have to understand, these people have already been through so much, this is really going to be a devastating thing. They've been dragged in the last few years through global wars, worldwide famine, worldwide plagues and pestilences, and some other natural disasters, including earthquakes, that have killed one fourth of the population of the world and it all happened just at the time they thought they had reached world peace. And the false prophets are still crying, "Peace, peace, peace and safety, we're nearly at utopia, as soon as we get the Christians massacred, utopia will come, they're the problem." And also, through this time period remember 2 Thessalonians 2 says the restrainer is removed. That's the Holy Spirit, most likely, who holds back sin. And so sin is unrestrained, immorality unrestrained, wickedness, vice, godlessness, Christlessness rampant, Satan is running the world, Antichrist is demanding that everybody worship him in his deceptive wickedness. The world is plunged into deep sin and all the time while it's literally following all of its lusts and impulses being promised utopia to come out of the chaos that exists, a great host of people are being saved, according to chapter 6 verses 9 to 11, they're under the altar praying for God's vengeance. According to chapter 7 verse 9, they're so many of them converted during that time period they can't even be numbered. So there will be a great revival, a great host will be saved. But the rest of the world goes on in sin and deception following Antichrist and killing the Christians.

Then in a moment, while some sleep and others are awake, while some are driving their car down the freeway and some are flying in an airplane, and some are walking, and some are jogging and some are at work and some are reading the paper in their dens and some are watching television and some are playing tennis and some are at home and others are in a hotel, some are in an auditorium, some

are at a sporting event, some are at school, the whole universe starts to shake...a seismos from God that no seismograph could ever measure. And, you see, this is such a frightening thing because man always counts on the stable universe. He always counts on dawn and darkness, on the cycle of the rotation of the earth and the seasons, as it moves in orbit. Man demands uniformity in his world. And that's what evolution tells him. It always goes on the same way, remember Peter's words about the scoffers, all things continue as they have from the beginning, it all goes on the same way. In a moment that theory is utterly exploded and the seismos hits.

The first thing that John describes is the second element, the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair. Sackcloth is what people wore to a funeral. Sackcloth was a rough garment that you wore when you wanted to mourn somebody. You put it over you like a robe and it went all the way to the floor so that none of you was seen. You wouldn't want to draw attention to yourself while mourning the death of someone. Black sackcloth of hair, simply means that the sackcloth was woven most likely out of black goat's hair. It was very dark, very black. And that's how the sun will be, as black as a black mourner's robe woven out of black goat's hair.

The upheaval, the shaking shakes everything and the upheaval is so enormous that it blackens out the sun. What does blacken out the sun? Why does the sun go black? Dr. Henry Morris, a wonderful scientist, creationist, writes this, "The seismos described here is worldwide in scope for the first time in history. Seismologists and geophysicists in recent years have learned a great deal about the structure of the earth and about the cause and nature of earthquakes. The earth's solid crust is traversed with a complex network of faults, with all resting on a plastic mantle whose structure is still largely unknown. Whether the crust consists of great moving plates is a current matter of controversy among geophysicists so the ultimate cause of earthquakes is still not known. In all likelihood the entire complex of crustal instabilities is a remnant of the phenomena of the great Flood, especially the break up of the fountains of the great deep. In any case, the vast network of unstable earthquake belts around the world suddenly begin to slip and fracture on a global basis and a gigantic earthquake ensues. This is evidently naturally accompanied by tremendous volcanic eruptions, spewing vast quantities of dust and steam and gases into the upper atmosphere. It is probably these that will cause the sun to be darkened and the moon to appear blood red."

That fits what the prophet said...fire and smoke, doesn't it? Blackness and darkness is often associated with judgment. When God judged Egypt, He brought thick blackness. When God came to Mount Sinai to lay down the law, it was shrouded in black smoke. When God judged His Son, you remember, on the cross for our sins, from noon till three o'clock the world went black. And Isaiah looked at this judgment time and he saw this blackness. It was revealed to him in Isaiah chapter 13 and verse 9, "Behold the day of the Lord is coming, cruel with fury and burning anger to make the land a desolation. He will exterminate its sinners from it. The stars of heaven and their constellations will not flash forth their light. The sun will be dark when it rises. The moon will not shed its light. Thus I will punish the world for its evil and the wicked for their iniquity. I will put an end to the arrogance of

the proud and abase the haughtiness of the ruthless." Down in verse 13, "I will make the heavens tremble, the earth will be shaken from its place, at the fury of the Lord of hosts in the day of His burning anger." A blackness, a darkness comes over the universe.

The third thing that he notes is that the moon becomes like blood. Literally the text says, "the whole moon," you have a total eclipse. Whatever it is that causes it, it's vivid. The blackened sun, of course, then hides the moon because it only reflects the sun. Joel the prophet said, "The sun and the moon grow dark." And as I read you earlier, Joel said...God said, "I'll display wonders in the sky and the earth, blood, fire, columns of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness, the moon to blood before that great and awesome day of the Lord."

Now you understand that when this begins to happen it effects everything. It effects daylight and darkness. There will be no daylight. It effects plant life, it effects man, it effects the animal world. All the cycles by which animals function, plants function, humans function thrown into total chaos. And then a fourth feature, out of that blackness, verse 13, the stars of the sky fell to the earth. Fiery balls come careening out of the darkness, and I guess you might say if you remember the fairy tale, Chicken Little's fear comes true.

The word "stars," would you note, astraes(?), it can refer to any celestial body, large or small, not limited to what we know as a star. It could be a star, a star that is millions of times larger than our sun, as some are. It also could refer to an asteroid, meteor. Perhaps that's the best understanding of it here. The earth is going to get showered by astraes plummeting out of the sky. Obviously if that meant stars, it would burn us up long before it ever got here. So this is probably an asteroid shower or a meteor shower. Scientists, by the way, have speculated for years what a massive asteroid meteor shower hitting the earth would be like, the unbelievable destruction that it would create. Certainly the stars are involved as the whole universe shakes and they begin to move out of their orbits. And they begin to function in a random way...spinning and whirling around in space as the whole collapsing universe begins to disintegrate. The earth is then plummeted with fiery balls coming out of the sky. It's analogous, he says, to make it vivid, to a fig tree casting its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. A fig tree can be covered with figs and when the wind hits it, they just come down in mass.

Where are people going to go? Where are they going to go in the panic of this all over the globe? Where are they going to go? No way can they escape.

Zechariah chapter 14 looks at the same scene. And it says, verse 6, "I will come about in a day...in that day there will be no light, the luminaries will dwindle," verse 6. "It will be a unique day...verse 7...which is known to the Lord, it's not day and it's not night." It's the same time.

Then in terms that John can't even describe, verse 14, "The sky was split apart like a scroll when it's rolled up." A couple of times in my life I've had an opportunity to see a scroll, I mean a really old scroll. I've seen the Dead Sea Scrolls, the actual ones in Jerusalem. I have held ancient scrolls. And one of the interesting things about a scroll is that as it's unrolled and rolled and unrolled and rolled, and unrolled and rolled it wears and ages. And as it sits it dries out. And it's frequently the case that when you unroll a scroll and you get it out at its tension point, because it's been rolled up so long and dried in that position, it will crack. And John says it would be like rolling out a scroll and having it just rip in the middle and then "ballipt," roll up in two separate places. It says the sky was split apart in John's vision, literally ripped apart. It pictures the whole of the sky, like a scroll held open at tension. And all of a sudden it's just ripped down the middle and the whole sky disappears, it's all gone. The stars are flying all over the place careening. The whole universe is shaking. No sun, no moon and the earth is being blasted with asteroids, meteorites plummeting out of the sky as the universe breaks up. The heaven that was so familiar to us is ripped to pieces.

This is the scene. Certainly Isaiah again had it in mind in chapter 34, "The Lord's indignation is against all the nations, His wrath against all their armies, He's utterly destroyed them, given them over to slaughter. Their slain will be thrown out, their corpses will give off their stench, the mountains will be drenched with their blood, all the hosts of heaven will wear away and the sky will be rolled up like a scroll. All their hosts...that's the stars...will wither away, like a leaf withers from a vine or as one withers from the fig tree, for My sword, He says, is satiated in heaven." I'm going to strike the heavens. Why? Because that's been the domain of Satan, the prince of the power of the air. The whole universe is coming down.

So this kind of a quaking isn't just the earth. He gets to the earth in the sixth feature of it. Verse 14, "And every mountain and island were moved out of their places." This is hard to conceive...every mountain and island. The whole unstable crust of the earth begins to move and shift, and the faults split and the volcanic gases come out. Dr. Morris further says, "The earth's crust highly unstable ever since the great Flood will be so disturbed by the impacting asteroids, the volcanic explosions and the earthquakes, that great segments of it will actually begin to slip and slide over the earth's deep plastic mantle. Geophysicists for many years have been fascinated with the idea of continental drift. Several have published series of a past naturalistic catastrophism involving what they call the earth's shifting crust. Some such phenomenon may actually be triggered under this judgment of the sixth seal, dwarfing the damage occasioned by all the mighty earthquakes of the past. Those who reside in regions above such shifting crustal plates will observe the heavens appearing to move in the opposite direction," he says. Everything shaking.

Can I stop here and give a word to the environmentalists? Can I give a word to the "Save the Earth" group? If you think man has messed up this earth, wait till you see what God does to it? This is a disposable planet, my friend, it was made disposable by sin. You wait till you see what its Creator does to it. He made it, sin devastated it, and He'll destroy it. It's a throw-away world now, it's a throw-

away universe. The cosmos that came out of the chaos is going back to chaos and out of the chaos will come a new cosmos...the new heavens and the new earth. Peter wrote about that in 2 Peter chapter 3.

Well Jesus summed all of this up that we've just seen in those verses when He said in Luke 21:11, "And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven." And when it happens, people will die of fright. They will be scared to death. Can you understand that? Of course you can.

I say to you then in bringing this to a conclusion tonight, people are afraid of a lot of things, aren't they? They're afraid of a lot of things they shouldn't be afraid of. And usually, commonly, normally, they're not afraid of the one person they should be afraid of. Romans 2:5 says that sinners are accumulating...are accumulating sin that some day is going to feel the wrath of God. And those who have never feared Him will fear Him then.

But you don't need to be afraid. We don't have fear, we who are Christians, do we? Because we have escaped the wrath of God. We have been delivered from the wrath to come through Jesus Christ. You heard some people give testimonies in baptism tonight and they talked about how Christ has changed their lives, that's true. Let me also tell you, He has changed their future destiny from wrath to blessing, from hell to heaven, from terror to rejoicing. We're not looking for this wrath, we're going to be caught up to be with the Lord before it ever hits, amen? Amen. If you put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, you will escape the wrath to come. "Fear Him who after He has killed has the authority to cast you into hell. Yes, I say, fear Him." Let's pray.

Lord, this is so powerful, so frightening and yet the world is so deceived. This kind of truth often rolls off without even a conviction, may it not be. For those who hear this word tonight, may they feel the terror of the Lord and may they know that there is a God of wrath and vengeance who is some day going to hit the deceived world with reality and then it's too late. And may folks know that they only have their life time to come to Christ to escape the wrath to come. We thank You that we as Christians are waiting for Christ to come from heaven, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come. We thank You that we're looking for Christ. We don't fear You anymore, as a God of vengeance and a God of wrath because we've put our trust in Christ who has felt Your wrath for us on the cross. I pray, Lord, that any here who don't know Christ would come to Him now as Savior and Lord so they will feel nothing of Your wrath but all of Your goodness. And for those who are Christians, Father, may we first of all be thankful and secondly, may we warn the world as those dear saints will some day who lose their lives because they stand for the gospel. Help us to be willing in our time to warn sinners of Your wrath. Make us faithful, in Christ's name. Amen.

COPYRIGHT (C) 2015 Grace to You

You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (<http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright>).