

Rev 6:9-17

The Great Day Of Wrath

Fifth Seal: The Cry of the Martyrs

Good morning Church.

It is wonderful to be here with you all.

This morning we will continue our study of the Book of Revelation.

It has been intense so far to say the least.

If you have missed any portion of this study, please go to our Website and catch up.

Now last week, we turned from heaven's view, as the Lamb of God has taken the scroll and began to open the Seven Seals of judgment and John's vision came back toward earth.

We studied the first four seals, which revealed the four horse riders of the Apocalypse.

The first was the rider of the white horse; he came immediately on the scene as a peaceful conqueror.

We identified this man as the Antichrist, the prince who is to come, the man of sin, and the son of perdition.

The scriptures have many names for this prized prodigy of Satan.

But this man, immediately after the church, or bride of Christ is raptured home, he will captivate the world with his charisma and his wonderful promises of peace.

And this will be the start of the Tribulation, the hour of trial that will come upon the whole world.

And as this Seventieth Week that Daniel prophesied about begins, many things will be different from this current dispensation that we are in right now.

We are currently in the Age of Grace, the Church Age, and if you remember from our study of Matthew 24 and the Olivet Discourse, we are in the Beginning of Sorrows.

Jesus explained this age this way...

Matt 24:4-8 And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. 5 For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. 6 And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of sorrows.

And this has been the story of this age, yet since Pentecost, the Promised Helper, has been working in and through the church.

Although many evils tell the story of our age, the church, empowered by the Spirit of God has been a restraint and a check on evil.

The full representation of the Antichrist cannot be revealed yet with the church here.

2 Thess. 2:7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.

After the rapture, all restraint will be removed, and the evil system and ruler of the tribulation period will be unloosed on the earth dwellers.

And peace will be his means of deception, but like his father, the devil, he will be a master of lies.

And the second rider will come riding in as we saw last week, the fiery red horse who brought World War as peace was taken from the earth.

And this World Wide conflict will bring with it the companion of war, famine.

And as the third seal was broken, the black horse brought a rider with scales in his hands.

And the poor were subjected with cruelty and suffering as those in power lived with delicacy.

There was no in-between, either famine or feasting.

As the corruption of war hit this world like never before.

The fourth seal, brought the reality of all that was happening in the first part of the tribulation.

Death and Hades ride in on a pale green horse, sweeping up a quarter of life on earth.

The devastation in the first part of this Seven Year period is nothing like this world has ever seen.

We have seen extreme events happen in this age of wars and rumors of wars, and we are currently seeing some catastrophic disasters, but none of what we see in this age will even measure up to the world wide devastation unleashed on a rebellious mankind.

This seven-year period is still yet to come, you should not even entertain the thought that we are seeing or living in the tribulation period now.

The riders of the apocalypse are still yet to ride.

Understand that the word of God assures you, who has sincerely put your faith in Jesus Christ that you are not appointed to wrath.

Paul explains to the church in Thessalonica...

1 Thess. 5:8-10 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

And so we know, during this tribulation period, the church will not be present, we are not appointed to wrath.

So this leaves a huge question for us.

Many people have asked me over the years, “will there be believers in the tribulation period, and will the Holy Spirit still work to convert the soul of the believer?”

And this morning the text will speak to these issues.

But understand this, that which restrains is the Holy Spirit working through the church.

In this age the church is made up of believers that have come through faith in Jesus Christ, and received His Grace

In the Tribulation, this Great Mystery, the Church, will be gone, and understand, the Holy Spirit's unique work through the Body of Christ will be done away with.

We will go to meet Jesus in the air at the trumpet blast, at the shout of an archangel.

So the next dispensation, people get very confused about, because we say the Restrainer will be taken out of the world.

As if, God's Omnipresence leaves the earth as well.

Jeremiah the prophet, speaking for the Lord wrote...

Jer. 23:24 Can anyone hide himself in secret places, So I shall not see him?" says the Lord; "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" says the Lord.

God's presence is everywhere all the time by His Spirit.

Now as the Holy Spirit had a different function in the Old Testament, He will also have a unique function in the tribulation, no longer will He be working through the church.

Understand through this future time of God's Wrath being poured out on earth, a multitude that cannot be numbered will come to faith in Jesus Christ.

Donald Barnhouse believes those that come to salvation in the tribulation will be more numerous than the number of believers that came to faith in all the dispensations prior.

The Holy Spirit will continue His work in drawing many to faith in Christ.

We will also see Him protect another distinct group of believers, 144,000 sealed evangelists from the Jewish Nation.

And even more Jewish believers will come to faith through an outpouring of God's Spirit as mentioned by the prophet Zechariah.

Zech. 12:10-11 "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns

for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.

There will be a national revival in Israel, with an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Understand however, in the dispensation that we are in, we currently relate to God through His Grace, and we come to salvation through His Grace.

And God's Grace will still be the effective tool for believers in the tribulation, yet at that time, with the restraining force of the Church in heaven, the believers will know God through His wrath.

That multitude of believers I mentioned earlier are known as Martyrs in the tribulation.

Their faith will be tried and tested through the severest of tests.

But understand, in this dispensation we are to live for Jesus Christ, in the next they will be killed for Christ.

Now, as we discussed last week, the spirit of the antichrist is already at work in our age.

And persecution and martyrdom have been a part of the church age, but understand that the severity of a worldwide persecution is not, and has not taken place yet.

We see it is getting closer than ever.

The hatred and animosity toward the church is increasing daily, even outright persecution of the church is growing to great numbers all over the planet.

And when the churches witness is taken from this earth, the persecution will be put into full swing.

We will meet the Martyrs of the tribulation this morning in our text; they are the first of 3 distinct groups of believers in the tribulation.

So who are these believers, these martyrs who chose death over living a lie?

Well, understand immediately after the rapture of the Church, think of the people in your life right now, who know your witness for Christ.

Think of your family members who think you are crazy for believing in Jesus as your Savior.

Who scoff at the idea that one day we will all be snatched from this earth, in a moment.

The many people who are aware you spend your Sunday mornings coming into the house of God to worship and praise His Name instead of watching football.

Those coaches who want your kids to play in the Sunday league because they are so gifted, yet you will not budge, because Jesus takes precedence in your life.

All your co-workers who cannot understand why you do not go to the bar after work with everyone.

Those on the jobsite who make fun of you for not catcalling the pretty young ladies that walk by, because as you explain it... 'You love your wife.'

Your neighbors who you continually ask to pray for.

All of those around you who see Jesus' Light burning bright from your steadfast witness for Him.

When we are gone, as we say we will be, then something will awaken in their souls.

As the Holy Spirit brings to remembrance all of our warnings, all of those meaningful conversations, they will be without excuse.

These Martyrs, I imagine, will also consist of those prodigals that just held out too long, and thought they had more time.

There is a brother at our former ministry, who has two sons in complete rebellion toward the Lord.

He says there seems to be no hope in this dispensation for them.

So he is preparing their hearts to get saved in the Tribulation.

He has made sure they know when the church is gone, that it is time they come to Jesus.

There are those who have even left rapture letters for their loved ones who will not hear and have closed off any communication about the gospel.

We even, at Calvary Chapel Apple Valley, left instructions in a glass case for those who will be fleeing to the church for answers during this time.

But many will come to Jesus in the Tribulation, and believe it or not, many today who confess outwardly a faith, based on religious exercise and church attendance, will be left here to find a true relationship with the living God.

Church Smith used to say there will be many surprises in heaven, of some who we thought would never make it, and we might be shocked by who doesn't make it in the Rapture.

Perhaps some of you will even benefit from this teaching about the tribulation, because you have not taken serious this offer of grace, and you will need guidance for the dispensation or time period to come.

That is a heart-searching reality! That some of you here will live through the tribulation.

Well, let us get into the fifth and sixth seal this morning.

Before we do let us pray...

Revelation 6:9-11 reads...

6:9 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. 10 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?" 11 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.

So we see here John's vision shifts back to heaven.

And what we see here in heaven speaks volumes to what is taking place on earth.

Remember the seven seals are speaking to the first half of the tribulation.

We see even in those first three and half years, where this man of peace comes on the scene, we see that in his system there will be no toleration for Jesus or His followers.

A system of persecution and swift judgment will be placed on those who put their faith in Jesus Christ.

This speaks to the fact, that there will be no waiting for a fair trial, whatever the means of decimating God's children is, it will be swift.

Notice here in verse 9 John saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.

Now, remember we have previously discussed how the Tabernacle and Temple of the Old Testament served as a picture of the Heavenly Temple.

Now in that Tabernacle of Old, remember the purpose of the altar.

Lev 4:7 And the priest shall put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the Lord, which is in the tabernacle of meeting; and he shall pour the remaining blood of the bull at the base of the altar of the burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

The altar was a place where the victim's blood was poured out.

The Blood according to Leviticus 17:11 represents life. And here in Revelation the souls of the Martyrs are under the altar declaring they had given their lives sacrificially for the glory of God.

Now we see these martyrs or witnesses who were murdered by an evil enemy have a peculiar request.

10 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?"

Now, like I mentioned earlier, in our current dispensation there is a multitude of martyrs who are currently dying for their faith.

It has been estimated that since Jesus walked this earth there have been over 70 million martyrs who have died for their faith in Jesus Christ. That was in 2014. <https://www.christiantoday.com/article/70.million.christians.martyred.faith.since.jesus.walked.earth/38403.htm>

Recent history has even seen some of the worst Christian persecution.

And again this spirit of the Antichrist is among us today.

Christians as we discussed last week are the problem to every issue today.

I watched a video of a young volleyball girl preaching proudly how her college is excepting a young man on their girl's team who wants to be a girl.

And she went on this tirade of how all-inclusive they are to everyone.

The reporter asked about Christians, and she instantly flipped on her all-inclusive speech, and started talking crudeness and wanted to exclude them altogether.

Perhaps you have sent your child to college, and you are watching their minds and hearts changed as they are continually bombarded with liberal ideas, and hatred of Christians.

But the spirit of this persecution is already among us.

But there is a distinction here from the martyrs of the tribulation and the martyrs from this era of Grace.

Remember our first faithful witness in the Book of Acts from our dispensation, his name was Stephan.

And then he set the tempo and example for all who would follow in this age.

Acts 7:59-60 And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 60 Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

We are commanded by Jesus in this age, to pray for those who persecute us.

Even my 5 year old, empowered by the Holy Spirit prays for the bad people who stole mommy's purse, she prays for them to get Jesus in their heart so they are not bad anymore.

That is how we pray in this age.

The Martyrs in the tribulation have another prayer, and it sounds much like the Psalmist of the Old Testament.

Who said...

Ps 54:1-5 Save me, O God, by Your name,
And vindicate me by Your strength.

2 Hear my prayer, O God;

Give ear to the words of my mouth.

3 For strangers have risen up against me,
And oppressors have sought after my life;
They have not set God before them.

4 Behold, God is my helper;

The Lord is with those who uphold my life.

5 He will repay my enemies for their evil.

Cut them off in Your truth.

When we read through the Psalms, we who are now under Christ, and bear His Name in our identity, have a hard time understanding the plea of David for vengeance.

We are instructed in this age to forgive those who persecute us, to do good to those who do evil to us.

That is the calling of the Martyr or witness of our age.

But God's people in each dispensation are taught by the Spirit to pray according to the ruling principle of the age.

And although these words here by the tribulation saints are difficult for our ears to hear and heart to understand, these words will be fitting for the age to come.

Where mankind will no longer be relating to God through Grace but through Wrath.

"How long?" they ask, wanting to know when God's holiness and righteous judgment will deal with the injustice on earth.

Now these martyrs are seen here before the resurrection and we will see them again at the end of the tribulation.

So there has been much debate on what form they stand before the throne in, in this picture.

They have not received their heavenly bodies yet, that is too come.

However, we see next...

11 Then a white robe was given to each of them;

Now, these white robes are symbolic of righteousness. It seems some temporary covering is given to them, while they wait.

The fact they are given a robe almost demands here they are given some kind of body. Walvoord

It is not the temporary tent we all dwell in now, these earthen vessels.

And they do not have their resurrected bodies yet, which they will receive in Revelation 20 verse 4.

It seems they have received here something temporarily suited for heaven, until the final resurrection.

Now this is clearly the martyred Saints from the tribulation.

It is said of the church, those of us who die in this age, **2 Cor. 5:7-8 For we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.**

We have a confidence that either we die and go be with the Lord, or we will be taken in the Rapture.

That is the churches promise.

But these martyrs must wait, John explains next...

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.

Now, their instruction is to rest, until the number of those who come to Jesus and will be martyred is completed.

This is telling us that the in the second part of the tribulation, persecution will both continue and increase.

Now we will see of this group next time we are together, and they are innumerable.

Rev 7:9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before

the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands,

I know when we hear of the Great and Dreadful Day of the Lord, we know that it speaks to a great slaughter of rebellious men here on earth.

We know of the devastation, and chaos, we know the calamity and confusion.

But, understand this, as these Great Events take place, in opposition to the Antichrist a multitude of faithful witnesses will also come into the fold of God.

This fifth seal speaks of a great revival in this dreaded time.

These believers will be steadfast and faithful unto death, we will learn they will actually be beheaded for their faith.

I imagine the numbers will be so high in such a short amount of time, that these trials will be quick and unjust.

Perhaps much like what we see ISIS doing today for their god Allah.

Understand, if we truly believe the Bible, our witness should be to those who reject now, a long lasting witness, so much so that they are impacted in such a way that when these things began to happen, they will be willing to go to their death for Christ.

Understand as you share your faith with your loved ones, those who reject, make sure you plan on leaving back a note or letter of some sort explaining to them what they have to do in the Tribulation.

I plan to do so, as the urgency of the times we live in press upon me as we journey through the Revelation.

There are many today I love who reject the Gospel of Grace, who if remain unchanged, will have to choose when God's Wrath is being poured out.

May they grab a hold of Jesus at last, when there will be no more opportunity after the tribulation.

Now, we will go from the cries of the Martyrs "Avenge us!" to the cry of the wicked "Hide us!"

As the opening of the sixth seal will open up worldwide catastrophe like never before seen.

Now, the next seal has been looked at in two prominent ways.

And I think they are equally as profound and equally translated very well.

One way is to look at the events here in the sixth seal symbolically.

As in the earthquake speaking of a worldwide shaking up of powers.

Sun, moon and stars, even mountains and islands all having a distinct meaning to governments and world structure.

Donald Barnhouse is one who takes the next seal symbolically, and he does an amazing job at it.

H.A. Ironside does this as well.

He explains in short, "It is therefore not a worldwide, literal earthquake that the sixth seal introduces, but rather a destruction of the present order... Ironside

Both he and Barnhouse find scripture to back their system of interpretation up, and I might say they do a very good job at it.

And if you would like their interpretation I can get that to you, and you can believe them, and I would think no less of you.

However, I choose to follow the literal interpretation of this next seal as does John F. Walvoord and many others.

To me the plainest interpretation is best.

These events will happen, and as we will see can very easily happen when God decides it is time.

Remember the symbolism comes when John says something looks like something or he says it is as something. As sackcloth of hair, would mean he is seeing something that is like sackcloth of hair.

But when he says sun and moon, and stars very plainly we know we are looking at the sun, moon and stars.

Understand all of nature will be affected and even the heavens will be shaken.

The terror of God's wrath through nature will cause fear and dread in such a way that no upheaval of governments could insight this in the heart of man.

The prophet Joel spoke of this time.

Joel 2:30-31 "And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke.

31 The sun shall be turned into darkness,

And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.

We read John's account as the sixth seal is open.

Sixth Seal: Cosmic Disturbances

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. 13 And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. 14 Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. 15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men,

every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, 16 and said 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! 17 For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

The first powerful event John sees after the sixth seal was opened was a great earthquake;

This is once again different from the description of this dispensation, described by Jesus as the Beginning of Sorrows, which is described as having many earthquakes in various places.

This here is a worldwide shaking.

Some even think now that the earth is headed for a magnetic pole reversal, where north will become south and south will become north.

Surely this would cause some kind of world event.

Others speculate that something from space as if a giant meteor will come catapulting against the earth

causing a shifting and shaking that would have devastating effects.

This seems extreme for many people, but I remember when I was in 8th grade, my father took us on a vacation to Arizona, we saw the Grand Canyon, the Petrified Forest, and he took us to a place I will never forget, because of the overwhelming feeling I got thinking about what it meant.

He took us into the middle of the desert to look at this huge hole in the ground.

Then he explained it was a Meteor Crater.

Show Picture

A what? You mean something out of space came hurling through our atmosphere and made that thing?

It terrified me, that that was a possibility.

And perhaps something bigger than that event could easily shake the whole earth.

So perhaps that is how, we will be told in a moment, that stars will plummet the earth.

Or maybe a huge event like a super volcano like the one under Yellowstone National Park, as it finally goes off.

They say that super volcano would completely wipe out life on the North American continent; some projections show us here in California under 10 feet of ash.

This thing is no joke; check it out, if you are not already.

Every time I mention something like this, my wife get sidetracked on a google search immediately.

She is constantly fact checking me.

I'll ask, "How do you think it went." She will say "well, I kind of got sidetracked on Super volcanoes and missed some of it."

So research it after church okay. But learn what they have found out just recently about this huge volcano, earlier this year, it had a swarm of 400 earthquakes around it.

Yikes...

But this would still only be a North American event, unless many tectonic plates began to shift at once.

You know the Pacific Rim or Ring of Fire which is associated with a continuous series of oceanic trenches, volcanic arcs, and volcanic belts and plate movements, this connected Ring could unleash a fury felt across much of the world.

However this world-wide shaking happens, it will happen... The Word of God says it will.

Now as we move on, if we were to take the symbolic approach, this next portion would be difficult to make sense.

However, the literal understanding presents no difficulty in its interpretation.

Notice next...

and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. 13 And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind.

Now the great objects that have brought certainty for humanity for thousands of years, which have faithfully been a powerful symbol of security and stability.

The great light God breathed into the sky, the sun, is now darkened, as black as sackcloth.

Now this is the literal sun darkened as something.

Sackcloth would be made of goat's hair.

John is saying, during this seal judgment, darkness will cover the earth.

Now a worldwide shaking would trigger volcanoes and disaster like never before seen.

They say even if just Yellowstone ever decides to awaken from its slumber, the cloud would put North America and beyond into nuclear winter.

Again, however this happens, the days will be as night.

The moon will be reddened like blood.

We have had in the recent past a tetrad of Blood Moons, yet remember what we are reading is

happening in the Tribulation, we all saw the Blood Moons, we will not see this that John is speaking of.

Now when we get those devastating fires as we do often here in the desert, if you look at the moon, you will see the cloud of smoke makes the moon blood red at night.

And perhaps this Red Moon is created by the same cloud that darkens the Sun.

And those stable stars that we stare up at night to gaze upon, will fall to the earth as a fig drops its weakened late fruit by a powerful wind.

This will be terrifying and tormenting as God uses the part His own creation that has for the centuries spoken of His Glory, and testified to His fame, and He takes those objects of His Testimony and hurls them toward the earth to administer His justice.

How little does a tyrant from North Korea look when Almighty God administers His Divine Judgment.

Listen to how the prophet Isaiah describes this time...

Isa 13:6-13 Wail, for the day of the Lord is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty. 7

Therefore all hands will be limp, Every man's heart will melt, 8 And they will be afraid. Pangs and sorrows will take hold of them; They will be in pain as a woman in childbirth; They will be amazed at one another; Their faces will be like flames.

9 Behold, the day of the Lord comes, Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, To lay the land desolate; And He will destroy its sinners from it. 10 For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not give their light; The sun will be darkened in its going forth, And the moon will not cause its light to shine.

11 "I will punish the world for its evil, And the wicked for their iniquity; I will halt the arrogance of the proud, And will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. 12 I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold, A man more than the golden wedge of Ophir. 13 Therefore I will shake the heavens, And the earth will move out of her place, In the wrath of the Lord of hosts And in the day of His fierce anger.

These elements of Divine Judgement have been pictured all throughout the scriptures, and all speak of the surety of what is to come.

Next John describes his vision of the earth's movements...

14 Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.

Heaven opens in this terrifying aerial spectacle, as the heavens roll back like a scroll, and reveal something never seen before by mankind.

It causes mountains and islands to move as if they were in a child's sandbox.

All of the grandeur of creation that brings so much security to humanity will tremble in fear for what is coming, or Who is coming!

Understand this is why I cannot take the symbolic approach to this section, no toppling of governments can produce the equal amount of fear across mankind in the same way.

Look next...

15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, 16 and said 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! 17 For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Listen, that constant Blue Sky we see, even if it goes away for a cloudy day or two, we know it is there, and as far as our naked eyes can see, that we get no further then that beautiful blue.

But when that wonderful blue sky is rolled back, something is revealed, something that clearly displays to every man on earth that there is the Lamb of God sitting on a throne.

Those who have no understanding of God's Word in this time will feel a terror and dread no soul has felt in the history of humanity.

All of civilization, rich, powerful, mighty, and poor and enslaved alike will ask God's creation to hide or kill them, to escape the torment of what is revealed.

This is the wrath of the Lamb upon the evil rebellion of mankind.

Notice, we see here the extent of their wickedness, they will even acknowledge Jesus, and yet they will seek death before they will repent.

Salvation can still be found, God will be looking for repentance until the final moment of Christ's return.

Yet these poor souls, will find even in death they will not escape the consequence of their rejection!

No one will be able to stand, all will be crushed by the Stone that the builders rejected, unless they fall at their own will before Him and bend their knee in humility and seek a pardon.

All who confess Jesus Christ will be saved even in the next age.

Now perhaps you can't understand why?

Why do we the church need to know these judgments if we are going to be with Jesus before these things will take place.

Why does John receive so much detail on the Tribulation, and we only have two chapters that deal with the church era in Revelation.

The answer is this... God has given His church this horrific vision of the future to wake us up!

To give us an urgency in our witness for Christ.

What we are reading here is the reality of all who would reject the Name of Jesus.

Every proud professor, every arrogant politician, every wealthy business man, every content father, every care free neighbor, every soul going about their life like all is well.

After this age, if not reached with this glorious gospel, they will endure these great tragedies.

Listen, we are living in the final moments of the last days.

God has placed us in this particular time for a reason.

God has a plan to use you in His work, every one of you have a place.

Yet I cannot tell you how many times I have heard, “I just need to worry about myself right now, I want to serve God, but now is not the time.”

“God wants me to focus on myself right now, to get my life straightened out.”

You understand that is not biblical, never are we called to focus on ourselves in scripture.

Jesus told His disciples to Go, and make disciples of the Nations.

“Well, I need to pray about it pastor.” No you do not the instruction is clear. Go... the prayer is already answered, yes, you are to serve Jesus.

He spoke so clearly in the scriptures about it.

May the reality of what we are hearing this morning put an urgency in your heart and mind to get busy about His business.

The god of self has infiltrated the church of Jesus Christ, and too many today are scrambling and racing to fulfill self.

Meanwhile the fate of those around us hang in the balance.

Our children's ministry Pastor and his wife can even rarely get over here to be a part of service; they are so understaffed with volunteers.

We are in the last days, and many of those kids need mentors, father figures, they need examples of what a godly woman lives like.

The harvest is great over there, we need patient, longsuffering, committed servants, whose yes is a yes, and no is a no.

Every ministry on our webpage is looking for help.

If you are not sure where you belong, just pick one and start somewhere.

Jess and I started as ushers; she still to this day was the best usher I have ever worked with. She knows the streets.

But as we were faithful in one ministry God moved us to the next, children's ministry, youth ministry, then pastoral ministry.

You know some of you are pastors, some of you are called to be elders, some of you are perhaps called to be a missionary, or street evangelist, or a mentor.

Maybe you are called to clean the church, to serve as a greeter, or an usher.

Perhaps God has entrusted much to you to give much, and you are called to help financially to the work of God.

There is a place for every one of you, you are all so important to the work God is doing here.

So start somewhere and be faithful there until God moves you.

Faithfulness is so lacking in the church today as Christians are constantly fighting against the Humanism within.

Self is supposed to be last in God's Kingdom.

Listen, you will spend the rest of your life trying to get your life straightened out to serve Jesus, it will never be straight enough.

Just step out, and you will be surprised at what God does in your life when your eyes are on Him and others.

Phil 2:4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

This is our call church. Shake off the delusion of our day, of humanism, serving self.

Find purpose and joy in serving Jesus, the souls of our neighbors are at stake.

I know many of you have heard the Lord throughout your weeks of sitting in the pew, and every week, you try to shake off that voice telling you “it is time.”

He wants you engaged, listen, during the prayer time during this last song, come up and pray for direction, these Elders and Pastors are here to help guide you and pray with you.

Our calling is to equip the saints for the work of God.

So don't be surprised if we ever come and tap on your shoulder and ask you to serve somewhere.

We want to see you experience your full potential, we know you are important to all that God is doing here, we know God has you here for a reason.

Let's commit with one another to do all we can in these last days to spare as many people from the wrath of the Lamb of God, may they instead experience the Grace that the Lamb of God has provided for their salvation.

Let's live like our goodbyes might be our last, let's serve understanding tomorrow might not coming.

You know in my life I have some really hard unfinished goodbyes.

When I was 15 years old, I remember, my grandpa Dan. He was a tuff old Irishman. A WW2 vet.

That man loved me a lot. We had such a special connection.

He was a great man, so proud of all of my achievements in life.

At my little league games he was so boisterous, you can hear his shouts above everyone.

As I would go up to bat, I would hear him “Come on, Gar! Knock it out the park!”

When I started football, there was no one louder than him in the stands.

I loved him greatly.

My freshmen year, at 15 years old he got a brain tumor, and it too quickly overcame him.

I remember everyone saying goodbye to him, and I would not go in there, I could not accept the fact he was leaving me.

I got angry, and I could hear him calling me. I missed my goodbye, we left and that was the last chance I had.

So much left unsaid. Why did I not go in the room and tell that wonderful man how much I loved him, how grateful I was for his love and encouragement.

That man brought me so much strength, “Grandpa, you are a great man,” I would have said, “you helped me achieve things I never thought possible, thank you.”

But it was left unsaid.

So many unfinished goodbyes in my life.

Those unfinished goodbyes leave so much uncertainty.

Just recently Jessica’s father laid in bed connected to oxygen for 2 years straight, we almost lost him many times, but he always came back.

Toward the end of his life, as the ministry got busier, and work increased, I found it more difficult to go see him.

Jess took the kids down on a Thursday, and I knew I was supposed to go see him that day, but I had so much work to do, I decided I would go another time.

The chance was lost, I never got to have that last conversation with Tony.

One last time to tell him how much we love him, how much he touched our lives.

I regret it so much, how could I choose work over such a great man, and it remains unfinished goodbye. And my heart sinks every time I think about it.

But as heart wrenching and difficult it is to live with unfinished goodbyes in this life, none will compare in scale, even close to the ones that will take place when we are raptured and our loved ones and friends will be left behind.

I don't know if regret will be allowed in eternity, but if it is, I don't want to live with the regret of unfinished words with my loved ones.

Think about the co-worker you have been shoulder to shoulder with for all those years, and the confusion they will have when you are raptured, and you never told them about the Jesus you worship on Sunday.

Think of that brother-in-law that you just can't get the courage to speak to about Jesus.

Think of your children who have a degree, and a successful career, but you don't have the heart to tell them it is all meaningless, there is no success without Jesus.

They worked so hard, you don't want to rain on their parade.

Listen don't count on tomorrow for your opportunity, the way the world is looking you might not get that opportunity.

You know the only thing that will matter in eternity is what you did for Jesus in this life.

How you served Jesus in this life, that is all that will matter in the next, think about what is important to your life.

These events will come to this earth, the urgency is upon us like never before.

May we live these final days to work as hard as we can to have no unfinished goodbyes.

Tell them now, write the letters now, make the phone call now, and if they reject, find a way to leave

something behind for them to choose in the next dispensation.

Listen church, this is why John received this vision of things that will suddenly come about, so we could be fervent in our love for God, and for others.

May we go about this week filled a fresh with His Spirit, and may we have eternity on hearts.

Also, if you are here this morning and you have become frightfully aware of your need for Jesus Christ.

Come today, and pray to receive this wonderful grace, there is no religious performance required to receive a full pardon from your sins.

You only need to confess your sinful and lost condition, and receive that wonderful life changing forgiveness once and for all, that Jesus paid for on the cross.

Come to Him this morning.

Now, questions or concerns email me or call me.

Amen?