

06a REV

This is Friday, the 9th of September, 2005. We continue tonight our study in the book of Revelation, resuming in chapter 7. Let's take a moment as we begin to clear our minds and prepare our hearts, offload the baggage of the day and of the week, and prepare ourselves for a refreshing time in God's Word. Shall we pray? Father, we are grateful for the opportunity to spend time in fellowship and to encourage one another as we look at the truth of your Word.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will find our hearts receptive and impressionable so that the things that we see and hear from your Word tonight will be a lasting benefit, be something that will guide us and shed light on our path in the days ahead. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Revelation is probably most famous. Almost everybody knows. You can speak to somebody on the street and they say, well, oh yeah, Revelation, that's got the seven seals and the four horsemen of the apocalypse.

It's probably, outside of the lake of fire itself, it's probably the most famous and well-known part of the book. And that's where we find ourselves in chapters 6 and 7, looking at the seven seals. And as the first four of those seals are opened, you have these four horsemen of the apocalypse emerge.

We've looked at that in some detail. We saw the fifth and sixth seals opened so that in Revelation 6.12, when the sixth seal is opened, John looks and behold, there's a great earthquake and the sun becomes black as sackcloth of hair, the moon becomes like blood, the stars of heaven fall to the earth, a fig tree dropping its light figs, and so on. And as I mentioned the last time we met and looked at this passage, there is a familiarity to that language.

There's another place in the Bible where we have this sort of description. And it's helpful to look at that alongside this for this reason. Revelation is tricky.

We said in our introduction in the beginning of this study that figuring out at what level it's symbolic and at what level it is literal and how many layers of symbolism there are is really important. So if there is another passage that talks about this same episode, this same part of history that's being described here, shining that passage's light on this passage is going to help us see the level of symbolic imagery that's involved, right? Because we'll get a different perspective. So the description here is reminiscent of what Jesus says over in Matthew chapter 24.

And if you keep your finger in Revelation, we're going to look briefly at the 24th chapter of Matthew just to see the parallel. I'm going to assume you remember what we saw in the first six seals. So take a look at Matthew 24.

Jesus departed from the temple. His disciples showing the buildings of the temple. You have the whole thing, no one stone left upon another.

And so the disciples come to him privately and say, tell us when will these things be and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age? Now, two things are critically important to understand Matthew 24. And both of them are dispensations. You have to understand dispensations.

When they say what is the sign of your coming and the end of the age, which coming are we talking about and which age are we talking about? Can I tell you, you are going to be in like the 90th percentile just by knowing what I'm about to say. This is not talking about the church and it's not talking about the rapture and it's not talking about the end of the church age. Most Christians don't know this information.

Most Christians are dazed and confused and do not understand that the age of Israel is one thing, the age of the church is something else. The age of Israel is detailed in the Old Testament and in the Gospels. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, if I was going to invent the Bible, I would put the dividing line between the Old Testament and the New Testament between John and Acts.

Because Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are set in the Old Testament age of Israel. Everything in those things happens in the Old Testament age of Israel. Everything.

Everything. Jesus going out to the Mount of Olives and ascending is the Old Testament age of Israel. All of it.

You don't get the church age until Acts. So, what book are we in here? Matthew. When they say the disciples are sitting there in the age of Israel talking to Jesus saying, well, Lord, what's going to be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age? The age that we're talking about is the age of Israel.

The coming is the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ as Messiah to Israel. So, if you miss everything else in the class, somebody says, well, what did you talk about Friday night? Well, I figured out that Matthew 24 is talking about the second coming of Christ back to earth to rule His kingdom in Israel for a thousand years. That's what this is talking about.

Why is that important? Why do I stress it? Because a lot of people now are saying, wow, look at that thing in New Orleans. Look at the famines. Look at wars and rumors of wars.

Well, I could take you to many times in history where people could point to famines and wars and pestilences and so on. This is not unique. The things that Jesus is about to talk about are unique.

And when they happen, people are going to say, well, what are they saying about the hurricane in New Orleans? Worst natural disaster to ever hit the U.S. Everything else in

history, Camille and all, it pales in comparison with this devastation, right? Nobody is saying, this isn't the worst that ever happened. I can think of something worse. No, you can't.

It's the worst that's ever hit. Well, in the same way, when the pestilences and plagues and these horsemen ride forth and all the sun darkens and the moon turns to blood, people are going to say, you know what? Never in the history of the world has it been this bad. And they'll be right.

What we're looking at today is not these end time signs. So, let's take a look at it. This is parallel, by the way, in Mark 13 and Luke 21.

You may have a note in your Bible to that effect. Jesus says in verse 4, Take heed that no one deceives you. This is why I'm stressing this point, because many people are deceived.

Many will come in my name saying, I am the Christ. These are not people saying, hello, my name is Sam Hall, but I am really the Christ. People are coming saying, I'm Sam Hall, and I'm telling you Jesus is the Christ.

Many will come claiming Christ. They're not claiming to be Christ, but they are affirming that Jesus is the Christ. This is their foot in the door.

This is their initial step of credibility. People say, oh good. This is like Sun Mung Moon coming over to the United States and saying, oh yeah, Jesus is the Christ.

Well, we don't all become moonies just because he affirms Christ. And in the same way, many are going to be deceived because their initial spam filter is going to be breached. Well, I'm not going to listen to somebody who doesn't affirm that Jesus is the Christ.

I know what the spirit of antichrist is. It's to say that Jesus didn't come in the flesh. Well, these people are going to clear that first fence.

Oh yeah, Jesus is the Christ, absolutely. I believe it. Oh, okay.

Well, then people are going to be set up to swallow the big lie that follows. Many will come in my name, Jesus says, saying I am the Christ, and will deceive many. Not deceive about the identity of Christ, but everything else they say.

Will some of our popular modern televangelists and TV ministry guys affirm that Jesus is the Christ? Will Benny Hinn tell you that Jesus is the Christ? Will Robert Tilton tell you, and some of the others you can name, Swaggart and some of these? Absolutely. Have they deceived many? Absolutely. See that you are not troubled.

You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled. All these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

He says, see that you are not troubled. He doesn't say the people at that time should not be troubled. He speaks to the disciples, and he says, see that you are not troubled.

Who are the disciples representative of here? They have come to Him privately, but they are Old Testament guys. They are believers in God, and they are Old Testament. And so, in the same way that God talks to Israel from Sinai and says, thou shalt not, here He says, don't be troubled.

Who is He talking to? Same audience. Israelites. See that you are not troubled.

All these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines, and so on. So, you have in Revelation chapter 6 and 7, when you are opening these seals, what is the first seal that is opened? You have the white horse.

He rides upon it and has a bow. No arrows, just a bow. What does he do? He goes forth conquering and to conquer.

Now, some people say, well, but it is a bloodless coup because he has got no arrows. He conquers in some sort of a peaceful means. Well, the end result is, he has still achieved a domination.

He has conquered. Weenie-weenie-weekie. I came, I saw, I conquered.

Nike. You know, victory. That's the whole thing.

The white horse is a symbol of victory. In Rome, when a victorious general would come back, what did he ride down the Appian Way and up the steps? White horse. It is a symbol of victory.

Wars and rumors of wars. Nation will rise against nation. Kingdom against kingdom.

There will be famines and pestilences. Remember the second horse that rides out? What is the color of the second horse? Seal number two. Blood red.

The guy on that one has a sword. There is your nation rising against nation. Now, the white horse covers the first three and a half years.

Everyone is saying peace and safety. Isn't it great? This guy has taken charge. We've got the revived Roman Empire going here.

We've got a wonderful system in place. We always knew if we could just create the right environment, everybody would be happy. Everybody could buy and sell.

Nobody would fight. Crime would go down. War would disappear.

Nobody would be hungry. All natural disasters would be coped with in a wonderful way.

Have you noticed? I know some of you heard on the radio earlier today some of the commentary and if you've seen the news and all of the flack that they're throwing at the head of FEMA and one thing and another over this thing in New Orleans.

It is a syndrome. It's been pointed out by people smarter than me that a lot of times when there's a natural disaster, people aren't content to shake their fist at fate or God or whatever. They want to find a person to blame for this huge natural disaster.

Patty heard somebody pointing out earlier today that this is what they did in the ancient world. When a volcano erupted or pestilence came through, locusts swarmed through, they would look around and say, there's sin in the camp. Who goofed up that we need to sacrifice somebody to appease the gods? This is somebody's fault.

With all the modern progress and how high and falutin' we are now, all of our intelligentsia are still looking around saying, who can we hang for this natural disaster? Oh, it's Mr. Brown's fault. Heaven help him. He was in the Arabian Horse Association, so he can't be any good at leading a disaster organization, ignoring the guy's resume, picking holes in his resume, finding where he misworded something.

Oh, I told you he didn't know anything. Mr. Brown, by the way, has been in charge while FEMA has addressed over 164 presidentially recognized disasters. He presided over FEMA's response last year, which was the most active hurricane season in over 100 years.

He has been in the administration involved in policy for disaster management since late 2001. He has been a key player. The president has put him in charge of numerous committees and policymaking.

He's all over that, but you won't hear it in the news because the liberal media and the opponents of the president who are looking for anything at all that they can tar him with and hang him with are seizing on this and saying, Aha, I told you the president was a bad guy, and his appointee is a bad guy, and I predict they're probably going to hang Mr. Brown as the sacrificial lamb, and then all of these people will be appeased. Well, see, there was a natural disaster, and it was this guy's fault, and now he's out. We're happy.

Well, anyway, this harks back to ancient times. The rider on the red horse, the sword, follows the guy on the white horse who has the bow. He's powerful, but he's not deadly.

He produces peace. Everybody's saying, Oh, peace and safety isn't this great. Well, the problem with this theory is that man is not inherently good.

Man is inherently evil. If you lift the restrictions, this is why it's a bad idea for nearly everybody to get drunk, because when you get drunk, your natural inhibitions and the things that prohibit your inner nature from emerging get removed. Alcohol releases inhibitions, right? Inhibiting what? My wonderful good nature? Do I get drunk and

become generous and kind and give away all my money and go around helping little old ladies across the street? Drunks are famous for this, aren't they? We have a hard time down in the Bowery with the winos and the people who get their inhibitions knocked out just being too kind and too nice to everybody.

What is at the center of all of our nature? Evil. We are conceived in iniquity. We're born in sin and we are evil.

Society spends a lot of its energy constructing channels for the rats so that we all go in the way we're supposed to go and we don't bite and devour one another. That's what law and government is. It's trying to keep people from hurting each other, right? But the liberal view is, oh no, if you can just create a good enough environment, everybody will be great.

So you remove all of the structure down in New Orleans and everybody's just nice to one another, helping one another. You have some people down there doing that, but you also have people running around with weapons, taking whatever they can, and people crying, where's the National Guard? And my point this week has been, oh yes, the president, who has no direct authority over the National Guard, that's the governors of the states, but yes, we should have sent in the National Guard at the height of the flood. Have them stand on every street corner in water up to their chin and use their magic floating jails to incarcerate all of the criminals that they find robbing and looting because their only other option is to either shoot them or handcuff them to floating debris.

What else are you going to do? I mean, honestly, it's easy to say, oh, they should have deployed the National Guard. It's not the fault of the looters. Oh, well, they can't be blamed.

I mean, look, they're under stress. So it's the National Guard's fault and it's the president's fault for not getting troops down there to control these people and protect them from each other. It's our fault.

It's somebody's fault that man is evil. And so we should have the National Guard down there standing on street corners. Of course, we don't know how many are in the gangs of thugs that are roaming, so we need maybe six National Guardsmen on each corner so they don't get outnumbered and sniped by these guys running around with AK-47s and so on.

So we'll put six of them on each street corner. Of course, we haven't figured out how we're going to relieve them after eight, 12, 16 hours of duty. Where do they sleep? How do they get there? How do they leave? What trucks do we have that are going to wade through nine feet of water and pick these guys up and bring them back? Where's their chow? And, of course, they're going to come automatically with truckloads of food and water that have magically materialized in the middle of a disaster area so that they can

freely distribute it.

They have, in my mind, flying carpets so that when they find people on roofs, they can just extract them and take them out. I mean, when you hear people say inane things like, why didn't the President send in troops on the first day? These people have no concept of what it means to deploy troops, of the logistical train that is required to support them, or anything else. So, when you look at the horsemen here, these first four horsemen are representative of what takes place in the last seven years of the age of Israel.

And for a time, this guy on the white horse achieves a false sort of peace. But his problem is the same problem that Satan has had since the beginning. Man will not be good just because you want him to or just because you create a peaceful environment.

Man is inherently evil. The only solution to internal, inherent evil is God's solution. There is no other solution.

There is no other way to fix it. It has been tried. Human history is a record of man trying to fix his internal problems and failing.

The ultimate and final expression of this is going to be the kingdom of the Antichrist, the revived Roman Empire. And people are going to say, you see, I told you it could be done. Look, we've got peace and we've got safety.

That's what we were after. And it's going to last a short time. It is achieved by Satanic means.

It's achieved by demonic means. It is achieved by eliminating opposition or having no opposition because the Christians have exited stage up. And so there is a wonderful initial spirit of cooperation, but it doesn't last because the greed and the defilement and the inherent nastiness of man is going to assert itself and pretty soon they're going to look for a scapegoat.

Who can we blame for losing the peace in our revived Roman Empire, in our pseudo-millennial kingdom? Who did Hitler blame? The Jews. Who is the Antichrist going to blame? The Jews. Find somebody to hang.

It's not my fault. It's not our fault. It's not the inherent nature of things.

It's somebody's fault. It's the Jews. They've been the problem for centuries.

And so halfway through, the Antichrist is going to break the covenant of peace that has allowed the Jews to live in their homeland, to operate their temple, to perform their sacrifices. He's going to break the covenant of peace. It's all in Daniel.

That's what Jesus is talking about because at the point that that covenant is broken with

God's people, and remember, it does not pertain in the church age, but it does pertain in the age of Israel. If you attack Israel, you're attacking God. And God takes it personally.

We just saw this in Psalm 83 last week. To attack the people of God is to attack God Himself. And when the Antichrist and his cohorts go after Israel, God is going to start busting those seals.

And these things are going to start taking place. And He's going to say, alright, you're going to live with the consequences of your decisions. And so the red horse and the horseman with the sword is going to come out.

And what's going to happen? Initially there's going to be a great period of deception. That's what Jesus said comes first. That's the first three and a half years.

Followed by, and by the way, there's going to be a sort of pseudo religion. I'll never forget when I was listening to Radio Havana Cuba on my short wave when I was a teenager. And I thought, these commies, they're just putting out all this false view of their ideal world.

And so I wrote a letter to Radio Havana Cuba and I said, so in your totalitarian communist state there, what opportunities do people have to go to church? Well, they actually answered me like eight months later. And they said, well, your question was answered on the air. I missed it on the air.

But they sent me a letter giving what the answer was and the text that had been read over the short wave radio. And they described how communism is friendly toward churches and friendly toward religion. And these lies about making it sound like, oh, it's a utopia for religious faith.

And it isn't at all. Same thing is going to happen in this seven year period. There is going to be a token recognition of religion, but it's going to be false.

They will say, oh yes, Jesus is the Christ. He hasn't come back yet. I don't know what all they're going to say, but they'll acknowledge it.

And this is going to take the fuse out of the bomb for people who might otherwise say, well, now wait a minute. Then there will be wars and rumors of wars. All these things must come to pass.

A nation will rise against a nation. A kingdom against a kingdom. There's going to be this great convergence.

There will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Seal one, seal two, seal three, seal four.

The third horse, remember the color of it? You've got white, you've got red, you've got

black. That's pestilence, famine. Uncontrollable.

They're going to think they've got diseases out of the way and everybody's inoculated and the World Health Organization has got everything under control. And then they're going to have outbreaks of something like AIDS or mutant strains of malaria or whatever else is going around. West Nile, I don't know what it might be, but they're going to have these diseases that break out.

And they're not going to be able to fix it because people are going to be antibiotic tolerant and so forth. Pestilence. And earthquakes in various places.

These are just the beginning of sorrows. So, the warfare that you find mentioned here is echoed in Revelation 6, 3 and 4. The fiery red horse. He takes peace from the earth and people kill one another and there's given to him this great sword.

Famine, that's mentioned here in verse 7 of Matthew 24, is in the next two verses of Revelation 6. Revelation 6, 5 and 6, he opens the third seal. Black horse. A pair of scales in his hand.

A quart of wheat for a denarius. Three quarts of barley for a denarius. Do not harm the oil and the wine.

A quart of wheat is about enough to make one meal for one person in the ancient world. That's about how much it takes to make one full piece of bread and that's about enough for a complete meal. If you don't have anything else to go with it, you can eat that piece of bread.

That'll be one meal for one person. If you get three quarts of barley, that's three meals. Three very low-life, low-level meals.

This is like eating hog jowls and poke salad. You can eat it if you have to, but barley is not people food. Barley is animal food.

Do you go down to the store and say, could you show me the aisle where the barley is? I want to make a gourmet dish. People don't eat barley. But you can get three quarts of barley for that day's wage.

You work all day long and you get enough money for how many meals? One good meal and three lousy meals. What about your family? What about putting something by? What about money for anything else? Your entire day's wage has been used up just subsisting food-wise. So, when it says do not harm the oil and wine, the word for harm here, I looked it up this week, it's adikia.

It's the verb form of adikia. Dikaio is the word for righteousness. Adikaio, adikia is unrighteousness.

And this is the verb form of adikia. And so you say, well, do not be unrighteous to the oil and wine. What does it mean? Well, if you treat something fairly and rightly, you honor it, you protect it, you do good things for it.

If you treat it unfairly, you harm it, you do it damage, you spoil it. Spoil is probably the best. It's going to be used here when the angels hold back the winds.

As I say, wait before you harm the earth, let us seal these people. We're going to see this word harm in Revelation chapter 9 and several other places coming up, looking at disasters that come upon the earth. So, don't spoil the earth, don't spoil the vegetation until something else is in place.

So, when it says, the guy with the scales riding the horse, the black horse, says a quart of wheat for Daenerys, three quarts of barley for Daenerys. Your entire day's wage doesn't cover what you need to feed yourself and your family, much less cover any other expenses. So, people are going to starve.

They're going to be malnutrition and disease and all the rest of it. And you've got oil and wine that's stored, but you're not going to break into it. You're not going to spoil it.

You're not going to open it and distribute it to these poor people that don't even have enough money for flour. They're saying, we've got these stockpiles. It would be like if the president said, well, we're not going to touch the strategic oil reserve in this time of no refining and so on.

Or, we're not going to drill the Alaskan oil fields. We're going to leave it pristine. We're not going to spoil it.

We're not going to break into it and touch it. So, we'll sell you a quart of wheat. We'll sell you three quarts of barley, but we're not going to spoil the oil and the wine.

We're holding that back. This is the situation that used to prevail in the USSR, where you had the people living in little mansions and chalets and things up in the mountains, and then you've got the other people waiting in line for bread and cheese. And there's the haves and the have-nots.

That's what's going to prevail. The guy with the scale will mete out just barely enough to these low-life, poor people. While they've got the oil and the wine safely socked away, we're not going to spoil it by giving it to these starving masses.

So, that's the idea of famine. Then you have death. In Matthew 24, 7-9, where the pestilences and earthquakes that are killing people, people are delivered up to tribulation and killed, hated by all nations.

This is in Revelation 6, 7, and 8. It talks about the fourth seal and the fourth living

creature, the green horse, remember? The pale horse. But it's chloros. It's like chlorophyll.

It's the word for green. It's a greenish horse. And this, of course, is the color of a corpse that you're running out of ice, so to speak.

The name of him who sat on it was Death. Hades followed with him. Power was given to him over a fourth of the earth to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.

People have been surviving a lot of these pestilences, but they die in the aftermath. And again, you're starting to see real concerns in southern United States about cholera, about the gross... I heard a guy say this morning that if anybody has worn clothes and the water down there has gotten in those clothes, the best thing they can do is burn the clothes because there is ten times the level of germs and bad things in that water that's enough to kill you. If a beach had water that was one-tenth as polluted as that water, the federal government would close the beach.

It's ten times worse. And they are very concerned. That's why they're trying to get these goofball people out of there who insist on staying.

They think they're being brave and, you know, I'm an American, I'm going to keep my stuff. Well, you're going to get down there and create an epidemic. And all of your bravery and goodwill is going to wind up being a typhoid Mary kind of thing.

So, same thing, when you get to the fourth seal, a lot of people have been coping and surviving pestilences and warfare and one thing and another, but the aftermath is going to get them. And one quarter, what's the current population of the earth? 2.6 billion. So you figure, 6 billion, I was thinking it was like 6, 6.5 billion, something like that.

So, 20% of that is 1.2 billion people. Where do you bury 1.2 billion people? If you think New Orleans is bad, you think what the earth is going to be like when one fourth of the entire earth's population is laying out there rotting in the sun. Thank the good Lord, we are not going to be here for those days.

But that is Matthew 24, 7-9, linked to Revelation 6, 7 and 8. Jesus also talks in verses 9 and 10, He says in Matthew 24, they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. This is the same thing you find in Revelation chapter 6 when it says that you have the martyrdom under the fifth seal. The souls of those who have been slain for the word of God under the altar, slain for the word of God.

Martyred. You're not following the program here. You're the cause of the problem.

We thought we got rid of all you religious types when the big disappearance happened,

and here's some more of them. Let's eradicate them. Everything was going great until you people reemerged.

They cry with a loud voice saying, O Lord, holy and true, how long until you judge the earth and avenge our blood? And Jesus said, they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. So there's a direct correlation there between Matthew 24, 9 and 10 and Revelation 6, 9 and 10 and 11. Jesus says later on in Matthew 24, skip down.

He talks about the abomination of desolation, let those who are in the house stop, not go down and take anything out, etc. etc. But you get down to verse 29.

Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light. The stars will fall from heaven and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And this corresponds directly to Revelation 6, 12-14, the sixth seal, great earthquake, the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, the moon became like blood, the stars of heaven fell to earth as a fig tree drops its untimely figs, shaken by a mighty wind, the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.

Now what does this sound like to you? If you had to try to guess at some physical cause for this level of disruption to the planet, what would you guess? I say one of three things has happened. There is either an extraterrestrial impact like the Wormwood impact. There has been a nuclear exchange of some sort which has set off, you know, they've done a lot of work on nuclear weapons since the last time they did much testing.

And what happens if you detonate two or three in the same vicinity? What kind of reaction do you set off? What sort of sympathetic vibrations can you create? It could be some sort of nuclear thing. It could also be a natural occurrence of a volcanic and fault line nature. There have been many predictions that there could be, you know, this huge pyroclastic event in Yellowstone or the entire west coast slipping off into the sea or whatever.

Any one of those three things could account for a global disruption of this magnitude where the powers of the heavens are shaken and something is going to obscure the sky. Obviously the sun is going to still be up there. The moon is still going to be up there but they will be virtually invisible from the surface of the earth.

Sort of like Genesis chapter 1. God said, let there be light. The fog dissipates. The cloud cover goes away so that there is enough light to strike the surface of the earth.

Well, that's going to be reversed. The moon is going to be like blood. The sun is black as sackcloth of hair.

The sky recedes like a scroll. Grim, grim times. I think all of us can look at what some

people are going through in recent events down south there and be thankful that our challenges are not well, my house is a pile of rotting lumber in a puddle of sewage and that's everything I've got.

My job is gone. The business that gave me my job is gone. The state where my job and house and business and life and everything was located is uninhabitable for the foreseeable future.

I'll take my problems and let them keep theirs. I wouldn't want to trade places. It's a horrible thing.

And I'm grateful to God that He has not chosen to give me that particular set of challenges. I think I'm in a much more blessed place at the moment than a lot of those folks are. And in the same way you look to the future and you look at this time and you think why would God bring about or allow this level of misery and destruction and death, suffering on the earth? Something pretty significant has to be at stake.

This is unlike anything since the flood, the time of Jacob's trouble. But this is divine judgment. And this is what Jesus talks about at the end of Matthew 24.32. He says, learn the parable of the fig tree.

When its branches already become tender and put forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. What is the fig tree? The fig tree is the nation of Israel. Has the fig tree become tender and put forth its leaves? We've had a nation there now for 60 years, virtually, 57 years.

There's been a nation over there, right? It has grown. It grew in 1967. It grew in 1973.

They're giving away a little bit of stuff now, but it's a nation. Learn a parable from the fig tree. When the branch is tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near.

You also, when you see all these things, know that it is near at the doors. The only manifestation of the nation of Israel that counts in terms of this prophecy is the manifestation of Israel that exists in this last seven years. And the budding and the branching and the leafing that he's talking about here is that which is manifest in the first three and a half years.

The Antichrist allows Israel its land and its space and a temple on the Temple Mount. And they have it and they use it for three and a half years. Then in the midst of the week, sacrifice and offering are cut off.

And this angers the Lord God and is a summation and a distillation and an expression of everything that has happened in human history. It has ever been the seed of the woman versus the seed of the serpent. And this is the latest and final manifestation in human history until you get to the end of the millennium.

So, when you see these things, know that it is near at the doors. What is near and at the doors? The resolution. The wiping out of the work of Satan.

The imprisoning of Satan in the pit. The implementation of the millennial kingdom. The fulfillment of God's Old Testament promises to Israel is near and at the door.

Somebody's trying to chop down the tender fig tree and God says, that's it. This generation will by no means pass away until all these things take place. I've mentioned before what I think He's talking about when He says this generation.

Jesus was 33 years old when He spoke these words. Another seven years. If you subtract out the church age, how old will Jesus be when He assumes the throne of His father David? Forty.

What's the biblical generation? Forty. What generation is going to see the beginning of the reign of Antichrist and is going to see the beginning of the reign of the Christ? It's the same generation. That generation will not pass away, time-wise, until all these things will be fulfilled.

It's all going to take place at the end of that generation. And when Jesus is talking to the disciples and He says, you, it is as though He expects them to be the ones that are going to go through. Why? Because from His point of view, you stop that clock and start it again 2,000 years later, and virtually no time has passed.

It's essentially the same generation. That's my view. So, Jesus is not using symbolic language in Matthew 24, is He? He's speaking pretty plainly.

An earthquake is an earthquake. A famine is a famine. The darkening of the heavenly bodies is the darkening of the heavenly bodies.

We do have some symbolism in Revelation, and yet we also have some literal description. We have a horseman. Do you think there's going to be an actual sort of movie in the sky with a red horse and a guy waving a sword? Seriously doubt it.

This is a symbol, but it means this is going to be the phase. This is going to be the time of warfare. Black horse comes out.

This is going to be the time of pestilence, plague, famine, and death. Pale horse comes out. Green horse.

This is going to be the time of 25% of the earth's population pushing up daisies, or not even pushing up daisies, not even being under the ground to push up daisies. There won't be enough people to bury the dead. It's just going to be an awful, awful time.

But this gives us a little bit of an example of how to understand the text of Revelation, because some things are clearly symbolic, but when it starts talking about conditions

and its causes and effects, those are fairly literal. So, returning now to Revelation 6, and getting to that sixth seal toward the end of that chapter, people, no matter who they are, the kings of the earth in verse 15, 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 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. I suspect that these people are not going to understand that this is the wrath of him who sits on the throne and the wrath of the Lamb.

What are they going to be saying? Find me a bomb shelter. Where is that place they made for the president that's under 25 feet of solid rock? Where is that abandoned missile silo we had out there in the cornfield in Iowa? Let's see if we can get down in that thing and get away from the surface of the earth. The surface of the earth is going to become virtually uninhabitable and people are going to be crying out for a way to get under the earth, to get into a cave or a hole in the ground to hide from what John describes as the wrath of the Lamb and the face of him who sits on the throne.

They may or may not make this connection. I suspect they won't. But that's what it's called in this symbolic description.

For the great day of his wrath has come and who is able to stand? Well, this brings us to chapter 7 and we say, well, we know there are seven seals. That's six of them. Where's the seventh seal? After these things, four angels standing at the four corners of the earth holding the four winds of the earth that the winds should not blow on the earth, on the sea or on any tree.

Now, this is not a good thing. Look at any weather map. Circulation is good.

The jet stream is good. We need, we want movement of the earth's atmosphere. Something has occurred that has disturbed the natural balance.

This is worse than El Nino or La Nina. It's worse than, oh, the jet stream went up into Canada or swooped down into Mexico. It's gone.

I think this is an actual interruption of the jet stream proper, which royally screws up the climate on earth. I mean, imagine. What about convection? What about evaporation? What about balanced rainfall and all of the things that we've come to take for granted on the planet? Well, all of this conflagration in the atmosphere and so on has messed up the, I mean, you know, global warming and the ozone layer and all that is, nobody's going to be talking about that.

They're going to be saying, you know, this two and a half mile thick cloud of dust that we've got in the air, now there's no wind. Now there's no evaporation. Now we have no temperature control.

Now we've got runaway greenhouse. We've got a quarter of the earth's population has died and there's no way to cope with it. The angels are holding back the four winds of the earth.

What does this mean? God is behind this destruction. He either causes it or allows it, one or the other. But it is pictured as the angels holding back, which tells me this is God taking an active role in totally changing the physics of the climate of earth.

Another angel ascends from the east having the seal of the living God. He cries with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was granted to harm Adikia, the earth and the sea, saying, do not Adikia, the earth, the sea or the trees until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads. To me, this seems a little late.

Why did these people get a seal before the horsemen, before the fifth seal, before the sixth seal, before the wind stopped? But he says, don't do any more harm until we seal these. What is this all about? Well, we're going to pause and take our break. When we come back, we're going to find out the details of these who received the seal in their forehead.