

## “THE GREAT DAY OF THEIR WRATH”:

- **ONE OF THE CENTRAL PROPHETIC THEMES IN SCRIPTURE IS THE COMING OF THE FINAL DAY OF GOD’S WRATH KNOWN AS THE DAY OF THE LORD.** While it is true that “God is angry with the wicked every day” (Ps. 7:11 NKJV), the Day of the Lord is an expression used to describe periods when God specially intervenes in human history for judgment. The phrase “Day of the Lord” appears nineteen times in the Old Testament and four times in the New. It is a unique time when God’s power and holiness are unveiled, bringing terror and death to His enemies. The prophets describe the Day of the Lord as “destruction from the Almighty” (Isa. 13:6; Joel 1:15), a time of “fury and burning anger” (Isa. 13:9), a “time of doom” (Ezek. 30:3), “great and very awesome” (Joel 2:11), and “darkness and not light” (Amos 5:18; cf. v. 20). [MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1999). Revelation 1–11 (pp. 199–200). Chicago: Moody Press.]
- Like the first five seals, the sixth seal (which introduces the arrival of the Day of the Lord, calling it “the great day of ... wrath”; 6:17) is associated with a force. That force is fear, a feeling which is among the most powerful of human emotions, capable of seizing control of the mind and will. Fear can produce everything from cowardice to heroism, strength to weakness, aggression to passivity, reason to confusion, clear think-

ing to total panic. Fear can strengthen the heart and make it beat faster or stop it dead. [Ibid.]

- People fear all kinds of things, but rarely what they ought to fear most. In Luke 12:5 Jesus said, “I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!” The writer of Hebrews adds “For we know Him who said, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.’ And again, ‘The Lord will judge His people.’ It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10:30–31). But instead of fearing Him, most people either view God as some sort of benign grandfather, or deny His existence altogether. One day, however, people will have a consuming, debilitating, uncontrollable fear of the judgments of the living God. Describing that coming day, Jesus spoke in Luke 21:26 of “men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world.” “Fainting” is from *apopsucho*, which literally means “to stop breathing,” or “to expire.” When the Day of the Lord comes, sinners will be so terrified that some will faint and others will drop dead. The sixth seal reveals that the ones who are left will be so terrified that they will cry for the mountains and rocks to hide them from the fury of God’s devastating wrath. [Ibid.]
- First, there was a great earthquake.

There have been many earthquakes in recorded history and there will be more during the first half of the Tribulation (Matt. 24:7). But the cataclysmic event John saw in this seal is to be far more powerful and devastating than any previous earthquake. In fact, this one will shake more than just the earth (6:13–14). *Seismos* (earthquake) literally means “a shaking.” In Matthew 8:24 it describes a great storm on the Sea of Galilee, and the Septuagint uses it in Joel 2:10 to describe the heavens trembling. [Ibid.]

- Not only will this be the most powerful earthquake the world has ever seen, but it will also come at a time of unprecedented troubles. The people who experience this earthquake will have survived worldwide war, devastating famine, and widespread epidemics of deadly diseases. The removal of the restrainer, the Holy Spirit, the divine One who has held back Satan and Antichrist until God’s appointed season (2 Thess. 2:6–8), will allow the world to plunge headlong into immorality, vice, wickedness, and godlessness. [Ibid.]
- Stars falling ... This is most likely a reference to asteroid or meteor showers bombarding the earth. There has been much speculation among scientists recently about the effects of a large asteroid striking the earth. Modern experts believe that the impacts of asteroids, comets, and meteors striking the earth

would be devastating and cause unprecedented destruction. [Ibid.]

- **SCIENTIST DR. HENRY M. MORRIS EXPLAINS WHAT COULD CAUSE THAT PHENOMENON:** The great earthquake described here ... for the first time in history is worldwide in scope. 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 upon 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 breakup of the fountains of the great deep. In any case, the vast worldwide network of unstable earthquake belts around the world suddenly will begin to slip and fracture on a global basis and a gigantic earthquake will ensue. This is evidently, and 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. (The Revelation Record [Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 1983], 121)