

Staying Sane When All Hell Breaks Loose

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[0:00] Well, good morning again. This is 45 years ago.

! This home, I was an altar boy for a good number of years, and the idea of going to a different church was something that was quite radical for us.

We went to Mass every Sunday, didn't miss. And the first time that we went to a church like this one, we went to Mass on Saturday night just to make sure.

And then we went to that church, and either that Sunday or the next Sunday, this is where my memory begins to fail me a little bit. My dad, who had been a Christian about that time, probably about a year, and I was brand new.

For me, this was, I had not yet been baptized. I was very fresh. But that Sunday, we went to see a movie right after church.

[1:30] Because my dad was fascinated with the end times and revelation and had read several books on the issue and listened to broadcasts and so forth and teaching.

And we decided to go see *This Beauty*, starring Sam Neill. So there was my father and my mother and myself and my older sister still dressed in our Sunday best.

Sunday best for us was suit and tie and dresses and sitting in the movie theater watching this. I don't know if any of you have seen the *Omen* trilogy.

This was obviously the third in the trilogy and quite fascinating. And I learned pretty quickly that the theology, surprise, surprise, Hollywood, didn't get it quite right.

By the way, Sam Neill, early role for him, plays a very good Antichrist. So that's the role that he plays.

[2:54] You can see that face. That's just lovely. So, yeah. And so you can see why I have kind of dedicated at least a portion of my life to studying this subject and why I wrote the book that I wrote and all of that kind of stuff and why there is interest in that for me.

Some of it to correct some of my early leanings in this area and some of it just because of the fascination of it. And it is a fascinating subject.

Matter of fact, there have been multiple movies made about the apocalypse, about the end times, the end of the world.

The first one was 1916, starring Emma Thompson, called *The End of the World*. I guess they're looking at what is coming and it's not good.

And there have been multiple, a multitude of movies that have been made down through the years, all kinds of different ones, different angles, different reasons why the world was coming to an end.

[4:04] Some of you may have seen some of these movies. Some of them have a romantic bent to them, like *WALL-E*, *Seeking a Friend for the End of the World*, *Apocalypse Love Story*.

I guess you can take anything and make it a romantic movie. Comedies have been made about it. *This is the End*, *Apocalypse Clown*.

Okay. *The World's End*. I haven't seen any of those. Some have been focused on climate change. And I say that with somewhat of a grin on my face when I do that, but *The End of the World*, *Day After Tomorrow*.

Number of them on that particular subject. Some of them involve zombies. I've looked in my Bible. I don't see zombies anywhere, but people love zombies and the end of the world kind of stuff.

And so they're pretty popular. And of course, you have those that were made for religious purposes. And some of you might remember *A Thief in the Night* from, what is that, early to mid-70s.

[5:15] Anybody remember *A Thief in the Night*? Yeah. I got a few folks that, yeah, love that, love that stuff. Left behind a whole book series and a movie.

All kinds of stuff. But yeah. And there's been so many made that each decade has seen basically a doubling in the amount of apocalyptic movies that have been produced and put out there. And so it is a growing industry and a growing fascination. Many people in our country are very interested in the end times and almost to the point where they believe something cataclysmic is going to happen in their lifetime.

They may not attribute it to the end times from a biblical perspective or prophecy, but they think that there may be something having to do with the collapse of the economy or some sort of outbreak or plague that might happen.

Of course, that was a fascination about six years ago. Some of you remember. So all kinds of different reasons why people think, you know, another world war and, you know, all kinds of things having to do with that.

[6:31] And, in fact, we're so fascinated with this that there are companies out there, and I'm going to highlight one of them, that they're selling bomb shelters or actually just apocalyptic shelters.

And some of them are shelters that you can buy and put in your own property and have like a year's worth of provisions available to you.

And in case there's a nuclear holocaust or some sort of plague that happens, you can go into your base or bunker and do that. But this is actually shelters that are positioned in different parts of the country.

I don't know if you can see it, but the one at the top left is Vivos X Point. These are individual shelters and groupings in South Dakota where you can invest and buy a shelter.

And then if you think the end of the world is coming, you just hightail it to South Dakota and get in your bunker and you're all set. Then there's one in Indiana, Vivos Indiana.

[7:33] There's one of these in Central Europe as well. And all kinds of different things that they sell and all the different reasons why you might need one. Built to withstand virtually every threat.

Terrorism, electromagnetic pulses, killer comets or asteroids, super volcanoes, earthquake, whatever it is. Don't be left out.

Get yourself a bunker. Am I a good salesman? I hope not. I hope not. I hope we can tell. And actually, if you live on the West Coast, and thankfully we don't, in California, Oregon, and the state of Washington, you can have as an app on your phone this thing.

Actually, it's co-sponsored by the government. Called the Shake Alert. Yeah. I highlighted, and I don't know if you could read it. I'm going to try to read it for you. It detects significant earthquakes quickly enough so that alerts can be delivered to people and automated systems potentially seconds before strong shaking begins.

You would have literally seconds warning to get into your bunker. I don't know if you can get to South Dakota fast enough to do that, but, you know, there you go.

[8:54] All kinds of reasons why people are doing this. It's interesting that in God's great patience for humanity, he has also created an early warning system for cataclysmic events that are coming for us.

But, again, in his patients, it's not seconds that it will take. It's actually years, decades. Now it's centuries. It's 2,000 years old, this early warning system.

And it's contained in one of these, and you have either one of these in your lap or on your phone. And it's actually right there. And it's an early warning system that will get you to safety, not in a bunker, but in a person, a person of Jesus Christ.

And that's what matters, is that's where our safety, that's where our security is found. It is fascinating.

We're going to be delving into, for the next few weeks, this passage of Scripture in Luke 21 that deals with prophecy. It's a parallel passage. It's found also in the Gospel of Mark and also in Matthew.

[10:16] And we're going to start by looking at actually Mark's Gospel first, Mark 13, verse 1. And as Jesus and his disciples were leaving the temple area, remember, he's just confronted and been confronted by some of the Pharisees and Sadducees and Herodians and questioned.

And they've failed miserably when they questioned Jesus. And then he's noticed the widow giving her two copper coins at the offering. And now they're leaving.

And as they're leaving and going outside of the city and up to what is called the Mount of Olives, which would then overlook the whole temple area in the city of Jerusalem, a fantastic view from

there.

His disciples make note of the magnificence of this temple. Jesus, as he was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, Look, teacher, what massive stones, what magnificent buildings. And actually, in the original, it's just look at these stones. Look at these massive, look at these, look at the buildings. It is incredible.

[11:33] And then in our passage in Luke chapter 21, verse 5, while some were speaking of the temple and how it was adorned with noble stones and offerings.

This temple was so magnificent that it was in many areas layered with gold, real gold, not just paint, gold. And what wasn't covered with gold was white stone.

And it was fantastic. If you were outside of the city, looking back at Jerusalem at sunrise, the brilliance of that scene would have almost blinded you.

It would be like looking into the sun, how the sun would shine on the buildings and the brightness and the gold and the white and the combination of it all. The offerings had to do with how people in Israel would donate these fantastic jewels and gems.

And they were actually installed onto the doorways. And the decor was made up of these magnificent things. We have no way to really imagine someone has put together a kind of an example of what this might have looked like.

[12:50] This is Herod's temple. This is after the second temple. The first Solomon's temple had been destroyed by Babylon. The second temple built by Zerubbabel and Ezra had been much smaller.

But then Herod, King Herod came in starting around 20 BC and began to make it much bigger and much more ornate. And even while we see Jesus at this time in history, they're still renovating it. And they will continue to renovate this structure and all of these buildings all the way up until about 53 AD, about seven years before.

Actually, 63 AD, excuse me. About seven years before Rome comes in and destroys it. So it's only got seven years after it's completed. It's completely leveled and brought to the ground, which, of course, Jesus is going to talk to us about.

So this would have been a view from across the valley looking at the temple and the magnificence of this temple. So the disciples are making note of just how wonderful this temple is.

[14:04] And it's amazing. It's stunning to see what Jesus said in response to this. He said, As for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another.

Every one of them will be thrown down. These are massive stones. Some of the stones are as big as railroad cars. There was a quarry about two miles away.

And they would bring these stones in by oxen, huge, massive trains of oxen that would tow these stones into Jerusalem where the temple was at.

And would build these incredible structures. And Jesus is saying that all of this is going to be leveled to the ground.

It's going to be destroyed completely. And that would have been certainly an amazing statement to his disciples from their perspective and from Herod's perspective.

[15:09] When he built this temple, when he's adding on and building to this structure, he is under the assumption that this temple will outlast the pyramids in Egypt.

And he had every right to believe. And they all had every right to believe that this structure would outlast everything. It was a magnificent structure. And so they are curious.

Teacher, they asked, when will these things happen? When Jerusalem and the temple will be destroyed? What will be the sign that they are about to take place? In Matthew 24, this is the nature of the question there.

As he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. They said, tell us, when will this happen? And they added some extra to this.

What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age? And so, you know, they've heard, okay, Jesus is coming again. They don't understand that.

[16:07] And yet, okay, what's going to happen here? When is all of this going to come about? Because this doesn't seem like you're setting up the kingdom now. This is not, hey, the kingdom is about to start here in a few days.

This is really alarming news to them that all of this temple would be taken down, would be destroyed and utterly leveled.

And so what we have next is what's known as the Olivet Discourse. And it's just a sermon that he preaches to a select few of his disciples that tells us, tells them and tells us what's coming next. And here Jesus teaches prophecy. So this is the section in the Gospels, in the three Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, where we have prophecy.

And much like prophecy that we have in the Old Testament and also in the book of Revelation, there's some similarities to that prophecy, but there are also some differences as well.

[17:13] And so Jesus is answering a very specific question of his disciples about when will this happen and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?

And so Jesus sets about to answer that question. But before we delve into that, I want us to understand prophecy in the Gospels and what makes it unique.

And here is what makes prophecy in the Gospels unique. This idea. As we travel through these portions of prophecy in the Gospels, you will notice a sense of now, but not yet.

You see it here. You see it in Matthew 24. You see it in Mark chapter 13. This idea of these events that Jesus begins to describe.

Events that we would say, well, we have some of these events happening now. But that's not what Jesus is describing. He's describing events as they will happen during the tribulation.

[18:13] But there's a sense of, well, we see some of it now. But what we see now are just minor little things compared to what we're going to see or what we would see during the tribulation.

And as we make our way through this text, you'll begin to see the difference between the two. It's the sense of now, but not yet. And so Matthew 24, we'll start here.

Jesus answered them, see that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name saying, I am the Christ. And they will lead many astray. And you might say, well, we have false teachers today.

We have false Christs today. And certainly we've been warned of that. People who might declare things that they are the Christ or, you know, come follow me and they're false teachers.

But it will be nothing like what will happen during the tribulation. Those events will be marked by people after people who will be false teachers. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars.

[19:20] And again, I would ask, do we have those today? Absolutely. Matter of fact, if you look down through all of human history, there's been precious few times where there hasn't been a war somewhere on the planet.

And yet, what we see in wars happening today is nothing like what we will see during the tribulation, when during the tribulation there will be war on the whole planet.

Everywhere there is people, there will be war during that time. And so there's a sense of now, but not yet. It hasn't happened yet.

It's still yet to come. For nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. We've seen famines and earthquakes before.

But again, nothing like what we will see during the tribulation. We have in recorded history a certain number of earthquakes that measure 8.5 or higher on the Richter scale.

[20:27] Only like nine of those in recorded history in terms of recording of earthquakes. But what we will see in terms of earthquakes during the tribulation will make those look little minor events.

It will be massive in comparison. And so it's quite different. And all of these are but the beginning of birth pains.

And so when we talk about birth pains, I've got to ask the ladies because I don't have any experience. Apparently there's some debate over whether someone like me could have a baby or not.

Let me assure you, I've never had one. I don't think I ever will. I think I'm pretty safe in saying somebody with male parts are not ever going to have a baby. Okay.

But ladies, giving birth. How do you like that? Does it have pain? Is there pain involved in giving birth? Absolutely. It is.

[21:32] And I trust your testimony in that area. What's interesting is that these birth pains are things that happen for a period of time.

They happen over time. And yet you know when the end is coming. You know, ladies, when you're pregnant and you begin to experience birth pains or labor pains even, you know there is an end in mind.

And it's not going to be years down the road. Okay. So when it talks about birth pains, it talks about something that you know is coming. And during the tribulation, you will know exactly how long you have.

All you have to do is open up the scriptures during the tribulation and you'll know that it's an event that lasts about seven years. And so you will know when the end date is. You won't know the hour. You won't know the minute.

You won't know on any given night. But you'll know that it's going to be seven years period of time that the tribulation will last. And all of these events that happened during the tribulation are going to be birth pains pointing to the ultimate birth pain, the ultimate point of labor, that moment when Jesus comes back again.

[22:47] Now, it's interesting that the Apostle Paul also writes about birth pains in 1 Thessalonians 5. What we have to understand is that in the Gospels, in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, what Jesus is teaching us in a prophetic way has nothing to do with us as the church.

The church is not in view at all in any of these prophecies, nor is what is known as the rapture. The rapture is meant for the church.

And so if Jesus is not addressing the church in this text, he's not addressing the rapture at all in this text as well. And so Paul now, in 1 Thessalonians 4, does address the church and addresses the subject of the rapture, what's known as the rapture.

It's actually mentioned at the end of chapter 4 of 1 Thessalonians. But as we come into chapter 5, Paul switches gears and begins to talk about events during the tribulation.

Church has been raptured. He talks about us. And this is how we know how Paul goes from one subject to the other. And this is how we know how Paul goes from one subject to the church.

[24:15] And this is how we know how Paul goes from one subject to the church. And this is how we know how Paul goes from one subject to the church. To you, brethren. To you, church. You have no need concerning the times and the seasons, brothers. You have no need for any of this to be written to you when it comes to when even the rapture happens.

We're not today in the church age. We are not looking for signs. The next thing that will happen on a prophetic calendar is the rapture of the church.

And so we're not looking to the news. We're not looking to the skies in that sense other than to see that Jesus is going to come for his bride. John chapter 14.

Jesus comes for his bride. That's the next event that we're looking to have happen is the rapture of the church. And we will be taken out and away from this earth to the Father's house.

And from there, from that front row seat, if you will, we'll be able to... I don't know if the events of the tribulation taking place or if we'll be too busy worshipping or the judgment seat of Christ will take place at that point as well.

[25:27] Also for just the church. So you have no need of anything for this to be written to you. And he goes on to say this. For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord...

The day of the Lord is Old Testament language directed at Israel. And it's... The day of the Lord is specific language referring to the second coming of Jesus.

The event that happens at the end of the tribulation when Jesus actually comes and sets his feet down in Jerusalem. So the day of the Lord, he says, you're fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

In other words, you don't know at what hour the thief is coming, but you know when he's coming. But you don't know when it will happen. So the day of the Lord will come.

And he says, for while people are saying there is peace and security, and then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman.

[26:27] And then look at what he says. And they, them, will not escape. Do you notice the change in language?

He's talking about, in chapter 4, he's talking about us, the church being raptured. He's talking about you, the audience that he's addressing in Thessalonica.

You, I don't have any need to write to you about seasons and times and so forth. But for those during the tribulation, when the second coming of Christ happens, they, those people who are going through the tribulation, they will have to pay attention.

And they will not escape. So understand when we're looking at the difference in prophetic statements, who is being addressed and what's the question being answered?

And so the question that Jesus is answering is dealing specifically with Israel and Jesus fulfilling his promise to Israel.

[27:37] Jesus is coming back. And he will deal with Israel during the time of the tribulation. Now, when you, when you look all of that, at all of this, and as we look in, in Luke chapter 21, again, there are applications to be gleaned for us from these prophecies in the here and now.

Okay. Yes, we will teach these, even though we as a church won't have to go through the tribulation, we will still teach these because there's application for us. Just to know that, that God is in control, that God has this handled, that he is the one who is orchestrating events and so forth. But these prophecies will not find their final fulfillment until the tribulation occurs and the Lord returns in that order. And so be aware of, of what happens in this text and the order in which it happens.

And so now what we're going to have here in Luke chapter five, and again, in Matthew 24 and Mark 13 is a description. It's Jesus's description of the events of the tribulation.

And so back in our text in Luke chapter 21, verse eight. And as we read through this text, again, I want you to put in your mind's eye, the idea of it's now, but not yet.

[29:08] These are things that happen now, but on a much more minor scale than what will happen during the tribulation. So now, but not yet. Okay. Keep that in mind.

And he said, see that you are not led astray for many will come in my name saying, I am he. And the time is at hand. Do not go after them. And again, we'll see false Christ.

We'll see false teachers happening in our day, but nothing like what we'll see during the tribulation. When you hear of wars and tumults, do not be terrified for these things must first take place, but the end will not be at once.

In other words, there's some time that's going to lapse between when these wars and rumors of wars and this full scale battles will take place during the tribulation.

Doesn't mean the end is quite yet. There's still more to come. And then he said to them, nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be great earthquakes, earthquakes like we haven't seen.

[30:11] The word great here is just the word mega, the Greek word mega. So mega quakes, if you will, in various places, famines and pestilences, and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.

And so when we look at this description, we see a few things here that, number one, perhaps brought on by the rising power of the Antichrist, there will be worldwide conflict.

Again, we think we've seen wars and we've even called them world wars, but they will compel in comparison to what we will see during the end times, during the tribulation.

Secondly, a plurality of mega earthquakes, which have never before been experienced, these kinds of earthquakes.

We've seen some big ones, but nothing like what's described in apocalyptic literature. Excuse me.

[31:20] Now, what we see today in terms of wars, in terms of famines, in terms of persecution, in terms of all of these things, these precursors of what is yet to come, the now but not yet.

Famine and plagues that will account for the death of one-fourth of the world's population. And you might say, well, Rich, you're being quite specific there.

One-fourth of the world's population, that's quite specific. Hang with me. Give you a reason why we're that specific here as we go along.

That's quite a few people. How populated is the earth right now? How many billions of people?

What is it, 8.5? So what's one-fourth of that? It's over 2.1 billion people.

That's if the population then is the same as it is today. That's a lot of people that will die during this time. Quite a few.

[32:25] And then this phrase, terrors and great signs from heaven. This is all apocalyptic literature. Now, the word apocalypse, does anybody know what the word apocalypse means?

It just means revelation. So the last book of our New Testament, of our Bibles, is actually titled Apocalypse. We translate that to the word revelation.

It's just a revealing. And that's what the book of Revelation is. It is just the Lord Jesus revealing to John, who then writes it down for our benefit, what's going to be happening during these end times.

And so what's interesting to note, and this is where we'll finish for today, is in Revelation chapter 6.

This passage of Scripture, both here and in Matthew 24 and Mark 13, actually parallels a portion of

Scripture, actually all of Revelation chapter 6, that we're going to follow through and see how they tie together.

They actually go together. Now, Revelation 6, these are events that are happening toward the beginning of the tribulation. Sometimes we refer to the first half of the tribulation as being somewhat peaceful time.

[33:56] That's not quite correct, because these events that we're going to be describing here in Revelation 6 are events that occur, at least to begin with, during the first part of the tribulation.

And so the tribulation is going to be quite remarkable from that perspective. Now, the other thing that we have to understand as we make our way to Revelation chapter 6 is how these different judgments in the book of Revelation come across in terms of a timeline.

Because in the book of Revelation, these judgments that God is pouring out on the earth during this time because of Israel's disobedience are judgments that the chronology of them is difficult to make sense of.

Because it doesn't happen necessarily in chronological order. You can't read the book of Revelation and view it from a chronological perspective of this is where it begins and this is where it ends.

It doesn't quite work that way. There's a couple of unique things about the book of Revelation that it's good for us to note any time we dive into the book of Revelation.

[35:16] One is that Revelation, it seems like from our earthly perspective anyway, is to be seen as if it's like in two movie screens. Like if you were to go into a movie theater and have two movie screens, one on top of the other, the top screen are going to be events in heaven and then the bottom screen are going to be events that happen on the earth.

And the book of Revelation seems to go back and forth between these two screens even though they might be happening simultaneously. Okay? So Revelation chapter 5, it's a scene in heaven. Revelation 6, it's a scene on earth and so forth. The other thing in terms of the timing of these events is that these events are kind of like what I call waves, waves of events that if you're on the beach and you see waves coming in, you'll notice that waves, particularly waves in the ocean where you see the tide coming in, when the tide is coming in, the waves approach the dry sand and then recede.

And then the wave comes back again and then recedes. And every time it comes back in, it comes back in a little bit more until you get to high tide. Do you understand how that works?

And Revelation, when you see God pouring out these wraths in three different series, you have the seal judgments, which we'll see in Revelation 6, the trumpet judgments, and then the bowl judgments.

[36:52] And these begin in the first part of the tribulation. And then it seems as you get to the end of chapter 6, it's like at the end of the tribulation, and then the wave pulls back. And then the same thing happens with the trumpet judgments.

The wave comes in and it's even more intense and it's deeper and it's stronger. And then you finally get to the bowl judgments and the tide comes all the way in and it finishes the job, if you will.

Another way of looking at it is a winding up sound. Like in Revelation 6, the seal judgments, it's like it's a... And then it backs off a bit.

And then the trumpet judgments... And then the bowl judgments... And it's, you know...

But that's kind of what we're looking at when we look at these judgments. So Revelation chapter 6, and you'll see this as we make our way through.

[38:01] Now I watched when the Lamb opened up one of the seven seals. When you think of a seal, think of a scroll, and think of a wax seal that's used to seal it.

That's why it's called a seal. It seals the scroll. The only one who's found worthy to break open the seals is Jesus. That happens in the previous chapter. And they opened up the scroll and it reveals these seven judgments.

So I opened up one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a loud voice like thunder, Come. And I looked, and behold, a white horse, and its rider had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering and to conquer.

Who is this a picture of? This is a picture of the Antichrist, okay? Who's pretending to be the Christ. That's why he's called the Antichrist, okay?

And he comes out conquering and to conquer. That's his goal. So again, we see the parallel between that and what we see in Luke 21 and Matthew 24, Mark 13, the false Christs, okay?

[39:09] That's the revelation, the introduction of the Antichrist. So are we going to see the Antichrist in our lifetime? No. We shouldn't even be looking for the Antichrist because he's not going to show up, okay?

We can have some guesses like, oh, this guy could be the Antichrist, but then, you know, the rapture has to take place. We'll be gone. It's just we're not going to see it. We're not going to know who the Antichrist is before we're gone.

Praise the Lord for that, right? We don't have to worry about that. When he opened up the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, Come, and out came another horse, this one bright red. The first one's white, this one's red.

His rider was permitted to take peace from the earth so that people should slay one another. And he was given a great sword. And so you've heard of the four horsemen of the apocalypse?

It comes from Revelation chapter 6 from this portion of Scripture. This is where we are finding ourselves here. So this is war that happens and people killing each other.

[40:10] And then the third seal. And I heard the third living creature say, Come, and I looked and behold a black horse. And this rider had a pair of scales in his hand. And so this guy is interesting.

And I heard what seemed to be a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, A quart of wheat for a denarius and three quarts of barley for a denarius and do not harm the oil and the wine. And it's just talking about economic ruin and how expensive things would be.

The idea of a quart of wheat costing a denarius in that culture would have been outrageous. We can't relate to, okay, maybe it did cost that much.

I don't know. But for them, a denarius was like three months wages for a quart of wheat. That's crazy. Okay, we couldn't relate to that. So the famine would be great.

And a fourth seal. Heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, Come, and looked and behold a pale horse. And its rider's name was Death. And Hades followed him.

[41:12] Death and hell. And they were given authority over a fourth of the earth. Where did I get the number of fourths? From right here.

And this is the parallel passage to Luke 21. And so we talk about a fourth of the population of the earth being wiped out during this time. There's another portion during one of the other judgments when a third of that population is killed.

So the amount of death, the amount of destruction is going to be so complete and so unlike anything. We can't compare it to anything that we've experienced in our time on earth before these events happen.

So a fourth of the earth to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by wild beasts of the earth. That would be an interesting way to die. And he opened up the fifth seal. I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. And so we have here in the middle of chapter 6 a little bit of a... We're seeing all these things happening on the earth on the lower screen. But now this fifth seal gives us a little glimpse back up into heaven again.

[42:31] These souls that have been martyred that are under the altar there in heaven. And they cried out with a loud voice, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?

And then each were given a white robe and told the rest a little longer until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete who were killed as they themselves had been.

And so there will be multitudes of people who put their faith in Christ during the tribulation, but then will be martyred, will be killed for their faith, will literally lose their heads for their faith in Christ.

And here they are gathered in heaven under the altar and they're crying out for justice. Oh Lord, oh Sovereign Lord, how long will it be before you go and avenge our blood?

And Jesus is saying, hold on. The number of those who will be saved and then who will be martyred and killed during the tribulation has yet to be completed.

[43:33] And when it's time, then I will come. And back on the earth, he opened the sixth seal. And I looked and behold, there was a great earthquake.

Here's one of our mega earthquakes. And the sun became black as sackcloth and the full moon became like blood. And the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale.

And so we have not seen an earthquake like this on the earth. The sky vanished up like a scroll that is being rolled up. And every mountain and island was removed from its place.

This is an earthquake the world over. This is massive. This is God shaking the whole planet. And mountains falling into the sea.

Islands being removed. Incredible destruction. And then I want you to notice what happens to the people on the planet during this time.

[44 : 35] Those who are unsaved. The kings of the earth, the great ones, and the generals, and the rich, and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free. Everyone hid themselves as if they could hide from God.

In the caves. They hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains. Calling to the mountains and the rocks, fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne.

They know who's doing it. They know that this is judgment from God. They know it's the wrath of God.

And rather than repent, they choose to hide.

Later on, Revelation 16, we'll see them curse God. They'd rather curse God than repent of their sin. And they know it's him. Hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb.

[45 : 41] They know who that is. They know it's, they're describing Jesus. For the great day of their wrath has come and who can stand?

The answer to that question is no one. By the time you get to the end of these six seals, there's another seal coming, but the seventh seal reveals the next set of judgments.

We're at the end of the tribulation. Okay? By the time you get to the end of chapter six, you're at the end of the tribulation. When Jesus is about to step out and out of heaven and into the earth and come back.

But again, this is the wave. So the wave has come in and now it's going to recede again. And then the seven trumpet judgments are going to come.

And so from a time perspective, it's kind of baffling to us, to our finite minds that can only understand time from a linear perspective.

[46 : 50] It's just time progresses from one day to the next to the next. But revelation isn't written that way. Apocalyptic literature is not written that way. And so we have these events that ramp up and then come back down.

The trumpet judgments are going to ramp up again, even more, and then come back down. And then the final, by the time you get to the bowl judgments, Jesus is right on the threshold. He's ready to walk in.

The bowl judgments ramp up and they stay ramped up for the final battle of Armageddon. So we have all of these.

This is what Jesus is describing. This is why this is a parallel passage to our passage in Luke and Matthew 24 and Mark 13.

But this takes us a little further. Jesus is only describing events of the first half of the tribulation. And so he's just in the early part of the ramping up before we get to the end of Revelation 6.

[47 : 57] We find ourselves back in Luke 21, verse 12, where Jesus is just now finished describing these events.

So he's describing the wars and the rumors of wars and the nations rising against nations and the killing and the pestilence and the plagues and the earthquakes and sun and moon and stars falling, it seems, and asteroids and all this cataclysmic stuff.

But before all this, notice the time stamp. Before all this. And what does he say next?

This is where you and I are going to practice the now but the not yet. Because that's going to come next time we meet together. We'll look at what Jesus has to say about events that will come before all this.

So if you read ahead, I'm not forbidding you to read ahead, if you read ahead, you'll see events that, these might be things that you and I will experience in the here and now, as well as during the tribulation.

[49 : 15] And so be aware of that. We've seen some of these incredible horrors of the tribulation, but these events that he's about to describe will be things that happen before all of that comes to

place.

Now I want to finish with this on your notes, and you have this there on your notes. Take heart. God is able to predict the future with incredible accuracy.

And if you know anything about Old Testament prophecy, you know the incredible accuracy of events that were predicted before the birth of Christ and how all of those just were fulfilled one by one, and one after the other, incredible.

And there's a sense where prophecy is future history. We know this is what's going to happen. Some of the details are fuzzy because it's prophetic literature.

It's apocalyptic literature. But the reason why God is able to predict the future is because he's in control of the future. For him, it's not the future.

[50:22] For him, he looks at all of human history, all of the timeline, and he sees it all. He stands outside of time and can see all of this.

I don't understand that, but I believe in a big God, and I know that he has control of it all. And that's one of the reasons why we trust him, because he's in control, and that's a good thing.

And we trust him. So I want to encourage you. We know what's coming. Much better for us to place our trust in Jesus Christ now, in this life, while we have the opportunity.

If you've never trusted Christ as Savior, I would implore you, do that today. Don't wait. All of these things are things that are coming, that are on the way.

So let's pray. Lord, thank you so much again for your word. And, Lord, the word that we've been looking at today has been prophecy, and sometimes it's difficult, and there are a lot of voices out there saying different things about how to interpret these words, these ideas, these events.

[51:41] And yet, Lord, my goal here is to try to make it as plain as possible. We believe in your word. Lord, that for us is a starting point, that we trust you.

We trust your word. We trust that your word is true and right and purposeful and rightly applied to our lives.

So, Lord, as we look to the future, may we do that with a sense of hope, with a sense of longing, that for us in the point of history that we find ourselves, we are here in the church, and we're waiting for your return for the church, not your return to the earth, but your return to the sky where you take your church away.

And, Lord, what a day that will be. And we look forward to that day. And until that time, Lord, I pray that we would be found faithful.

I pray that we would serve you, that we would live lives that are morally pure, that we would live lives that are faithful and true to your word, that we would seek you, that we would live our lives in relationship with you.

[53:11] Lord, thank you for your love and your goodness to us. We don't deserve it. We recognize that every good thing that we have, it comes from you, and it comes from a heart that wants to bless us, even though we don't deserve it.

But, Lord, we thank you. And we love you. Lord, may we live for you with all of our lives. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.