This Is How The World Ends — Delivery Transcript

Revelation 6 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, September 12, 2021 · *Birth Pains*

Watch or listen: Subsplash (video & audio) · YouTube

> ⚠️ ***AUTO-GENERATED TRANSCRIPT — verify against the audio before quoting publicly.*** *Produced from a Descript transcription of the Broadview Church sermon recording and lightly cleaned (filler words removed, obvious mis-hears of names and Scripture references corrected). No timestamps. This is not a publication-ready manuscript and it is not Wes's exact words for print. Check any line against the recording before it goes on a graphic, in an email, or in a book.*

If you have your Bibles, we're going to be in Revelation chapter 6. If you want to go ahead and turn there, you can. If you're just now joining us, if this is your first time to Broadview, we're actually as a church going through the book of Revelation, which is the last book of the New Testament and one of the most controversial books in the Bible. A lot of people stay away from the book of Revelation because it's so confusing and has so many— not controversies, not necessarily the right word, but there's so many debates about how to interpret it and what's what.

And we thought, well, Pastor Wes loves controversy, so let's go through the book of Revelation. No, I'm just kidding, that's not what I thought. I actually don't like controversy. I don't like conflict, but I do sense the need for our church to go through this book of the Bible. And some of that is because there's just a general sense of hunger and thirst amongst people for knowing what does the Bible say about the end of the world. I think when 2020 came and went, I think everybody agrees the Lord used 2020 to kind of shake things up.

I thought of it as the great revealer. It revealed so much about so many things. And now on the other side of that, it just seems like the world continues to deteriorate. There continue to be things that are symptomatic of chaos and disorder. And so more and more people are starting to ask the question. If this is not the end of the world, what is the end of the world going to look like? And I'm not saying that we're in the end of the world by any means, but I do think it's important that we know what the Bible says about those things.

Jesus in Matthew 24 told his disciples nobody knows the day or the hour, but he did not by that mean don't think about the end of times. He says, no, there are signs, and you need to know the signs. Because knowing those signs is important for you being able to live how you ought to live. And so what we've done in the last four or five weeks in particular is look at

Revelation chapter six, because Revelation chapter six in some ways gives a timeline or a blueprint for the kinds of activities that are going to fall on the earth leading up to that final second coming of Jesus Christ.

And we're in week four of that series called Birth Pains. Jesus describes those events as the birth pains leading up to the second coming. And if you're just now joining us and you really want to drill down into each of the six seals, of the four horsemen, then you'll need to go back to weeks one, two, and three because today we're really going to give a bird's eye view of all of it. And then I want to try to help us situate it or to kind of piece it all together so that we have a timeline of events of what the end of the world, not only what will it look like, but when will it happen and what will follow.

And to do that effectively I'm going to have to expose you all to a lot of information. And I don't typically love to do that. I like to keep messages short, simple, to the point, and everyone laughed and said, yeah, right. But I try to, the best of my ability, try to keep things short, simple to the point, and really drill home a single point. And we will do that today, but I need to show you kind of all of it, which will feel overwhelming. But hopefully by the end of the message, I want to give you a template to really simplify and help you tie it together and expose you to how different people do this different ways.

So let's pick it up Revelation chapter 6 starting in verse 2 and I want to just real quickly hit these six seals. For those of you who do not know about the book of Revelation, when you get to Revelation chapter 6 Jesus takes this scroll which contains the future plans of God and he begins to break these seals that are keeping the scroll sealed up. And every time Jesus breaks a seal, there's a corresponding event that takes place on the earth. And you'll see these events take place as we read Revelation six onward.

The first seal is a rider on a white horse in Revelation chapter six verse two. John says, I looked and there was a white horse and its rider held a bow, kind of like a bow and arrow, but he doesn't have any arrows. It's just the bow. And a crown was given to him, and he went out as a conqueror in order to conquer. Now you say, well, who in the world or what in the world is that? I think if you compare this with Matthew 24, one of the things that becomes clear is that this reference to a rider on a white horse.

Is not Jesus Christ himself, although Jesus does ride on a white horse in the book of Revelation. It looks like Jesus, talks like Jesus, acts like Jesus, but is not Jesus. It is in fact a false Messiah or a false Christ. Jesus says in Matthew 24, before the end comes, there will be many false Christs who rise up and lead many astray. And so I believe this is a reference to false Christ in general, and perhaps even specifically a particular false Christ that the Bible calls the Antichrist. Have you ever heard that name before?

The antichrist, he's mentioned in Daniel chapter 9. Jesus mentions him in Matthew 24. I believe the first horseman is a reference to this Antichrist, he's going to make a peace treaty with Israel for seven years. Daniel 9:27 says at the middle of that seven-year period, he breaks that peace agreement and desolates the temple. He desolates the worship in the temple. He puts an end to animal sacrifices. He compares himself to God. It's a big mess. And it triggers this great tribulation that Jesus says is so bad the world has never seen this kind of tribulation before now and will never see it again.

You can see this in Matthew twenty four if you want to turn there. In Matthew twenty four verses fifteen and sixteen. Jesus says, when you see this event, when you see this abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, then you need to run. Those in Judea must flee to the mountains. Why are they fleeing to the mountains? Because according to Jesus, after that event, after the abomination of desolation, after the antichrist desecrates the temple and demands to be worshipped, Jesus says there's going to be a level of tribulation that is so bad the world has never seen it and will never see it again.

He says in verses 20 and 21, pray that your escape may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. Because at that time there will be great distress or great tribulation, capital T tribulation, that has not taken place from the beginning of the world until now and never will again. So this rider, this first rider in Revelation 6, I believe is an antichrist. And I believe that really seals one to four or even five talk about the fallout of the rise of this figure to power and his impact on the rest of the world.

So let's look at that fallout. Seals two and three, I believe, are a reference to war and poverty. So seal one, a reference to the antichrist. Seal two, a reference to war and famine. I'm sorry, war and famine. You see war in verse 4 of Revelation chapter 6, another horse went out. This was a fiery red one, and its rider was allowed to take peace from the earth. So if he takes peace from the earth, that means that the antichrist had established some kind of peace on the earth prior to this second rider.

People began to slaughter one another. A large sword was given to him. That fall is followed by the third rider, who verse 6[1] says is riding a black horse. John says in verse 6, I heard something like a voice among the four living creatures that's in the throne of heaven, and this voice says, A quart of wheat for a denarius, which was basically one serving of bread for one day's wage, and three quarts of barley, or three servings of bread for one day's wage. Barley was a cheaper bread. But do not harm the oil and the wine.

So essentially the currency becomes so worthless and prices become so high that you literally have to work just to eat. And God forbid you have a family. Because if you have a family, somebody's going to be starving because you'll either have to not feed yourself to feed everybody else, or if you have a big family, you're really out of luck. This is why I think Jesus

says in Matthew 24 verse 19, woe to pregnant women and nursing mothers in those days. Because we all know pregnant women love to eat, right?

They love to eat. And there's not going to be a lot of food to eat because the food's going to be so expensive. And nursing mothers need nutrients in order to pass those nutrients on to their children and it's just not going to be around. The world is going to be in trouble. And I believe it's a global famine, a global economic inflation that the world has never seen before. I mean we feel it a little bit right now in America with the inflation, but it's nothing compared to what this third seal will be.

Seals 2 and 3 are followed by seals 4 and 5. And seals 4 and 5 talk about death and martyrdom. The empty promises of peace and prosperity made by the antichrist will fall through. Instead of peace and prosperity, it's going to bring war and inflation, as we saw. Just like Nero did with the Christians with the burning of Rome. When Rome was burning, Nero blamed it on the Christians. And so there was intense persecution of Christians in the first century. I mean, it was one of the bloodiest centuries of the church besides the twentieth century.

I think a similar kind of thing is going to happen with the antichrist, where the antichrist loses some political power, people are blaming him for the economic woes in their nation or whatever the case may be. And he points the finger to the Christians and says, it's their fault, it's these people of God, it's these Jews. They're the troublemakers. We've seen this happen in history with Germany and the rise of Hitler and the Jews. A similar kind of thing I think is going to happen at the end of days. And there is incredible death that ensues.

Look at verse 8 of Revelation chapter 6. John says, I looked and there was a pale green horse, and its rider was named death. And Hades was following after him, they were given authority over a fourth of the earth to kill. Notice they're not actually killing people, but they do have authority— authority to kill. So perhaps the antichrist has some kind of global empire, we don't know that. Maybe he has an empire of one-fourth of the earth geographically or demographically, I'm not sure. But he gives these people, his people, authority to kill.

They kill by the sword and by famine, which we've already seen in seals 2 and 3. But then he adds, plagues and wild animals of the earth in the fourth seal. Some think that's a reference to pandemics, things like COVID-19. Maybe they just continue to get worse. Strain upon a strain. What do they call 'em? Not strains. They call them variants. Variants upon variants just killing people all throughout the world. And these people have authority to kill people by plague, which is an interesting idea. But between that and the wild beasts of the earth, one fourth of the population is at risk of death.

And that's a lot of people. We have, I think, around eight billion people on the earth right now. One fourth of eight. That's Roby math, baby. That's two billion people. That's a lot of people. How many people are in the United States? It's like 300 and 400 million people. So that's not Roby math, but that's how many United States is that? That's a lot of United States. So you've got seal one, the rise of the antichrist, seal two is war, seal three is famine, and seal four is mass death. Seal number five, according to Revelation chapter six is the cry of the martyrs.

They cry out in verse nine, how long, O Lord, until you avenge our blood? How long until you make this right? He says under the altar were the souls of those who had been slaughtered because of the word of God and the testimony that they had given, the Lord responds to their cry by telling them to wait a little longer until the full number of martyrs is complete. Now I want you to note that Revelation chapter six, as interesting as it is, there is a parallel of Revelation chapter 6 with Matthew 24.

You may want to put that in your notes. Think of Matthew 24 and Revelation chapter 6 as two sides of a train track running together on which the train of the end times runs. Because everything that John says happens in the first six seals, Jesus also describes with very similar language in Matthew 24. I want to show you this before we move on. If you want to turn in your Bible to Matthew 24, you can, or I'll have it up on the screen. But essentially Jesus had been walking with his disciples.

They passed the temple and he says the temple's going to be destroyed in a couple of years. They interpreted that as a cataclysmic end times event and so they say, Lord, when are these things going to happen? What will be the sign of your coming? And he says to them in verse four, watch out that nobody deceives you. Because here's what the end times are going to look like. Number one, many will come in my name, saying, I am the Messiah. In other words there's going to be false Christs or anti-Christs, and they will deceive many.

You are going to hear of what? Wars. Okay, that's seal number two. You get the antichrist, then you'll hear of wars and rumors of wars. See to it that you're not alarmed, because these things must take place, but the end is not yet. Nation will rise up against nation and kingdom against kingdom. Then there will be what? Famines. That's our third seal. And earthquakes in various places. All of these events are the beginning of labor pains. In other words, we're not to the big bad stuff yet, but this is just the beginning of the labor pains.

So you've got false Christ, war, and famine, all mentioned in Matthew 24. And that's seals 1, 2, and 3 of Revelation chapter 6. What about seals 4 through 5? Well, keep reading. Matthew chapter 24, verse 9. In seals 4 and 5, you've got mass death and martyrdom, and that's exactly what you see described in verses 9 to 14. Jesus says, they will hand you, my disciples, they will hand you over to be persecuted, and they will what? They will kill you. They will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of my name.

Then many will fall away, betray one another, and hate one another. Many false prophets will rise up and deceive many, because lawlessness will multiply, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved, and this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed in all the world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. So seals 1 to 5. And again, we've looked at these, so I'm not going to spend much time, but you've got the antichrist comes to power as a result of his false promises of peace and prosperity.

Instead, he gets wars and famine. He, I think, then blames the Christians for the economic woes, which results in death and martyrdom. Seals 4 and 5. That season of life for Christians is going to literally be hell on earth. There will be persecution and martyrdom unlike we've ever seen up until this point. And there will be a sense of longing, how long, O Lord, until you make it right? You feel that angst in the fifth seal, but you feel that angst answered in the sixth seal. We haven't looked at this seal yet, but the sixth seal is a radical, powerful demonstration of cosmic signs and wonders that make it clear to everybody who lives on the earth, the Lord sees what you're doing.

He is here, and he is angry. He is fed up. He is done with this persecution of Christians and God's people. And he is about to bring judgment on the earth. So let's pick it up in verse 12. Then I saw, John says I saw him open the sixth seal. There's seven seals total. This is the second to the last one. And as soon as Jesus broke that sixth seal, it says a violent earthquake occurred. Notice this apocalyptic language. The sun turns black like sackcloth made of hair. So notice it's like sackcloth.

The sun doesn't literally turn black. But it looks black. The entire moon became like blood. So it doesn't become blood, but it looks red like blood. The stars in the heaven fell to the earth like a fig tree drops its unripe figs when shaken by a high wind. The sky was split apart like a scroll being rolled up and every mountain and island was moved from its place. Now, some people say, whoa, wow, what in the world is going on? Some people think that this is apocalyptic language that's speaking to a metaphorical spiritual kind of chaos in the earth.

So they would say it's not literal meteorite shower, it's not a literal sun moon thing. That's just John's way of saying that the chaos on the earth is going to get to such a scale it's as if the sky is literally falling. Or it's as if the sky is falling. I sympathize with that view. This is apocalyptic language, but in my mind John uses apocalyptic language not always to talk about spiritual things, but often to talk about literal things that he cannot describe in any other way other than apocalyptic language.

So I don't know— the sky can't literally split apart, but maybe there's going to be natural phenomena that cause it to look as if the sky is splitting apart. And there's going to be natural phenomena that make it look as if the stars are falling from the sky. And there will be literal cosmic signs and wonders that make it look as if the sun is turning black and the

moon is turning like blood. And I think all of those things will literally happen for the sake of everybody who lives on the earth knowing God is here and he is angry.

Because that's exactly what happens in verse 15. Notice all the people of the earth, the kings of the earth, the nobles, the generals, the rich, the powerful. Every slave person and every free person, they hid in the caves and among the rocks on the mountains, and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, fall on us and hide us from the face of the one seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. So they recognize this is God, this is God's wrath. This is the Lamb who had been slain, this is his wrath, and the great day of their wrath has come.

Who is able to stand? I heard somebody use an illustration of the fifth and sixth seal. I don't know if anybody— are you guys, anybody out there, wrestling fans? Like your beloved pastor, loves to watch wrestling. I was a huge wrestling fan growing up. I was into the NWO. My mom thought I was joining the New World Order as a result of that, but I wasn't. I just like Kevin Nash, I like Scott Hall, I love wrestling. During WrestleMania, which is like the big event, they always have these matchups of a big bad wrestler and a first-year wrestler, or not a great wrestler.

And it's just not fair and the little guy gets pummeled and just crushed and that's kind of what I think the world is going to look like between the antichrist and God's people. The antichrist is just going to pummel the people of God, persecution, hardship. It is just going to be terrible. But always during WrestleMania, one of those matches, while the big bad is pummeling the first-year wrestler, usually there'll be like a really big good guy, like the world champion, like Hulk Hogan or Sting or some good guy. And he'll come out from behind the stage.

And the big bad in the ring, he doesn't know that he's coming, but the crowd sees Hulk Hogan coming, and he's kind of strutting his stuff, you know, and the crowd's going wild and everybody knows what's about to happen. But the big bad doesn't know what's about to happen. That's the way I think of seal 5. Like they're crying out, how long, O Lord, until— and God's like, I am here, I see what's happening, I'm going to wait until the last martyr comes, and then I'm coming down. And the sixth seal is like Hulk Hogan getting into the ring and it's Hulkamania, baby.

It's go time. And he just pummels. This is God. He's on the scene. I've had enough. I've had it up to here. And he pours out his wrath. And everybody knows on the earth. And I want you to notice, everybody knows that God is judging, that the wrath is coming, but nobody wants to repent. Fascinating. Everybody knows it's God. Nobody wants to repent. I think that shows you just how bad off the world is going to be when the day of the Lord is announced. It's really, really bad. Now I don't think Jesus and Hulk Hogan are the same people, obviously.

I just think it's a good illustration. In your notes I say in seals 1 to 5 the source of the trouble is Satan and the antichrist, but in the sixth seal the trouble comes from God Himself, cosmic signs and wonders. The wrath of the antichrist is poured out. It is bad. The people of God are present on the earth while this is taking place. And then the Lord's wrath is announced or portended, if you want to use a fancy word for it, in the sixth seal. Revelation takes a break at chapter 7, and then chapter 8, the day of the Lord actually hits.

Now the question is, what does Matthew 24 say? Because remember Matthew 24 and Revelation chapter 6 are like two rails on a train track. We already saw seals 1 to 5 in Matthew 24. Do we see the sixth seal in Matthew 24? And you will not be surprised to know he does mention this. Look at Matthew 24, verse 29. Jesus says, immediately after the distress of those days. What days is he talking about? He's talking about the antichrist, abomination of desolation, tribulation. Okay, Jesus says, after the great tribulation, what's going to happen?

The sun will be darkened, the moon will not shed its light. The stars will fall from the sky, the powers of the heavens will be shaken. It's almost verbatim what you see in Revelation 6 with the sixth seal. Then the sign of the Son of man will appear in the sky, and then all the peoples of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. A very close parallel with Revelation chapter six. Matthew 24, verse 31: after the Lord comes in power and great glory, verse 31 says that he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet.

And they will gather his elect from the four winds or from everywhere on the earth, from one end of the sky to the other. Now I know that was like drinking from a fire hydrant, and it's a ton of information. And I don't want you to miss the forest for the trees. And so if as you think about what does the end of the world look like, I think that you could simplify it into four basic events that must take place before Jesus comes again. And you see all of them mentioned in Revelation 6, Matthew 24 and Daniel chapter 9.

And I'm not going to put these in any particular order, but in your notes, the first one is what's called the abomination of desolation. This is when the antichrist stands up in the temple, the Jewish temple, and he desecrates it. Maybe he demands worship, he puts an end to animal sacrifices, he does something unholy. That is kind of the trigger for everything else that happens before the end of the world. So you've got the AOD or the abomination of desolation. After that, Jesus says there will be great tribulation that the world has never seen before.

The third thing in your notes is what's called the rapture of the church. Now, a lot of people talk a lot about the rapture. We have not talked about the rapture very much because it's not really mentioned in the book of Revelation, at least not explicitly in my view, but it is mentioned in Matthew 24. It's mentioned in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. So there will be a

gathering of the church to meet the Lord in the air. And then the fourth event is what's called the day of the Lord, or the great and terrible day of the Lord.

We've talked a lot about this, but we have not talked much about the rapture or the day of the Lord. So what I want to do with the time we have left, which is not much, is to unpack those two ideas of the rapture and the day of the Lord and to give you a timeline for how it's all going to fall out, because people disagree not on the fact that these four things will happen. Everybody agrees that these things will happen. But how it happens, there's also debate whether or not this happens within a seven-year period at the end of the world.

If you guys remember in week one of this series, we talked about a view called preterism, which basically says this is kind of unimportant, and these things have already happened in AD 70. Leading up to AD 70, you had the Roman Emperor at the time abominate desolate the temple. Temple was destroyed. There was great tribulation on the church, and the day of the Lord came. But that it came in a spiritual way, it came in a metaphorical way. Jesus was alive in the hearts of the disciples, and there's a kind of spiritual victory in that way.

In my view, preterism is attractive because it's neat and tidy in terms of the timeline. The problem is it doesn't seem to quite capture all of what the Bible says will happen at the end of the world. I think it over spiritualizes, over analogizes, and so I don't subscribe to preterism. Some of you may, and that's fine. I believe in an interpretive grid called futurism. So I think these events are yet future. And I say that because of what Daniel chapter 9 seems to suggest. And Daniel chapter 9, we looked at this in week two.

But in Daniel chapter 9, you've got these literal physical fulfillment of prophecies. The first prophecy was that the temple would be rebuilt, that the Jews would be liberated from Babylon and they'd go back to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. In like 490 years. And it literally happened. Within 490 years they went back, they rebuilt the temple, Ezra and Nehemiah talk about it. Literal physical fulfillment in space-time. Then the second prophecy was the coming of the Messiah, and that happens. Actually, the first was 49 years. The coming of the Messiah happened within 490 years.

And you see that literal physical fulfillment in space-time with the coming of Jesus when he enters into Jerusalem on the donkey and they claim him to be the Messiah. It was a literal fulfillment of Daniel 9:24–25. The only thing left is the last seven years of that prophecy. It's called the 70 weeks prophecy. So 70 sets of seven years. The last is the seven years before Messiah comes. And here's how Daniel describes it. Look at verse 27 of Daniel chapter 9. It'll be on the screen. The antichrist is going to make a firm covenant with many.

So the antichrist is going to make a covenant with Israel. The many is a reference to the nation of Israel. For one week, not seven days, but seven years. They use the word week to talk about years in the Old Testament sometimes. But in the middle of those seven years, so

at three and a half years in, the antichrist is going to put a stop to sacrifice and offering. And what's going to happen? The abomination of desolation. This is exactly what Jesus talked about in Matthew 24. The abomination of desolation will be on a wing of the temple.

Jesus says after that happens, there will be great tribulation. And that tribulation is going to extend until the decreed destruction is poured out on the desolator, which is this thing here, the day of the Lord. So you've got the abomination of desolation? Well, first you've got the agreement between the antichrist and the Jews or the nation of Israel for seven years. Three and a half years in, he breaks the covenant, and that results in the abomination of desolation. There's a great tribulation that transpires after the abomination of desolation, culminating with the judgment of God being poured out on the antichrist in the day of the Lord.

Does that make sense? So here's a very simple version. You've got the first three and a half years, the agreement between the antichrist and Israel. I think this is where seals one to three happen. He comes on the scene promising peace. It results in war and famine. He breaks the agreement because he didn't deliver on his promises. And it triggers incredible persecution and martyrdom of the saints, of God's people, Christians and Jews. And that culminates with the second coming of Christ. So you see all of our four events in there, except for this thing here called the rapture.

So let's talk about the rapture. What does the Bible say about the rapture? How many of you have heard that phrase before? The rapture. It was popularized by Tim LaHaye, Jerry B. Jenkins,[2] and the Left Behind series. Did anybody read the Left Behind series? A couple of you did. Why do you watch that terrible movie? Nicolas Cage's performance was the worst he's ever done, but it was otherwise a pretty good, very entertaining movie. The rapture is a biblical concept. There are some people who say the rapture is not in the Bible, the word rapture is not in the Bible.

That's true, the word rapture is not in the Bible. But the idea of rapture is in the Bible, and the Latin word for rapture is in the Latin Bible. So it's in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. If you want to turn there, you can. I read this passage at every graveside funeral I've ever done because it's so filled with hope. Essentially, there were Christians in Thessalonica who were worried about their loved ones. My spouse died, my grandma died, Jesus hasn't come back yet. What am I to think about my loved one who's in the dirt and Jesus hasn't come back yet?

And Paul writes to them and says, let me tell you how you should think about this. Because I don't want you to grieve like other people grieve who have no hope. Because we have a living hope in the Lord Jesus Christ. And one of these days the Lord will return. And when he returns, Paul says the dead in Christ are going to rise first. Then we who are still alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds. This phrase right here, caught up

together, is the Greek word harpazo, and in the Latin Bible it was translated rapturo.[3] It's where we get our English word rapture.

So the word rapture is not in the Bible, it's harpazo, but it's Latin rapturo. So we're going to be caught up together. It means a snatching up. So we're going to be caught up together from the floor, from the ground, to meet the Lord in the clouds, in the air, and we will always be with the Lord. That's the rapture. The doctrine of the rapture is that the church, the Christians, whether you're dead or alive, when Jesus returns, there's going to be a transformation that takes place in your body. You're going to go from having an earthly deteriorating body to a resurrection body that is no longer susceptible to decay and sin and brokenness.

And when that happens, you're going to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. You can look at other passages in your notes, Mark 13, Matthew 24, 1 Corinthians 15. It's all there. I don't think anybody debates that the rapture is a biblical concept. The debate is where do you put the rapture on the timeline of events? Does that make sense? All right, the second thing that we have not talked about yet is this thing called the day of the Lord. And the day of the Lord is a biblical concept in Old and New Testaments.

That essentially says it is going to be a season in which God pours out his wrath on the earth. Every injustice will be made just, everything wrong will be made right. It will be a terrible day for people who have been sinning against God. Joel chapter 2, verse 30, is a key text where the Lord says, I will display wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood, fire, and columns of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness, and the moon will be turned to blood before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes.

And so it's not after, it's not on, it's before. That language is exactly what we saw in the sixth seal. Blood turning to moon— or the moon turning to blood, the sun turning dark. Isaiah chapter 13 also talks about it. He says, wail, for the day of the Lord is near. In other words, don't be excited about it. Wail, cry. It's a terrible day. It will come as destruction from the Almighty. Therefore everyone's hands will become weak, every man will lose heart. They will be horrified. Pain and agony will seize them.

They will be in anguish like a woman in labor. That's where Jesus gets his phrase: birth pains. They will look at each other, their faces flushed with fear. Look, the day of the Lord is coming, cruel with fury and burning anger, to make the earth a desolation and to destroy its sinners. That's the language from Daniel chapter 9. The desolation will be poured out on the desolator. 2 Peter chapter 3, verse 10: The day of the Lord will come like a thief. On that day the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, the elements will burn and be dissolved, and the earth and the works on it will be disclosed.

Since all of these things are to be dissolved in this way, it's clear the kind of people you should be in holy conduct and godliness as you wait for the day of God and hasten its coming. Because of that day, the heavens will be dissolved with fire and the elements will melt with heat, but based on God's promise, we wait for a new heavens and a new earth where righteousness dwells. So that's the day of the Lord. Two things about this day of the Lord. Number one, the day of the Lord is not the same thing as the great Tribulation.

It's very important. This, the great Tribulation, is the wrath of the antichrist poured out on believers. The day of the Lord is the wrath of God poured out on unbelievers. These are not the same thing. Some people confuse them. They're not the same thing. The second thing to know about the day of the Lord is it's not a 24-hour period. This is my side. This is my side. This is your side. It's not a 24-hour period. You know how we use the phrase back in the day? Or the good old days?

We use the word day like that to talk about an extended season. I think that's what the day of the Lord is going to be. It's not going to be a 24-hour period where God pours out his wrath. I think it'll be as many as five months to two or three years, maybe not that long, but at least five months up to maybe a one- to three-year period where God's wrath is poured out on the earth. So the debate again is not that these things happen. This is how the world ends.

There will be a rapture of the church. There will be an antichrist who desolates the temple. There will be incredible persecution, and there will be a day of the Lord where Jesus pours out his wrath on the earth. And that precedes the second coming of Christ to the world. The debate is on how it happens. The debate is on the timeline. And really the debate is ultimately about this thing called the rapture. Some people put the rapture up here, some people put the rapture right here, some people put the rapture down here, and some people put the rapture right here.

It's like a magic trick: Where's the rapture? Where's the rapture? And listen, I don't want to get all uppity about this because there are different views for a good reason. It is not clear. There is not a Bible verse that says rapture insert here. Insert rapture here. I wish there was. There would be no more debate. Well the Bible doesn't have a Bible verse that says insert rapture here. It just does not. So I'm going to show you four views. I don't have time to do this, but I want to expose you to four views.

And I want you to know whatever view you hold, you're welcome in this church, number one. And number two, whatever view you hold, I as your pastor am encouraging you to deal charitably with people that disagree with you. Because it is not clear from my perspective of which view is best. In fact, I've held all four of these views I'm about to give you. And whether it's Monday or Friday, I jump between two of them that I think are most likely. The first view is what's called the pre-tribulational rapture. And as it may sound, the pre-

tribulational rapture takes this idea of a rapture and puts it pre, or before, the last week, the last seven years of the earth.

They would say that before the antichrist comes on the scene, before he makes the covenant with Israel, the church is going to be caught up to heaven to meet the Lord in the air, and we are going to be in heaven while all hell breaks loose on the earth. Now there's obviously a very attractive thing about this view, which is the church is gone. We don't got to deal with no antichrist. We don't have to deal with no tribulation. We don't have to deal with no day of the Lord. We are up in heaven, watching from the good seats and we're exempted.

Why do people believe this? Well again, there's no Bible verse that says the rapture is going to happen there, but there are inferences, because the Bible does say that the church is not appointed to wrath. And the pre-tribulation people believe that this is God's wrath, this is God's wrath, this is God's wrath, therefore the church comes out here. Some people disagree with that, but that's where they get their logic from. 1 Thessalonians chapter 1 verse 10 talks about us being rescued from the wrath that is to come. Jesus is the one on whom these people are waiting.

And we're going to be delivered. We're waiting for the Son from heaven whom God raised from the dead, Jesus who rescues us from the coming wrath. They say that coming wrath is the wrath talked about in Revelation, and Jesus takes us out through the rapture. Revelation chapter 3, verse 10, the church in Philadelphia is promised: To those who overcome, I will keep you from the hour of testing that is going to come on the whole world to test those who live on the earth. That keeping from is by taking the church out before all the other stuff happens.

Now that sounds wonderful, obviously, so why in the world would we want to believe anything else? The people who don't believe this view would say the reason that I don't believe it is because of things in the Bible that suggest we will be on the earth during the rise of the antichrist and we will be on the earth during the great Tribulation. Why doesn't Jesus talk about the rapture in Matthew 24 before the abomination? Why does he say you will see? When you see the abomination, then run. That seems to suggest Christians are on the earth when this happens.

Why are there why are there Christians in the fifth seal? If we're taken out before the fifth seal, what are we to make of all the Christians who are martyred for their faith? Pre-tribulationalists will say, well those are tribulation saints. That's not the church. They make a distinction between those two. But there are people who go, well, it doesn't really settle with me. And so I think maybe the church does go through the tribulation. Maybe we do go through the abomination. Maybe we do see the rise of the antichrist, maybe we do go through the great Tribulation.

There's a passage in 2 Thessalonians that really seems to suggest that we will not be raptured before the antichrist comes. It's in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, verse 1, Paul says to a group of Christians who were worried that they had been left behind— you guys ever felt that way? Like you try to get hold of your spouse and you can't get a hold of them and you try three times and there's no answer and you're like, I've been left behind. You know, I wasn't living good, I wasn't good enough, and God left me here and I'm going to get the antichrist.

Nobody's ever thought that. But I have. Anyway. Look at here's what Paul says to those Christians who are feeling that way. Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him. That's a reference to the rapture. So concerning this whole deal about the rapture, do not be easily upset or troubled either by a prophecy or by a message or a letter supposedly from us alleging that the day of the Lord has come. In other words, don't freak out like Wes just freaked out. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way.

Why? Two things have to happen before the rapture. First, that day will not come unless the apostasy comes first. And then secondly, the man of lawlessness must be revealed. Who's that man? That's the antichrist, the man doomed to destruction. He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he sits in God's temple proclaiming that he himself is God. That is a clear reference to this act right here, the abomination of desolation. And Paul says there is going to be no rapture until that takes place.

So that's why you have the other views. The second view is what's called mid-tribulation rapture. It puts the rapture at the same time of the abomination of desolation. So you've got it puts the rapture at the middle of the last seven years. Can we throw up that chart? Essentially you've got tribulation in the first three years, but that's not the great tribulation, that's not the wrath. And so we're going to go through this tribulation, but we're not going to go through the great tribulation. Because at the abomination of desolation, the church goes up and we're exempted.

There are others who say, there's no Bible verse that says that. And if you believe that, then you basically predict the day and the hour when the Lord returns because all you got to do is go to when the covenant was signed between the antichrist and Israel, go three and a half years from that moment, and you're going to know when Jesus is going to return. So they would say— post-tribulationists— the church is going to go through the entire tribulation. And for those who say, well, the church is not appointed to wrath, post-tribulationists say we're not going to experience God's wrath.

We will be on the earth during the wrath of God being poured out, but we will be protected from the wrath of God while it's being poured out. So it puts the rapture at the end of the last seven years. And similar to what you saw with the Exodus events. You remember when God

poured out his plagues on Egypt? You had the water turning to blood, you had the death of the firstborn, the death angel. But for the people of God, the people who had the blood of the lamb on their doorpost, it passed over them, and a similar dynamic will take place at the end of days.

The wrath of God will be poured out. We'll be there in the trumpet judgments. We'll see the wrath of God absolutely devastating the earth, but we're going to be sealed. We're going to be protected, and after the day of the Lord, we're going to be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, and then we're going to come right back down. Some people pejoratively call this view the yo-yo view of the rapture, in that we go up just to go back down, but that's just a kind of mean-spirited way to talk about it.

So you've got pre-trib, you've got mid-trib, you've got post-trib. The last view is what's called pre-wrath rapture. The pre-wrath rapture tries to draw on the strengths of the pre-tribulation view and saying that we will be exempted from God's wrath. We're exempted from the trumpet judgments. But we're not exempted from the seals, we're not exempted from the rise of the antichrist, we're not exempted from the great Tribulation. And so they put us after the great Tribulation, but before the day of the Lord. Alright, let's throw this chart up real quick and then we're going to be done.

I know y'all are ready to leave. But here's how their timeline is. You got the first three and a half years of the beginning of birth pains, seals one, two, and three. Then the abomination of desolation, which triggers the great Tribulation. The pre-wrath view importantly makes a distinction between great Tribulation and day of the Lord. They would say the great tribulation is the wrath of Satan. We are not protected from the wrath of Satan, but we are protected from the wrath of God. That's here, the day of the Lord. So we're on the earth here.

We're out of the earth before this. And so somewhere between the sixth seal and the seventh seal, the church is caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and we kind of hang out with the Lord while the trumpet judgments are hitting the earth. For at least five and a half months, maybe longer. So it tries to draw from the strengths of pre-trib and post-trib while avoiding its weaknesses. There's one more chart of how it plays out with the seals. You've got the first three and a half years, antichrist, wars and rumors of wars, famine.

There's the abomination of desolation. The antichrist puts the attention on the Christians, which results in death and martyrdom. That culminates with the sixth seal, the cosmic signs and wonders. The church is on the earth during that. But somewhere after that and before the trumpets in chapter 8, the rapture happens. It's right here. This is where Jesus says that it's going to be such a bad tribulation that if the Lord did not cut it short, no one would have survived. But he did cut those days short for the sake of the elect.

Many people believe that's the reference to the rapture. He's going to cut the day short and rapture the church so they don't have to experience it, which is what Matthew 24:31 is talking about. So you say, Wes, which view should I hold? Which view do you hold? And you have to come back next week. I don't have time to tell you my view. You can come back next week. But here's what I'd say for you. You should hold the view that you believe the Bible teaches. And don't believe a view just because your pastor holds it.

Don't believe a view just because that's what John MacArthur or David Jeremiah or the Left Behind series taught. There is not agreement on when all this happens. So hold the view that you think makes sense with the Bible, and number two, be charitable with people who disagree with you. And ultimately at the end of the day, this timing of events is irrelevant. What's relevant is are you ready for these events should they take place? We may in fact be the last generation before the second coming of the Lord. And if we are that generation, the question you've got to ask yourself is, am I ready?

Will I be someone who's crying out for the rocks to fall on me because I just refuse to bow the knee and repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? Or today, if you hear the Holy Spirit drawing you to Christ, will you say, Lord, I repent. You're Lord, I'm not. You're right, I'm wrong. I know I can't save myself. I know there's no other name under heaven by which people can be saved other than the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And if you're not a Christian this morning and the Holy Spirit is calling you to himself, would you make today the day where you put your faith in the Lord?

And those of you who are Christians, will you make today the day where you truly examine your heart and ask the Lord, do I have the kind of love that can make me ready for these kinds of events? If I was left on the earth and I had to make a choice, will I follow Jesus, will I be loyal to Jesus, or am I going to take the mark of the beast? What kind of faith do you have? Am I going to be loyal to Jesus or am I going to cave under the pressure of intense persecution?

You've got to have an affection for Jesus that outweighs your love for safety, that outweighs your need for the approval of other people, and is your love for Jesus that kind of love? And if not, then today is a day where the Holy Spirit, through the Word of God, can minister to you, strengthen you, quicken your affections for Jesus, so that is the case.

---

1. Transcript note: spoken as "verse six" for the rider on the black horse; the black horse appears in Revelation 6:5, and the voice quoting the prices of wheat and barley is verse 6. Source: Revelation 6:5–6 (CSB). ↩
2. Transcript note: spoken as "Larry B. Jenkins"; the Left Behind series was co-written by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins. Source: Wikipedia, "Left Behind." ↩

3. Transcript note: spoken as "translated rapturo"; the Latin Vulgate of 1 Thessalonians 4:17 reads "rapiemur" ("we will be caught up"), a form of the verb rapio, from which "rapture" comes; there is no word "rapturo." Source: 1 Thessalonians 4:17 (Biblia Sacra Vulgata). ↩