



THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

"Gimmee Shelter"

6:12-17

Movie trailers heighten your interest in seeing the film before it is released. A good trailer gives you just enough of a preview of what you can expect.

Jesus has been opening the seals of the seven-sealed scroll. He's come to the sixth seal. It unleashes a grouping of events on and around the earth. They serve as a trailer to announce to the human race things that are coming over the next three and one half years. They are a sneak preview of things to come.

Revelation 6:12 I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake...

Are earthquakes increasing in frequency? Many followers of Bible prophecy say "Yes!" because Jesus mentioned earthquakes when talking to His disciples on the Mount of Olives.

Here is what the U.S. Geological survey says on their website:

We continue to be asked by many people throughout the world if earthquakes are on the increase. Although it may seem that we are having more earthquakes, earthquakes of magnitude 7.0 or greater have remained fairly constant.

A partial explanation may lie in the fact that in the last twenty years, we have definitely had an increase in the number of earthquakes we have been able to locate each year. This is because of the tremendous increase in the number of seismograph stations in the world and the many improvements in global communications. In 1931, there were about 350 stations operating in the world; today, there are more than 8,000 stations and the data now comes in rapidly from these stations by electronic mail, internet and satellite. This increase in the number of stations and the more timely receipt of data has allowed us and other seismological centers to locate earthquakes more rapidly and to locate many small earthquakes which were undetected in earlier years. The NEIC now locates about 20,000 earthquakes each year or approximately 50 per day. Also, because of the improvements in communications and the increased interest in the environment and natural disasters, the public now learns about more earthquakes.

According to long-term records (since about 1900), we expect about 17 major earthquakes (7.0 - 7.9) and one great earthquake (8.0 or above) in any given year.

If earthquakes are not increasing, are we wrong about prophecy? No, we're not. We just need to be more careful to stay in context. When Jesus mentioned **earthquakes in various places** (Matthew 24:7) He was describing events in the first half of the Tribulation. Thus I don't really see earthquake frequency and intensity as a major sign to watch during the Church Age.

There *will* be a major **earthquake** just before the middle of the Tribulation. It will preview massive upheavals yet to come on planet earth.

Revelation 6:12 ... and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood.

The prophet Joel predicted that **the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come** (Joel 2:31). He said **the sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining** (Joel 3:15).

We're told in Genesis 1:14 that God placed the sun and the moon in the heavens for **signs and seasons, and for days and years**. We appreciate the seasons, days, and years but overlook the sign-aspect of them. Creation declares the glory of God. Everywhere you look there are signs of an intelligent Creator. Because men do not wish to acknowledge God they come up with alternatives to creation. The current one is that aliens brought life to our planet and we evolved.

Is that really more scientific than biblical creationism?

Just towards the middle of the Tribulation God will use the sun and moon as **signs** of His great power. He will be trying to get mankind to pay attention to the preaching of His witnesses on the earth. It's like when the lights are dimmed at the theater. It alerts you the movie is about to start.

The signs in the heavens thus show His mercy. He will be telling mankind what they can expect if they refuse His offers of salvation.

Revelation 6:13 And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind.

Shooting **stars** are the common name for the streak of light produced by a meteor as the small bits of it burn up when passing through the atmosphere. These are meteorites striking the earth.

According to NASA,

A meteor appears when a particle or chunk of metallic or stony matter called a meteoroid enters the earth's atmosphere from outer space. Air friction heats the meteoroid so that it glows and creates a shining trail of gases and melted meteoroid particles. The gases include vaporized meteoroid material and atmospheric gases that heat up when the meteoroid passes through the atmosphere. Most meteors glow for about a second.

Most meteoroids disintegrate before reaching the earth. But some leave a trail that lasts several minutes. Meteoroids that reach the earth are called meteorites. Millions of meteors occur in the earth's atmosphere every day. Most meteoroids that cause meteors are about the size of a pebble. They become visible between about 40 and 75 miles (65 and 120 kilometers) above the earth. They disintegrate at altitudes of 30 to 60 miles (50 to 95 kilometers).

Meteors do hit the earth. You can visit the International Meteor Collector's Association website for some great true stories.¹

From time-to-time meteorites have struck man-made objects such as houses, roads, cars, and even a mailbox (Claxton, 1984), humans (Sylacauga, 1954) and cows (Valera, 1972)!

In 2003 CNN reported,

Two people have been injured and several homes badly damaged by a suspected meteorite crashing into a village in eastern India, reports said Sunday.

The fiery object crashed to earth shortly after sunset Saturday in the coastal state of Orissa, the Press Trust of India reported.

Witnesses reported a bright fireball briefly lighting up the night sky and causing panic among local residents, the PTI report said.

Reports from several districts described an ear spitting noise that shattered several windows as the object sped overhead.

At least one part of the fireball came down in a village in Mayurbhanj district, setting several homes alight and lightly injuring at least two people.

The report said other parts of the suspected meteorite may have crashed into another village, also setting at least one thatched house ablaze.

Mid-trib there will be many more meteorites striking the earth. The sky will seem to be falling.

Revelation 6:14 Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.

A **scroll** is generally pictured as a parchment with rolled ends. Isaiah 42:5 says that God stretched out the heavens. Isaiah 34:4 says the heavens will be rolled up like a scroll. Skeptics laughed at this for years. Not anymore! We know that the universe is indeed expanding and quantum physics and the findings of the Hubbell spacecraft verify that the universe is indeed curved, perhaps scroll-like, in shape.

¹ <http://imca.repetti.net/metinfo/metstruck.html>

For the sky to recede as a scroll when it is rolled up would imply that the atmospheric heavens have suddenly and rapidly cleared themselves as if in preparation for something or Someone to arrive.

Though this sixth seal does have an apocalyptic sense of the Second Coming of Jesus it is only the preview.

Why these amazing mid-trib signs and sufferings? The first five seal judgments can be variously interpreted by ungodly men as acts of men. This sixth seal will leave little to the imagination. This is an act of God.

And men will definitely know it:

Revelation 6:15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,

Revelation 6:16 and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!

Revelation 6:17 For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

No other explanation will do. These things are the work of God and are being administered by Jesus as He prepares the earth for His return. **Everyone** on earth will know God is calling to them and that Jesus is coming.

Mankind will choose to take shelter in those final days of the first half of the tribulation. The real shelter, though, is spiritual! It is to be found safe in Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

It has become far too common to blame natural disasters on God as judgments for sin. Unless it is obvious let's just call them disasters and rush to aid the victims.

When God wants 'credit' for a natural disturbance He makes it obvious.

And He does it to offer the shelter of His Son, Jesus Christ.

