



The Revelation of Jesus Christ

"Hail from the Thief"

16:17-23

It was fine summer weather on August 6th, 1945 in Hiroshima. At 7:09 that morning a weather reconnaissance plane passed overhead and radioed back: "Cloud cover less than three-tenths. Advice: bomb primary." That is, the sky was clear enough to drop the first nuclear weapon used in war. The lack of cloud cover sealed Hiroshima's fate and spared the back-up target. Even more dramatic was the effect of cloud cover on Kokura. On August 8th the second nuclear weapon was loaded into a B-29. But the skies were overcast over the primary target, Kokura. Instead the bomb was released over the backup target: Nagasaki. (Laura Lee, based on her book *Blame it on the Rain*).

Weather conditions have been responsible for altering history. The Weather Channel is even launching a new series, *How Weather Changed History*.

Our text at the end of Revelation sixteen involves weather and seismic activity that definitely affect history. In fact, they bring the current history of the world to an end and prepare the way for the reign and rule of Jesus on the earth.

Revelation 16:17 Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!"

Three series of sevens come to their end. There were seven seals, seven trumpets, seven bowls. Then, "It is done!"

Every generation scoffs at the thought that the Lord is going to return. Certain Christians and cults haven't helped any by predicting the exact date of Christ's return:

- William Miller was the founder of an end-times movement that was so prominent it received its own name, Millerism. From his studies of the Bible, Miller determined that the second coming would happen sometime between 1843-1844. A spectacular meteor shower in 1833 gave the movement a good push forward. The buildup of anticipation continued until March 21, 1844, when Miller's one-year timetable ran out. Some followers set another date - Oct 22, 1844. This, too failed, collapsing the movement. One follower described the days after the failed predictions: "The world made merry over the old Prophet's predicament. The taunts and jeers of the 'scoffers' were well-nigh unbearable."
- Charles Russell, after being exposed to the teachings of William Miller, founded his own organization that evolved into the Jehovah's Witnesses. In 1914, Russell predicted the return of Jesus Christ.
- In 1918, new math didn't help the Witnesses from striking out again.
- One author boldly declared that the rapture would occur before December 31, 1981, based on Christian prophecy, astronomy, and a dash of ecological fatalism. He pegged the date to Jesus' promised return to earth a generation after Israel's rebirth. He also made references to the "Jupiter Effect," a planetary alignment occurring every 179 years that supposedly could lead to earthquakes and nuclear plant meltdowns.
- The Jehovah's Witnesses made sure, in 1984, that no one else would be able to top their record of most wrong doomsday predictions. The Witnesses' record currently holds at nine. The years are: 1874, 1878, 1881, 1910, 1914, 1918, 1925, 1975, and 1984.

- The book, *88 Reasons Why the Rapture is in 1988*, came out only a few months before the event was to take place. What little time the book had it used effectively. By the time the predicted dates, September 11-13, rolled around whole churches were caught up in the excitement the book generated. Finally, the days of destiny dawned and then set. No Jesus.
- After the passing of the deadline in *88 Reasons*, the author, Edgar Whisenant, came out with a new book called *89 Reasons Why the Rapture is in 1989*. This book sold only a fraction of the number of copies his prior release had sold.¹

The resurrection and rapture of the church is always imminent. As far as the Second Coming of Jesus, it will follow the seven years of the Great Tribulation. Period. End of story.

Revelation 16:18 And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth.

A storm breaks out overhead. The earth shakes beneath. The next verses will describe some of the dreadfulness of these two things.

Weather can be terrifying and it can kill. The same with earthquakes. It always astonishes me that people are far more terrified of earthquakes than storm phenomena.

Storms and earthquakes may be increasing. You can find evidence and scientists that say they are; but others say they are not. No matter. The storm and the quake described here don't depend upon a global build-up. They happen at God's command to fulfill His purposes.

Remember that for seven years God has been seeking to save mankind. Remember that for centuries before the seven years God has been seeking to save mankind. Then remember it was man who

¹ <http://www.raptureready.com/rr-date-setters.html>

ruined God's good creation and brought things like storms and quakes into our experience.

God is never to be blamed. He's the rescuer who has been reaching out to us.

I remember someone describing firemen on 9-11 as people who were running into what everyone else was running out of. God has come into our disaster to save us.

Revelation 16:19 Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.

This is a global shaking; "the cities of [all] the nations fell."

What is "the great city?" It is a real end times city. It could be Jerusalem; or the rebuilt "Babylon" mentioned in the verse; or Rome which was referred to as Babylon by first century believers; or some other great city that will be the capital of the antichrist that is referred to as Babylon.

- Jerusalem will experience geographic alterations at the Second Coming of Jesus. For one thing, we know that Mount Zion will split in two.
- I am one who thinks that Babylon refers Babylon being literally rebuilt in Iraq and serving as the antichrist's capital.

We'll see more about Babylon in chapters seventeen and eighteen. Her destruction will be described. Here it is summarized for us.

Babylon is a real city that also symbolizes mankind's centuries of rebellion against God. It's destruction reveals God's victory over man's rebellion.

Back to the earthquake itself:

Revelation 16:20 Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

This seems to indicate topographic changes all over the planet - not confined to the area around the Middle East. Creation scientists see this as a leveling of the planet. High peaks and low troughs and valleys level out so the entire planet is somewhat accessible during the reign of Jesus. Everyone will be able to climb Everest!

While that will be the end result, think of how terrifying a seismic event this will be. If you've ever experienced a severe earthquake, multiply that by like a million!

Revelation 16:21 And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.

A "talent" is believed to be around one hundred pounds. Golfball sized hail scares me. Here are some facts about hail.

Hail starts out as falling rain, several miles up in the clouds. But an updraft(an upward blowing wind) holds it aloft, moving it upward instead of allowing it to fall. As it goes up, it freezes because of the colder temperatures aloft. Drops of supercooled water (agitated liquid water colder than 32 degrees) hit these pellets of ice and freeze on. The mass of ice may fall and then be lifted again several times, each time getting larger and larger as more water freezes onto it. When the hail is so big that the updraft can't hold it aloft any more, it falls to the ground. Other times, the updraft may weaken, or shift its position and the hail falls because of that. The stronger the updraft is, the larger the hail can be. It takes an updraft of 55+ mph to create hail the size of a golf ball, and an updraft of 90+ or more mph to create hail the size of a baseball.

I couldn't find any math about how much wind is needed to create one hundred pound hail! As for damage:

It usually takes hail the size of a hen's egg to dent a car, but hail the size of baseballs can kill animals who can't find a sheltering tree that breaks the fall of the fall.

Baseball sized hail is about 2.75 inches. The largest hail on record is 7 inches. Concerning that storm we're told,

The largest hailstone recovered in the U.S. fell in Aurora, NE on June 22, 2003 with a diameter of 7 inches and a circumference of 18.75 inches. Since its weight could not be determined, the hailstone that fell on Coffeyville KS in 1970 remains the largest on record at 5.7 inches and 1.67 pounds, with a circumference of 17.5 inches.²

The reaction to the hail is that men blaspheme God. They speak evil of God and revile Him.

I can understand, to a certain extent, when people blame God after some tragedy. But during a catastrophe it is more typical for folks to call upon God. As its been said, "There are no atheists in foxholes."

It shows how severely hardened the hearts of these nonbelievers really are by the end of the Great Tribulation. God does whatever it takes to break their hardened hearts but, in the end, they harden their hearts all the more.

Stoning was the Old Testament punishment for blasphemy:

Leviticus 24:16 And whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him, the stranger as well as him who is born in the land. When he blasphemes the name of the Lord, he shall be put to death.

Nonbelievers had been blaspheming God throughout the Great Tribulation. They remain unchanged even in the light of the series of accelerating judgments warning them of the end of opportunity to be saved.

The question is sometimes raised as to why eternal punishment is eternal. The answer is that people in the hardness of their hearts will not change; they deserve eternal punishment because they are eternally unrepentant.

² http://www.nssl.noaa.gov/primer/hail/hail_faq.shtml

Christians can certainly be sensational in their approach to prophecy. Even good, solid Bible teachers and pastors have either predicted or come very close to predicting the rapture and the Second Coming.

Nonbelievers, I think, are far worse! Think of the fascination people have for Nostrodamus. He's elevated to the status of a prophet even though most of his writings amount to nothing.

Sure, believers went overboard predicting disasters that never occurred at Y2K. But so did secular folks.

The latest secular craze is 2012. A number of sources, not just the Mayan's, predict the end of the world on December 21st of 2012. At 11:11GMT (Greenwich Mean Time).

Why?

December 21 2012 is not defined by its date in time, but by the events expected to take place on that very day. From an astrological standpoint, we know for a fact that out celestial bodies will align in such a way that has not happened in upwards of 26,000 years. We also know that our planet earth will complete what is known as the "precession of the equinoxes" or earth's wobble which also has not happened for nearly 26,000 years.

The world is going to end. It's going to end just as the Bible says. I believe God, Who cannot lie, and who is constantly reaching out to save.