

THE SIXTH SEAL PART I

David Baker, Presbytery Word for week commencing Sunday 16 February 2025
Transcription of recording, slightly edited

It is wonderful to be with you (and with the family as well), over this weekend. We are certainly enjoying your very warm hospitality and the fellowship across the weekend. I have been appreciating the offering of all the care teams as well, looking after us as we arrive and leave the building. It is a real joy to be here, and at this time of year as well. What I am going to be doing is really continuing from our NBS in Brisbane, and continuing to introduce the book, 'Choosing the culture of Zion'. We will be continuing in the theme of eschatology. I will be taking something of a Bible school approach this morning. Many of these points will not be new for you (or you will not be necessarily unfamiliar with them), but hopefully we will keep working on the framework and filling in further detail and orientating ourselves to the framework.

You will remember in Brisbane we were talking about preachers of righteousness in Sodom and considering Lot; and then the difference between Lot and Isaiah; and then the way Isaiah met the Lord and was recommissioned as a prophet to minister in the spirit and power of Elijah. We are also introducing the theme of 'Look at the fig tree' and the fruit of the fig tree being worthy houses.

I am going to keep moving forward then today, and we will be looking primarily at the theme of the opening of the sixth seal, which is a major waypoint in the time of the end. When you are looking at the early part of the book of Isaiah and all the prophetic summaries that we see there, you will note that they keep finishing at the opening of the sixth seal.

I want to pick this up from the book of Matthew, particularly Matthew chapter 24. I know if you have read the book, 'Choosing the culture of Zion', you will have noticed

that the whole book is built around Matthew 24 and that major prophetic discourse. Obviously, the theme of the fig tree is picked up in Matthew 24 where Jesus says, 'Look at the fig tree.' That was chapter 2 in the book. Chapter 3 of the book is picking up all the birth pains - the beginning of the birth pains; then the opening of the seals and what that looks like.

We are going to be working out of chapter 4 today, which is the sixth seal, but also chapter 4 on the 2300-year prophecy. Jesus is drawing our attention to that in Matthew 24 as well; then also the great falling away. Jesus is talking about that too.

I thought we might orientate ourselves here as we begin. We will turn to Matthew 24, and I am going to pick up three verses here as we begin. To orientate ourselves, remember in Matthew 23 (I know you have started to look at this), Jesus stood in the temple precinct, and He pronounced eight statements of 'woe' on the religious leaders of the day - the scribes and the Pharisees. He was particularly addressing their hypocrisy and their religious projection that had no substance to it. They had refused over a season to receive any admonition or rebuke. They had refused to come to any repentance.

When Christ was saying, 'Woe', that was an irrevocable invocation of judgement upon them. There are eight statements of woe there. He pronounces that, then He laments the fact that all the citizens (the inhabitants of Jerusalem) have all refused to repent. They have missed the day of their visitation. Then as He is leaving the temple precinct (never to set foot inside those buildings again), His disciples take the opportunity to point out the beautiful stones of the building, because of course that building was the centrepiece of the nation. It was the pride of the nation, and it was the fruit of all their religious

offering over many years to build this. They are asking the questions, 'What about this building and what is going to happen to it?' Jesus says, 'Do you see these stones? Not one stone is going to be left upon another.' He was there prophesying of the destruction of the temple. Once they get to the Mount of Olives, the disciples have a bit of privacy (an opportunity) then to ask Him the question, 'When will this happen?' That was their first question concerning the destruction of the temple. Then they also ask Him, 'What will be the sign of Your coming?'

Now particularly we want to pick that up today. What is the sign of the Son of Man that appears in the heavens before the physical second coming of Christ on the day of resurrection? 'What is the sign of Your coming, and also, of the end of the age?' We need to consider then what are the signs that will be very clearly manifest in the present heavens and earth concerning the coming of the end of the age when this present heavens and earth will be dissolved? Jesus is addressing and answering all these questions.

In reading Matthew 24 now (as I said), I will take a Bible school approach here as we begin, and comment on the structure of Matthew 24. It is important to also remember that the answer runs all the way to the end of Matthew chapter 25. We keep saying 'Matthew chapter 24', but it is important to remember that Jesus' prophetic statement runs all the way to the end of chapter 25. He is teaching on the wise and foolish virgins and the need to obtain a double portion of oil; then He is teaching concerning the parable of the talents; then all His statements concerning the separation of sheep and goats and the judgement of the great white throne — it is all part of the same prophetic statement. We do need to look further at Matthew 25. I will comment on Matthew 24. Jesus is answering with a number of summaries.

The first summary begins in verse 4. Jesus starts by describing the birth pains and the beginning of birth pains. He is talking about wars and rumours of wars - meaning accounts of wars; the continual accounting of them; the continual reporting of them on our news feeds. He is saying to us particularly concerning that, 'See that you are not troubled.' Keep your focus on what the Lord is actually saying to His people and not the events that are transpiring in the world. But we are to know that all these things will take place. He is talking about wars and rumours of wars and then famine and pestilence. We connect all these things to the opening of the seals.

We know we are seeing the beginning of birth pains now. But then we see the active labour pains in relation to the opening of the seals. That is where He begins with His first summary, and He runs down to verse 14. I will read from verse 13. He says, 'But he who endures to the end shall be saved.' There is a need to endure. We are enduring because we are continuing to receive the word of perseverance as we remain connected to Christ and His administration that is proclaiming that word to us. 'He who endures to the end...' This is the question: What announces the end in the first case? 'And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.' We know that the end is not when the Father takes His seat because the gospel is proclaimed as a testimony in all nations once the first seal is opened. The thing that announces the end is the blowing of the seventh trumpet. That is announcing the coming of the end of the age. It is also announcing the physical second coming of Christ. It is the trumpet of resurrection. It is also called 'the last trumpet' or 'the trumpet of God' in the various Scriptures, and it blows seven years before the physical second coming of Christ; but it is announcing the coming of Christ; and it is the trumpet of

resurrection - blowing seven years before His physical second coming. But it continues to blow through the millennium all the way to the dissolution of the present heavens and earth. It is announcing then the inauguration of the new heavens and the new earth. That is the end. The seventh trumpet announces the end of the age. Jesus is running His summaries through to this end.

Then verse 15 starts another summary. He goes back to the beginning of the 2300-year prophecy, and He picks that up. Matthew tells us that every person who reads the Scriptures (and is particularly considering the words of Jesus), needs to go back and understand the 2300-year prophecy in the book of Daniel. 'Let the reader understand.'

He picks that up and then He runs another summary all the way through to verse 31 where He says, 'And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet.' Now we note that is 'angels' plural. We are looking at the blowing of the seven trumpets here by those seven angels. 'He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.' Obviously the seventh trumpet is the last trumpet. So that summary is running through to the seventh trumpet as well. The blowing of the seventh trumpet, incidentally, is the end of the 2300-year prophecy. We have a very good summary there of everything that belongs to that prophecy also, in Matthew 24.

Now I am saying that we orientate ourselves as we begin, because we are going to pick up the discourse, so to speak, toward the end of this second summary where Jesus is describing the opening of the sixth seal. This is verse 28. We are going to read three verses here. I will be primarily working around these three verses. Reading from verse 28. Jesus is nominating three major events which will all be happening at the opening of the sixth seal. One is on the earth. Then one includes the heavens - the natural

universe as well. Then one is particularly talking about what will happen in the third heaven.

We will begin with verse 28. This is talking about what is going to happen on the earth. It says, 'For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles [or literally the 'vultures'] will be gathered together.' That can be translated 'eagles' or 'vultures'. This is talking about the first event that happens at the opening of the sixth seal, which is the slaughter of Gog and Magog on the mountains of Israel.

It is worth pausing here because in years gone by, we have interpreted this Scripture in reverse to say, 'Wherever the body is, [speaking about the body of Christ], there the eagles will be gathered together.' That was used then to promote the need for believers to gather to a city-wide communion and to receive (eat and drink) of the body of Christ. Of course, we still had a sacramental view of the communion at that particular point in time. Now we have a lot better... (I hope you have been hearing this over the course of the weekend) ...a lot better view now of the fellowship of the body of Christ. We are very clear that we are not preaching the coming together of the body of Christ. We are not preaching that you get baptised into water into the body of Christ. That has been a very helpful clarification. We are not preaching that you become a member of the body of Christ by coming and eating and drinking the Eucharist.

We are very clear now that when you are born as a son of God, the Father Himself baptises you by one Spirit into the fellowship of the body of Christ. Then we are coming together here today (and whenever we gather) as members of the body of Christ to hear the word publicly proclaimed. We are gathering then to participate in the fellowship of the *agape* meal publicly and then also from house to house. By clarifying our understanding of this Scripture, we are not doing any violence whatsoever to the

fellowship of the body of Christ and the understanding that we now have of the *agape* public and house to house. We can be very settled on that.

Then come and have a look at this Scripture from a fresh perspective and say this is a direct quote from the book of Ezekiel concerning the slaughter of Gog and Magog on the mountains of Israel. This is not an allegory. It is talking about a literal event. I will begin to read in Ezekiel 38, and I would like to read some of these key Scriptures. This is Ezekiel 38 and verse 2. The Lord is saying to Ezekiel here, 'Son of man, set your face against Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshach and Tubal, and prophesy against him.'

He is talking about a particular leader from a certain land - Gog from the land of Magog. Now we know that this became over time 'Gog and Magog'. By the time you get to the end of the millennium, when all the ungodly are raised in a mortal body, and they surround the camp of the saints, that whole company of the ungodly from all of history that is raised there, *they* are referred to as Gog and Magog. It is an all-encompassing statement concerning all the ungodly nations.

Here in the book of Ezekiel it is very specific. It is 'Gog from the land of Magog'. Here we are looking at this coalition of nations. It would seem reasonably clear that this will be led by Russia, but it will be a coalition of nations that comes down into the land of Israel in the time of the end after the opening of the second seal. Let us continue to read here. It is important that we do not confuse Gog... (because this is a very common point of confusion) ...we are not confusing Gog with Antichrist. Gog is not Antichrist. Gog is one of the ten kings that belongs to the seventh world kingdom. The book of Daniel calls him the 'king of the north'. This army is brought down from the far north. We are looking at a secular ruler here, one of the

kings that belongs to the seventh world kingdom. Antichrist, as we will hopefully talk about a bit later, is completely different from this. He comes out of the church. We are not to confuse this with Antichrist. Nor are we confusing this with the Battle of Armageddon, even though in many ways this is the harbinger of it. It is important to keep the sanctification of all these events clear.

Verse 8 says, 'After many days you will be visited. In the latter years... [we are speaking particularly here concerning the time of the end]... in the latter years, you will come into the land of those brought back from the sword and gathered from many people on the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate; they were brought out of the nations and now all of them dwell safely.'

When Jesus Christ opens the second seal in the time of the end, peace will be taken from the earth. We are looking at the beginning of birth pains now with all the various conflicts around the world. In many ways the Lord is still restraining it. When the second seal is opened, peace is taken from the earth, and we do have worldwide war, and this is going to impact every part of the world. It is good to be sober concerning this. This is ahead of us and all things will not continue as they have from the beginning. The Father will take His seat, and He will begin to judge the world. In the first case He is judging the unclean daughters of Zion.

We have peace taken from the whole earth. The whole world will be plunged into a time of intense warfare. But then there is a focal point, if you like, in the Middle East - in the land of Israel, in relation to this army that is brought down from the north. The armies of Gog and Magog will be an instrument of judgement in the Lord's hand in the same way that the army of Prince Titus was an instrument of judgement upon the Jewish nation in AD 70. In many ways everything that we see happening in the Middle East now... (and it may continue to ebb and flow)

... but the ball is rolling so to speak and will continue to roll all the way down to this event. We do see that very clearly in our day.

The armies of Gog and Magog will be an instrument of judgement in the Lord's hand in the same way that the army of Prince Titus was an instrument of judgement upon the Jewish nation in AD 70. However, in contrast to AD 70, when the whole city of Jerusalem was captured and destroyed, we read in the book of Zechariah that only half the city will be captured in the time of the end. The believing remnant among the Jewish nation will be among those who are preserved by the Lord. There is a remnant, and the city is preserved for their sake. This is similar to the days of Hezekiah. The Lord will sovereignly intervene; but nonetheless, there is an army coming and it is an instrument of judgement.

During this time of severe judgement (at the hands of Gog and Magog) one third of the Jewish nation will receive the gospel of God and learn to call upon the name of the Lord to be saved. Zechariah says in Zechariah chapter 13 and verse 9, 'I will bring the one third through the fire, will refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name and I will answer them. I will say, "This is My people"; and each one will say, "The Lord is my God"'. There is a harvest from the Jewish nation, but they need to come into the true Israel of God.

The season of judgement will become a trial of faith for the sons of God who embrace their unique participation in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. Now when the Lord has completed this refining work, He will then judge the armies of Gog and Magog upon the mountains of Israel.

We will continue to read in Ezekiel. This is chapter 38 verse 18. These are amazing passages. 'And it will come to pass at the same time when Gog comes against the land of Israel,' says the Lord God, 'that my fury, will show in My face. For in My jealousy and

in the fire of My wrath I have spoken: surely in that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel [and this is when the Mount of Olives is split in two], so that the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all creeping things that creep on the earth and all men who are on the face of the earth shall shake at My presence.' We are beginning to see the impact of these events.

Now as we read this, we are hopefully not shrugging our shoulders. These are going to be major events with a huge impact upon the world. It says here that 'all men who are on the face of the earth shall shake at My presence. The mountains shall be thrown down, the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground [It is not a good time to be building retaining walls in your backyard at this particular point in time]. I will call for a sword against Gog throughout all My mountains,' says the Lord God. 'Every man's sword will be against his brother [It is confusion]. And I will bring him to judgement with pestilence and bloodshed; I will rain down on him, on his troops and on the many peoples who are with him, flooding rain, great hailstones, fire and brimstone.' This is a supernatural intervention when the Lord Himself fights on behalf of His people. It is like the days of Hezekiah when the angel of the Lord went out and slaughtered 185,000 soldiers that belonged to the Syrian army in one night. This is a miraculous and sovereign intervention.

Verse 23, 'Thus I will magnify Myself and sanctify Myself, and I will be known in the eyes of many nations. Then they shall know that I am the Lord.' We are registering then what the nations are learning in relation to each of these events. The Lord magnifies Himself, sanctifies Himself, so He is known in the eyes of many nations. 'Then they shall know that I am the Lord.'

Now notably the Lord referred to this great slaughter as 'My sacrificial meal'. This is an

interesting designation. The Lord calls this 'My sacrificial meal'. He instructed the prophet Ezekiel to invite all the birds to come and feast upon the dead bodies of the slain. This is Ezekiel 39 now, and these are our key verses. Verse 17, "As for you, son of man," thus says the Lord God, "speak to every sort of bird and to every beast of the field: Assemble yourselves and come gathered together from all sides to My sacrificial meal, which I am sacrificing for you". We are not talking about the communion here. We are not talking about *agape*. We are talking about a different kind of sacrificial meal, "...which I am sacrificing for you, a great sacrificial meal on the mountains of Israel, that you may eat flesh and drink blood. [Verse 18] You shall eat the flesh of the mighty, drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams and lambs, of goats and bulls, all of them fatlings of Bashan. You shall eat fat till you are full, and drink blood till you are drunk, at My sacrificial meal, which I am sacrificing for you".

This is what Jesus is describing when He says, 'Wherever the carcass is, there the vultures will be gathered together.' This is the first major event that belongs to the opening of the sixth seal. Now this is a harbinger then of Armageddon where the Lord has another great sacrificial meal. The sixth seal in a lot of ways is the entrée for all the birds of heaven and the vultures. Then Armageddon, when you have all the ungodly nations under the leadership of Antichrist. At that point in time, they are also slaughtered and that is called 'the supper of the great God'. You have these sacrificial meals.

Running completely differently from this, we are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb. As I said a number of times, you do get to choose which feast you would like to go to; but I certainly know which one I want to be at. This is the first major event in the opening of the sixth seal. It is this slaughter. This will be a major event for the world.

Then it takes seven months to bury all the bodies after this slaughter and seven years to burn all the weapons. This is definitely a major wake-up call for all of the leaders of the seventh world kingdom. But this is not the only event that is happening. Jesus continues. He says, concerning the second event in Mat 24:29: 'Immediately after the tribulation of those days...' We are talking the opening of the second to the sixth seal. That is the time of great tribulation - completely unprecedented. It impacts all the nations of the world. It is also the time of great persecution for the church. It says, '...immediately after the tribulation of those days [this is at the opening of the sixth seal] the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light. The stars will fall from heaven and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.'

Now this is an amazing statement. The slaughter of Gog and Magog is a sign of judgement on the earth, but then the Lord is saying, 'I am also going to shake the heavens.' This will fulfill the prophecy, 'I shook the earth, yet once more I am going to shake not only the earth but also the heavens.' Hag 2:6. The powers of the heavens will be shaken. We are talking about this in the natural universe, but this will also impact the angelic administration. Their job is to uphold all the laws of the natural universe, but the whole thing is going to be shaken. Isaiah says that 'the earth, will be moved out of its place'. That is a remarkable statement when you consider how finely balanced everything is in terms of how far we are from the sun and what the tilt is in terms of the axis of the earth and all these things. The Lord is going to shake all of this. There will be signs in the natural universe. All these things accompany the day of the Lord.

These verses describe the signs that will appear in the natural universe, which indicate that the dissolution of the present heavens and earth is at hand. These signs

accompany the judgement of God that belongs to the day of the Lord, remembering the day of the Lord begins when the Father takes His seat. But it extends then all the way to the dissolution of the present heavens and earth at the end of the millennium. That is all 'the day of the Lord'. These signs will indicate that the day of the Lord is upon us and that the dissolution of the present heavens and earth is at hand.

Now the judgement of God upon the present heavens and earth has already been accomplished on the day of Christ's crucifixion. As I said, you will be familiar with these points. We are adding some detail here today and continuing to fill out the framework. We know that [regarding] the present heavens and earth, the destruction (or judgement) has already been accomplished on the day of Christ's crucifixion. We read in Matthew 5 verse 17, 'Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfil. For assuredly I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the Law till all is fulfilled.'

The simple point is that Christ fulfilled the Law on His offering journey from Gethsemane to the cross, and on that same offering journey, He took the whole present heavens and earth out into the sea of God's forgetfulness. Judgement has been pronounced on it. This has already happened. Remarkably, the sun, as the source of the natural light and life of the world was struck by God at the sixth hour (that is midday). As Christ hung on the cross, deep darkness covered the entire world from the sixth hour (which is midday) to the ninth hour, (which is around three o'clock in the afternoon). We know that this is when Christ is descending to the depths of the earth and fulfilling His suffering, eternal judgement, in this phase on the cross - an ageless age of years in relation to our eternal judgement,

bringing that to an end, while at the same time, He is authoring the works of our sonship in the depths of the earth for all time and then in the new heavens and the new earth. Abraham was connected to this (as we have heard over this weekend). In that covenant of faith he is participating, in a horror of great darkness, understanding that is where his name, and the works that belong to his name, were all fulfilled by Christ for him and for all his descendants. [In that covenant] we have that element of the cross. But at the same time the sun (we are talking the physical universe) the sun was struck and darkened and stopped shining on the earth for three hours.

Now this is an amazing thing when we stop and think about this. Everybody looks at this from a scientific perspective and says, 'Well, there must be some natural explanation for this great darkness and why the sun stopped shining. It must have been some kind of solar eclipse.' If you want to look at this from a scientific perspective, there is no way that it was a solar eclipse. There are two reasons for that. I will comment on this on the way through. Many people document this. This is the obvious problem with saying that it was a solar eclipse: It was the wrong time of the month. You only ever get a solar eclipse at a new moon. That is the first point. This is Passover. It is the time of a full moon. There has never been a solar eclipse at the time of a full moon.

Now equally, the longest solar eclipse... (and I was interested to look this up) ... in the history of the world (that has been documented anyway) is seven minutes and something seconds. They have actually worked out scientifically that the longest theoretically possible solar eclipse is seven minutes and 32 seconds. Now someone may want to check that, but we are certainly well short of three hours. They have projected that we are likely to get a solar eclipse in the year 2186 or something. They can project all of

these kinds of things. I do not think we are going to get there. This is definitely not a solar eclipse.

The sun was struck. This was a major world event. The gospels are clear this is not an isolated event in the land of Israel. This impacted the entire world because the source of the natural creation was struck. This is recorded in Roman history, and it is actually even recorded in Chinese history. Very interesting. In Chinese history they record at this time that there was (the historian says) an eclipse of the sun and the moon. It is obviously a different time of day over in China at the time that it is in the land of Israel. They do not know how to explain that the sun and the moon both stopped shining. This was a worldwide event, signifying that Christ is taking the whole present heavens and earth out into the sea of God's forgetfulness. Then it was the mercy of God to reactivate the sun at the ninth hour.

This present heavens and earth now are preserved by the prophetic word of God so that His purpose is fulfilled. The Scripture explains this to us. I will read Amos on the way through. This is Amos 8 verse 9. 'And it shall come to pass in that day [this is speaking about the crucifixion day], that I will make the sun go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in broad daylight; I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; I will bring sackcloth on every waist, and baldness on every head; I will make it like mourning for an only son, and its end like a bitter day.' This is definitely the day of crucifixion when finally they thrust the spear into Christ's side, and blood and water come forth with a spirit of grace and supplication, enabling them all to begin to mourn and they went, beating their breasts, to their houses.

It was an expression of the mercy of God to reactivate the light of the sun at the ninth hour. At the conclusion of Christ's offering journey, the entire natural creation is now

preserved by the prophetic word of God. We read in 2 Peter 3 and verse 7, 'The heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word [this is saying the word that created the present heavens and earth, is now preserving it], are reserved for fire until the day of judgement and perdition of ungodly men.'

The present heavens and earth are preserved by the prophetic word of God to give all men the opportunity for repentance and [opportunity] to escape the judgement that has already been pronounced on the old creation and [opportunity to] join the new creation which Christ also brought forth on the cross. This is an expression of the mercy of God. But God does have a prophetic timetable. Peter continues, 'But beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.' The word of God, the Father, who proclaims the end from the beginning, declared to Yahweh the Son, when He emptied Himself to become the Son of God in that offering transaction by the Holy Spirit and the Father proclaimed, 'You are my Son, today I have begotten You.' That word of the Father proclaims the end from the beginning. [That word] ordained 17 prophetic days for this present heavens and earth. That is absolute. God does have a prophetic timetable, and Peter tells us, 'Brethren, do not forget a day with the Lord is as a thousand years.'

Those 17 days are revealed to us when we look at the timing of the Feast of Passover. Remember that the feasts are revealing the timing of the Lord, the times and the seasons. The primary feast (or the foremost feast) is the Passover. Christ is the Passover Lamb - the Lamb for the Father's house. He was foreordained before the foundation of the world and then has been manifest in these last days for our sake as the Lamb on His offering journey. When you look at that timing of the Passover, the lamb was taken

on the tenth day and then sacrificed in the twilight on the fourteenth day. A lot of people have asked, 'Why are we saying 17 prophetic days?' We are using the timing that is revealed by the Passover as the foremost of all the feasts. When the Son said, 'Let there be light', that was the beginning of the first prophetic day - the first day of creation. There are six days of creation, and we know man and woman were created on the sixth day. Then we have a day of rest on the seventh. The lamb was taken as the provision for Adam and his wife, their house, and for all of us (for we are all their children in that regard). That lamb was taken on the tenth day.

As we have said many times, they are in the garden of Eden for 4000 years before the Fall. They happened to fall immediately before that provision was taken for them. But the Fall did not change the prophetic timetable of God the Father. The Lamb was taken on the tenth day. Of course, that provision includes provision for their redemption and our redemption. It is taken on the tenth day. Then Christ came and was sacrificed as the Passover Lamb in the twilight of the fourteenth day. It is important when you look at that to remember that it is the twilight, which means 'between the two evenings'. It is not right at the end of the fourteenth day. It is in the twilight.

Then we have the church age, and we are approaching the time when the Father will take His seat to initiate the time of the end. We are in the twilight phase now of the sixteenth prophetic day. Then we would expect that Jesus Christ will physically return at the end of the sixteenth day. The millennium is the seventeenth day of God's prophetic timetable (or what has been ordained for this present heavens and earth). Now this twilight principle means no man can know the exact day or the hour; but we certainly know that the time is approaching. God does have a prophetic timetable and this

present heavens and earth is being preserved by His word for our sake. But nonetheless, we are approaching the time when the Father will take His seat and begin judging the world. Peter continues, 'The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.'

The present heavens and earth are being preserved by the prophetic word of God for the purpose of giving all men the opportunity for repentance. However, we are fast approaching the time when the Father will take His seat to begin judging the world. Verse 10, 'But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.'

That is the end for every work in the world — 'the world and all of its work'. We have two kinds of works. [There are] works that are done in the world, but the only thing that endures is the work that Jesus Christ has already accomplished for us. That is what we are joined to. This is the message (or a big part of the message of the Elijah ministry), that 'all flesh is grass and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of God endures forever.' Isa 39:7-8.

I hope you are catching the gravity of what is happening here at the sixth seal when the sun is struck again. This is going to really shake up every scientist who has been busy studying the Laws of the universe the whole of their life. Then suddenly the sun is struck. This will be a major event. When the sun is darkened at the opening of the sixth seal, it will be a profound reminder of the same event that happened on the day of Christ's crucifixion. That is the first point. It will signify that the present heavens and earth have already been judged by Christ. But

equally, it will be the irrevocable and irrefutable sign that the opportunity for man's repentance is coming to an end and the final judgement of God upon the present heavens and earth is at hand. Jesus said, 'This will cause great distress among the nations' as you can imagine - great distress. Men's hearts will begin to fail for fear of what is then coming upon the world and the expectation of what is coming. This is Isaiah 13. There are some great passages on all this which we will not read today.

I will read Isaiah 13 and we will be breaking shortly. Verse 6 says, 'Wail, for the day of the Lord is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty. Therefore, all hands will be limp [It is a great picture of a very distressing time] All hands will be limp. Every man's heart will melt, and they will be afraid. Pangs and sorrows will take hold of them; they will be in pain as a woman in childbirth; they will be amazed at one another.' I sort of pictured them all completely astonished, because this has no explanation other than God doing this. 'Their faces will be like flames. Behold, the day of the Lord comes, cruel with both wrath and fierce anger to lay the land desolate; and He will destroy its sinners from it. [Verse 10] For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be darkened in its going forth, and the moon will not cause its light to shine.'

Let us go down to verse 13. 'Therefore, I will shake the heavens, and the earth will move out of its place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts and in the day of His fierce anger.' Now I will read Joel chapter 3 as well. This is verses 15 to 16. 'The sun and the moon will grow dark, and the stars will diminish their brightness. [Now this is a fantastic verse, this next one - verse 16]. The Lord also will roar from Zion and utter His voice from Jerusalem. The heavens and the earth will shake, but the Lord will be a shelter for His people, and the

strength of the children of Israel.' That is a great verse. This is an amazing event.

Let us finish with this key distinction. We know that the slaughter of Gog and Magog on the mountains of Israel accompanied by the great earthquake will cause the Lord to be revealed (or sanctified) as holy in the eyes of the nations. He magnifies Himself when He sovereignly slaughters that army. That is for our sake, and it is for the sake of the elect to bring that season to an end. The sun darkened is the harbinger of the dissolution of the present heavens and earth. You think this slaughter of Gog and Magog will definitely shake everybody, but then you have these signs in the heavens (in the natural universe), and this precipitates all of the nations to fear God.

We are not talking about the fear *of* God here. We are talking about fear of *death* and the fear of the expectation of what is coming upon the world. The outcome of these two events will be sufficient to cause all the leaders of the seventh world kingdom to flee from the presence of God and to say to the rocks and the mountains... (this is Revelation 6 verse 16). All the great men, the mighty men, the kings, everybody, they are all fleeing into the mountains and then saying to the rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!' They are all recognising that God is doing this and God is moving in judgement. 'For the great day of His wrath has come and who is able to stand?'

I will come back to that. My point here is that these two events alone cause the Lord to be magnified, and they cause all the nations to fear God, but they do not bring a harvest. These signs in and of themselves do not cause all the nations of the earth to mourn. We have to look at this third sign or this third major event to actually get to a harvest of the great multitude. What these first two signs do is they cause everybody to say, 'Who

is able to stand?' Now that is a good question. That is a good question to finish on as we draw to a close in this first session. 'Who is able to stand?'

The Lord is telling us how we *are to* stand, how we *can* stand and how we *must* stand through this whole season. When He says to us, 'Pray ... [now this is the word to us now] ... pray that you may be counted worthy to escape all of these things.' Not pray that you may escape but pray in response to the word that is coming to us that you may be counted worthy. We are asking for the cleansing initiative of the Lord in relation to our houses, so that we are becoming worthy firstfruits houses and that is how we will be counted worthy to not only *escape* all these things, but to also *stand* before the Son of man. This is the answer to the question.

We are receiving the answer now... All the leaders of the seventh world kingdom, all of the mighty men, all of the great men, all of the businessmen, everyone who thinks they have everything in control and in hand, that is the question they are all going to ask at the opening of the sixth seal. That is the question the Lord is answering for us now — in how we are to *stand*.

Then of course we have a message to the world and there is a great multitude that comes into the kingdom of God. They are clothed in white robes, and they have palm branches in their hands. They are *standing* before the throne of God and of the Lamb and they are proclaiming and testifying, 'Salvation belongs to our God and the Lamb!'

We might finish there for this first session and we will come back and look at this third sign. Thanks everyone.