

The Wrath of the Lamb

Text: Revelation 6.12–17

Theme: Unbelievers ought to fear and flee from the wrath of the Lamb

Introduction — Lamb who was slain is opening the scroll

- scroll is the plan of God to judge the inhabitants of earth and to save His own elect
- seven seals seal this scroll
- as Lamb breaks each seal, some form of judgment comes forth
- first four, as we have seen, are the four horsemen of the apocalypse
- the fifth, which we looked at last week, is scene with martyrs under throne, the altar of God
- now, we come to the sixth seal and see it opened, even as John watches it unfold

I want to read this text one more time; important & necessary with this text from God

- read Revelation 6.12–17
- let's pray
- *O Sovereign Lord, Holy and True, if you were to count iniquity, who could stand.*
- *If there were no mediator, no intercessor, no high priest, no sacrifice on our behalf...*
- *the only proper response from each one of us would be great fear*
- *without a hiding place in the Rock of Ages, we would quake before You...*
- *as Mt. Sinai did when You descended from the heavens*
- *So, for refuge from Your just wrath, we come to Jesus*
- *We come to Jesus, in whose blood we are saved & by whose perfect life we are redeemed*
- *In Him, we have our hope and in whose coming we live. In His name, we pray; Amen.*

C.H. Spurgeon used to counsel his young protégés in regard to their preaching

- Don't target a specific individual with your sermon; you'll miss every time
- I learned this thru experience as well, however
- would have a sermon I just needed a certain person to hear
- and inevitably, they would be gone, or simply miss everything I was saying to them

So, this morning, I'm not setting my sites upon any one individual

- instead, I have three groups in mind; and I do not know who any in these groups might be
- my aim in this message is this: I want & pray, I believe God's desire is this
- that those who do not follow Jesus will fear and flee the wrath of the Lamb
- so, with this in mind, I have three groups of people in mind this morning

First, I'm aiming at those who may be hostile to Christianity

- don't know if that includes any here this morning; Albion not located that might attract this
- but, it may be that you're here and you really don't want to be here this morning
- dragged here by your parents, or here, but really rather be out fishing or golfing or such
- you're just not interested in Christianity or following Jesus
- probably the smallest of the three groups

Second, I'm aiming at the curiously indifferent

- you play around with faith and philosophy
- you think it might make you look erudite, intellectual
- but again, you have no true interest in following Christ
- that kind of commitment is far off your radar

Third, probably the largest group here this morning: the false follower of Jesus

- you profess faith with your lips, you call yourself a Christian
- however, you have no affection for Christ beating in your heart
- you have no inclination toward spiritual matters
- there is no zeal for godliness, no fight of faith, no treasuring of Christ in your heart
- you went forward at a meeting, filled out a prayer card, raised your hand at Bible camp
- this is the largest set here this morning
- you're church-going folks, moral and nice people, interested in family values
- because of these things you think you should have no fear of Jesus coming
- but it is hard to be a follower of Jesus when you do not follow Him in any way in life
- you come on most Sundays, you watch the worship go by but don't really participate
- there is no heart for Bible study, or anything much extra
- Christ simply is not the treasure of your heart

It is these three groups I am preaching to this morning

- the main reason I'm doing this is because I want you to fear and to flee the wrath of the Lamb
- that is the theme of Revelation 6.12–17
- that all unbelievers ought to fear and flee the wrath of the Lamb

Going to ask three questions of the text before us to explain why this should be; first...

I. OF WHAT OUGHT YOU TO FEAR?

- while the imagery is very vivid here, earthquakes, blackened sun, blood-red moon is not it
- falling stars like leaves of a tree, the sky rolling up like a scroll, mountains crumbling: not it
- of what ought you to be afraid? End of v. 16: the wrath of the Lamb
- but let me touch on the preliminary items so we can see why that last is the worst

1. Massive, cataclysmic, apocalyptic, cosmic devastation

- this is the scene given to John in vv. 12–14
- this seems wildly strange to us
- moon is blood, mountains thrown into the sea and such
- maybe literal: tectonic plates of earth shifting causing worldwide quakes
- tidal waves washing over entire islands
- mountains, indeed crumbling
- but we know much of what we've been seeing has great symbolic meaning as well

2. Old Testament language

- once again, John enters the breach of the OT for his imagery and wording
- Isaiah 34.4 says, **All the host of heaven shall rot away, and the skies roll up like a scroll. All their host shall fall, as leaves fall from the vine, like leaves falling from the fig tree.**
- in Ezekiel 38, 19, 20 we hear: **For in my jealousy and in my blazing wrath I declare, On that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. The fish of the sea and the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the field and all creeping things that creep on the ground, and all the people who are on the face of the earth, shall quake at my presence. And the mountains shall be thrown down, and the cliffs shall fall, and every wall shall tumble to the ground.**
- Joel prophesied in Joel 2.31: **The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.**
- each of these pictures is of God's judgment; that much is clear
- but those were not the last judgment...couldn't be

- for one, we're still here; for another, only against certain nations
- but what about this 6th seal? Final judgment? Is this the end of the world?
- I believe it is, here in these verses

3. End of the world

- just above this, in v. 8, only ¼ of earth is affected by the horseman of death
- later, we'll read of only ⅓ being affected
- but here, it is the whole earth
- then, in Revelation 16.17, as 7th bowl is poured out, angel proclaims: "It is done!"
- that is the whole earth coming under God's judgment
- and then, in ch. 20, the same thing occurs; not three separate endings, but one
- each is describing that singular great, horrific, terrible day when the Lamb comes in wrath
- and, let me wow you with my math skills: this is end of world because #6 follows #5
- v. 10: martyrs cry out **"How long, O Sovereign Lord, holy and true before You will judge and avenge our blood o those who dwell on the earth"**
- when will martyrs be finally vindicated? Told to wait and rest
- told when number of martyrs is complete, fulfilled, then it will come
- and this is what we see in 6th seal: answer to martyrs prayers
- some time will pass between v. 11 and v. 12, but now the end has come
- and of this, everyone who does not believe upon, has not received, does not follow Jesus
- of this coming, they should fear and flee the wrath of the Lamb

4. Wrath of the Lamb

- and this is what you, if a part of that group: people who dwell on the earth, should fear
- the wrath of ... the Lamb
- sounds strange, but nevertheless true
- take note: not the "mean, ol' God of the OT" as some depict Him
- not some twisted version of God from the middle ages
- this is Jesus, same Jesus who said, **"Let the little children come unto Me"**
- very same Jesus who said, **"Come to Me and I will give you rest"**
- **"My yoke is easy and My burden is light"** — this Jesus
- and He will come back to earth with great wrath and vengeance upon all unbelievers

Yet the very unbelief raises the question...

II. WHY SHOULD YOU FEAR IT?

- remember the entire theme of this text
- God wants non-followers, unbelievers to fear and flee the wrath of the Lamb
- He, in His great mercy, gives John this vision to pass along to us so we might take heed
- so, why should you be afraid?
- some would criticize me for preaching in such a manner
- Pastor Kevin, you say, God is God of love; Scripture says, "God is love"
- and I'll not argue with you, for He is indeed
- you might say, "It's wrong to preach fire & brimstone sermons today"
- and I would rebut that with Revelation is full of fire & brimstone; cannot NOT preach it
- even Jesus would agree with me...or more rightly, I agree with Him
- this same Jesus said, in Matthew 10.28: **And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.**
- so, yes, if you are not a true follower of Jesus, then you should be very afraid...why?

1. Because it is so very real

- partial judgments of this nature have come against nations
- just like partial fulfillments of the four horsemen have come
- just like men and women who give lives for Christ's sake have died
- this will come: it is a promise of God Almighty, the One who sits on throne of universe

2. Because creation meets its Creator

- Mt. Sinai trembled and quaked when God came down to meet with Moses
- creation was meeting its Maker and shook in His presence
- so, we should never act all chummy with the "Big Guy Upstairs"
- God is not to be trifled with
- when He comes this final time, He reveals His mighty arm, flashes His glory
- and all creation quakes and earth dwellers run to the hills for cover
- this will be clear to absolutely everyone: not isolated nation
- won't say: Oh, look, end of the world coming in Afghanistan or China
- no one will miss this: the whole earth will shake at the judgment of the Lamb of God

3. Because this is the King returning

- yes, it is Jesus, meek and mild, as He has been described by some
- yes, it is a Lamb, but one of great ironies in all of Scripture
- the great and small, leaders and subjects, free and slave all running for very lives... from a sheep
- but this is One who sits on throne, from whom holy creatures there hide faces, ch. 4
- this is the Lamb slain in ch. 5, who also causes all holy beings in heaven to bow down
- this Lamb will come with nostrils flaring with holy anger
- He will come with a sword in His right hand to utterly defeat all who oppose Him
- His glory will flash forth in such brilliance all who do not treasure Him will run
- they will run, seeking to hide from Him

4. Because you are exposed

- all this is reminiscent of Genesis 3 with Adam and Eve
- you remember how they reacted, having disobeyed God, sinned and rebelled
- they sought to cover themselves by their own means
- and what did they do when the Lord came down to meet with them? They hid!
- in Revelation 6, those who dwell on the earth is "code language" for unbelievers
- on that great and terrible day of judgment, with more terror than you can imagine
- on that dreadful day, we see a scene of immense panic
- like their forefather and mother before them: hide out of shame, guilt, no covering
- it is a terrible thing for sinners to be exposed without any covering before a Holy God
- you WILL be afraid because Christ is NOT your mediator
- He will NOT play the Advocate for you
- you should be afraid because this is what the Bible tells you:
- Hebrews 10 reads: **How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**

And yet so few people fear this, which causes me to ask...

III. WHY DON'T YOU FEAR IT?

- almost no one truly fears God these days
- Proverbs repeatedly tells us: beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord
- 6 of 10 Americans believe in literal Hell; number goes WAY down if you think you'll be there
- so apparently hell is really but no one will be there
- I do want to make one thing very clear before finishing up
- if you cling to Christ, trust in Him, treasure Him, you should NOT fear His coming
- if Jesus is the only hope in life and death, you can be confident as that day approaches
- you will cry out, with the close of this book: Come, Lord Jesus; come quickly
- but if you reject Him, despise Him, are indifferent toward Him, fool yourself about Him
- you should be frightened
- but I don't want anyone here to be in that position
- however, I will be held accountable by God to tell you this news
- I pray that you will never be able to say, "You never warned us about the wrath of the Lamb!"
- but I still ask: Why don't you fear His coming?
- why do you have no thought of eternity, of life after this life?
- my time is gone so I'm only going to offer you the reasons without much else
- but here are the reasons I think you are not afraid of this wrathful Lamb's return

1. You consider unbelief a light and trivial thing

- you think of belief in Jesus like taking a test
- if you don't score 100%, that's okay; God grades on the curve...or so you think
- if I don't cross all my T's and dot all my I's just so, it's not that big a deal, right?
- but unbelief is surely the single reason why you will be cast into Hell
- Jesus is most glorious, most exalted, most worthy being that exists
- and it is a serious crime for you to disregard Him

2. You do not consider yourself an enemy of God

- Romans 5.10 says that apart from Christ you are an enemy of God
- not simply not acquaintances, not some disinterested third party, but enemies
- I don't care what you're feelings or experience say, the truth is: you are an enemy at war
- even by just disregarding Him, by ignoring or violating His desires for you, you are an enemy

3. You do not think about the sinfulness of your own heart

- you flatter yourself far too much: I'm not that bad, not as bad as some
- I live a decent life, I have good intentions
- but your heart are deceitful, and desperately wicked we read in Jeremiah
- all sorts of sins lurk in the shadowy recesses of your heart
- you're self-absorbed, self-occupied, self-centered, and self-righteous
- oh, that you would consider this seriously this very day!

4. You do not fear because you think God is a respecter of persons

- you come from a long family lineage of church-goers
- you're really somebody on this earth
- but look at v. 15: kings, great ones, generals, rich, powerful all flee from Jesus
- slave and free hide themselves rather than face Jesus
- God does not look at position, power, or prestige: He sees your heart & it is far from Jesus

5. You do not flee the wrath to come because you think you have time

- most of you in your teens or 20s think this way

- I'll get serious about my faith someday
- you put it off until after college, or marriage, or children, or into your retirement
- why do you think you even have tomorrow, let alone that kind of time?

Conclusion – Who can stand in the sight of His coming?

- how can you take refuge, if I am preaching to any one of you this day?
- answer: you run to the One you're running from
- the Lamb who will flash forth in great anger & wrath
- is also Lamb who was slain & by His wounds you can be healed
- the Lamb who judges earth is Lamb who died fo rebellious sinners like me & you

Who can stand?

- answer in ch. 7
- as we'll see next Lord's Day: only those who cry out:
- Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne & to the Lamb
- the ones who can stand in His presence are those who say
- "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

Fear and flee the wrath of the Lamb

- that is my call to each one of you
- seek refuge in the Lamb; run to Jesus
- then, like Lamb's blood on your door, angel of death & wrath passes over you
- you are covered in the blood of the Lamb so wrath of Lamb passes you by