

REVELATION REVISITED

The 6th Seal - The Second Coming?

For over 150 years we have used the language of the 6th seal to describe the second coming. People hiding underground, afraid of the One on the throne. We have made the association between this text and the second coming so strong, that it is difficult to question that assumption. But it is just an assumption. Does God's word prove this assumption?

I recall that Ellen White made a statement to the effect that we may have many things to unlearn. I believe this is one of them. My studies have convinced me that the sixth seal has nothing to do with the Second Coming.

To see this point, one merely has to make a checklist of the events depicted under the sixth seal, and then compare them to a similar checklist of events known to occur at the Second Coming. Under the 6th Seal:

- A great earthquake moves all islands and mountains.
- The sky is darkened.
- Meteorites fall.
- Atmospheric disturbances churn the clouds.
- Prominent people, military men and common people hide in the ground for protection.
- They realize that God is angry, and that the day of God's wrath has come.

Now compare this with the list of elements present at the Second Coming:

- A Cloud appears from the east.
- The assembled wicked fight against the army of heaven.
- The graves of the righteous are opened.
- The righteous dead are raised to life.
- The living saints are taken up into the air.
- A worldwide earthquake destroys all mountains and islands.
- The wicked are killed.

Comparing these lists, we find that *not a single element* of the Second Advent is present in the first list. We have to conclude that they are describing two different events.

If I had to come up with a single word to describe the sixth seal, I'd pick the word "signs." There are signs in the heavens and on the earth, and people are frightened to the point that many go into underground shelters for protection. God gives the earth a "shot across the bow" to get their attention. And it works. People everywhere come to a dramatic conclusion - **not that Jesus is coming** - but that the time of God's wrath has come.