Revelation Chapter 6

Intro- Lenski –

The commentators on Revelation are usually divided into 5 groups

1. **Spiritualizing** Group…. Seeks to spiritualize everything into a poetic-prophetic description of the struggle of righteousness and sin.

2 & 3. **Preterite** and **futuristic** groups….historical. **Preterite** = during John's own time. Nero is seen as the beast and that Nero would reappear as the antichrist.

Futuristic place everything beginning with chapter 4 at the time of the 2nd coming of Christ, in the last 7 years. Revelation has little to do with the church until the last few years.

3. Chronological…fits the evcents of history in their chronological sequence. How would the early Christians know or understand today's events…. Of what possible use would it have been to foretell to them events in which they could have no intrest? (this has passed today)

4. Synchronous… also interprets historically. Leaves out non of the vital data… not in chronological succession as in a book of history. (liked best by Linski)

Intro– as one by one the seals of the roll are opened, history unfolds itself before John's eyes. We must remember that John is seeing in advance the end of terror and judgment.

Zechariah 6:1-8

Four Chariots

1 I looked up again--and there before me were four chariots coming out from between
two mountains--mountains of bronze! 2 The first chariot had red horses, the second black,
3 the third white, and the fourth dappled--all of them powerful. 4 I asked the angel who
was speaking to me, "What are these, my lord?"

5 The angel answered me, "These are the four spirits of heaven, going out from
standing in the presence of the Lord of the whole world. 6 The one with the black horses
is going toward the north country, the one with the white horses toward the west, and the
one with the dappled horses toward the south."

[7] When the powerful horses went out, they were straining to go throughout the earth. And he said, "Go throughout the earth!" So they went throughout the earth.

[8] Then he called to me, "Look, those going toward the north country have given my Spirit rest in the land of the north."

Zech 6:1-8 (NIV)

Barclay –

The 4 horses stand for the 4 mighty winds which God is about to let loose on the earth with a blast of destruction. (avenging judgment of God.
John saw these as events of his own time and not any historical figures.
Blarclay will try to define the destructive force and to find circumstances in the history of John's own time which illustrate the destruction to come.

MacArthur –

The unrolling of the scroll marks the beginning of God's wrath and judgment on sinful mankind as the Lord takes back creation from the usurper, Satan. Each of the scroll's seven seals represents a specific divine judgment during the entire period of the tribulation. Described by Jesus in Matthew 24.

1st 4 = beginning of birth pains… last thee= final wrath.

Chapter 6

The Seals – **(1st section 1-8)**

[1] I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, "Come!" [2] I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest.

[3] When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!" [4] Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make men slay each other. To him was given a large sword.

[5] When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I

looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. [6] Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, "A quart of wheat for a day's wages, and three quarts of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!"

[7] When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!" [8] I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.
---------- 2nd section begins
[9] When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. [10] They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" [11] Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.

[12] I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, [13] and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. [14] The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

[15] Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. [16] They called to the mountains and 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! [17] For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

Rev 6:1-17 (NIV)

Verses 1 &2

More intro… via Lenski – six seals ore in the present vision. 1st 4 belong together. The six seals reveals is very brief (only 2 verses to 1st 4) ***in the six seals we are shown the general lines, a broad, simple sketch, and nothing more. --- looking at it as a picture book is unacceptable. The scrolls contain all, everything, but to John and thus to us only as much is revealed as it is good for us to know.

The Seals

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[3] When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!" [4] Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make men slay each other. To him was given a large sword.

Palmer – the 4 horsemen and their horses: verse 1-8

1st – white horse with rider with bow and crown. This is the specter (visible disembodied spirit) of tyranny and the conquering threat of power.

2nd – red horse and rider with great sword. This is the specter of the slaughter of war. (stronger word than kill… slaughter)

3rd – black horse with rider holding a balance. Specter of famine, overwhelming poverty and hardship. (runaway inflation of economy in ruins)

4th – pale horse with rider of death. Specter of Death, and the place of death is "Hades."

Palmer does not see the white horse as the same horse in 19:11 – as he sense a genuine shock that John experiences when he sees the second white horse.

[11] I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True.

Rev 19:11 (NIV)

Each of these 4 horse and what they represent ate timeless specters, though the means of their power have changed from generation to generation. Only famine and death stay the same.

These restraint theme shall become a very vital and important ingredient in the remaining chapters of the Book of Revelation. We need to know these enemies of humanity; conquering, runaway, persecuting power is our enemy and always has been.

The seven letters to the seven churches have already provided us with the strategy of hope and now we see what we are up against, but greater is he who is for us than he that is against us. Rom 8

Lenski – verse 1 The calls are to the horsemen and bid them to be on their way to work.

Verse 2 in the orient the ass and the camel are the animals used for transportation. Horses are connected with war, conquest, triumph. Horse, rider and what is said of him, are a composite symbol.

White is properly placed first – the other 3 are not his equal. Many think that the first rider represents Christ himself…

? if Christ is the Lamb who opens the seals, would he be only one of these riders? Preterists think a Roman emperor… is the white color intended to deceive, as this rider is the antichrist.

Lenski- those who think of Christ or Christianity are not far wrong. Those who refer to Matt 24 are correct.

Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. [5] For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ, ' and will deceive many. [6] You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. [7] Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. [8] All these are the beginning of birth pains.

[9] "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. [10] At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, [11] and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. [12] Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, [13] but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. [14] **And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.**

Matt 24:4-14 (NIV)

Lenski- verse 14 = The Whole Word of God as Jesus speaks it….

The Word of God rides forth into all the world. This rider is alone and he rides forth to conquer by his own power. It is the holy word that comes first.

White is victorious. The colors of the horse have meaning….

The bow is fitting for fighting at a distance. (not a sword as the word is referred to as)

Crown… royalty… God gave it a crown because it is his word.

MacArthur – horses = triumph, majesty, power and conquest.

Some identify the one who sat on the white horse a Christ. But since Christ opens the sealed scroll, He cannot be the rider. Further, this rider wears a stephanos, a crown won as a prize. Christ wears many diademas, royal crowns. Bow vs Christ sword. Finally, Christ returns at the end of the Tribulation, not at its beginning.

Others identify the rider as Antichrist. But since the other three riders represent not individual persons but impersonal forces (war, famine, and death) it is best to view the first one as a force as well… **world peace.** Which will be shattered during the second seal.

Peace… Dan 9:27, Matt 24:4-10, Jer 6:14; 8:11 and I Thess 5:3

He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing [of the temple] he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him".

Dan 9:27 (NIV)

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end is still to come. 7 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.
There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of
birth pains.

9 "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be
hated by all nations because of me. 10 At that time many will turn away from the faith and
will betray and hate each other,

Matt 24:4-10 (NIV)

14 They dress the wound of my people
as though it were not serious.
'Peace, peace,' they say,
when there is no peace.

Jer 6:14 (NIV)

11 They dress the wound of my people
as though it were not serious.
"Peace, peace," they say,
when there is no peace.

Jer 8:11 (NIV)

While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

1 Thess 5:3 (NIV)

MacArthur –Bow with no arrows…. Involve bloodless victories… no real king, just won by the world for his triumphant achievements leading to world peace. Conquer by cunning and deceit, not military force.

Barclay – Revelation 19:11, 12 tells of a white horse and on it a rider, called Faithful and True and crowned with many crowns, who is the victorious Christ. Note the different name for crowns… here is stephanos and in 19 diadema. So this is not a picture of Chirst.

White horse and rider stand for conquest in war. OT the bow = military power. In AD 62 the Parthians were the power feared by Roma. They rode on white horses and were know for their use of the bow. A "Parthian shot" still means a final, devastating blow, t which there is no possible answer.

So, then, the white horse and its rider with the bow stand for militarism and conquest.

Verse 3-4

When He broke the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come." And another, a red horse, went out; and to him who sat on it, It was granted to take peace from the earth, and that men would slay one another; and a great sword was given to him.

MacArthur – Here the story turns ugly and remains that way until the true King returns to establish His kingdom. (**Futuristic**) **Red**, the color of fire and blood, depicts war. God's judgment descends and the short-lived, false peace led by Antichrist dissolves in a bloody holocaust. Remember, All that happens will be under God's sovereign control, contrary to the teaching of some, the judgments of the Tribulation do not reflect the wrath of men or the wrath of Satan; they can only express God's wrath poured out on the world. **Sword**, Machaira refers to the short stabbing sword of a Roman soldier.

Antichrist will play a major role in the wars that follow the peace. Daniel 8:24 and Matt 24:9 Among his victims will be many of God's people.

The wars that begin with the opening of the second seal will last for the brief remaining time before the coming of the millennial kingdom.

Barclay – the function of the second horse and its rider is to take peace from the earth. (**Preterite)**

1. John was writing in a time when internecine strife was tearing the world apart.
2. In the Jewish pictures of the end time, an essential element is the complete disintegration of all human relationships. Brother will fight against brother, neighbor against neighbor, city will rise against city, and kingdom against kingdom. Is 19:2, Zech 14:13,

The vision of the end was a vision of a time when all human relationships would be destroyed and the world a seething cauldron (boiling) of embittered hate.

Lenski- **Red = War**. Close to Jesus words in Matt 24:6,7. **Futurists** think that these wars shall occur near the end and shall annul the promise of peace made by the deceiver on the first horse.

Another view stresses "shall slay one another" and thinks that they denote civil wars and then dates them – 30BC to 192 Ad **(provincialism)**

Some think the **red horse** is the devil – Bede and Calov… some think of a war against Christians and place Nero or some emperor on the horse.

Spiritualizing- such a Mauro makes this a spiritual war. (Matt 10:34 and Luke 12:49-53)

Short Sword is called great because of the constant and terrific slaughter it symbolizes.

Schemes and pacts to abolish war on earth are hopeless.

Verse 5-6

5 When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in

his hand. [6] Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, "A quart of wheat for a day's wages, and three quarts of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!"

MacArthur – famine is a logical consequence of worldwide war as food supplies are destroyed. This will be the most devastating famine in all of human history.

The voice is likely the voice of God…

A person's wages will barely fee three people with low quality food. Represent starvation wages.

Damage = waste basic food staples will become priceless… carefully protected.

A deceptive peace followed by worldwide wars and a resultant devastation global famine will combine to escalate the universal chaos. All this will take place during the first half of the Tribulation, while the worst will be yet to come.

Barclay – wine and oil are not affected… their roots are deeper and when drought comes, they can endure.

In OT the phrase to eat bread by weight indicates the greatest scarcity. Leviticus God threat is if the people are disobedient they shall deliver your bread again by weight. Also in Ezekiel 4:16

It was not abnormal that there would be wine and oil when no corn… Joseph sent down to Egypt for corn and gave the choice fruits of the land Gen 43:11

John is foretelling is a situation in which a man's whole working wage would be needed to buy enough corn for himself only… if he brought barley, inferior, he might manage to give some to his wife and family, but there again he would have nothing to buy anything else.

These are historical that men may recognize. There was one in Nero's time. The rich have all they want and more… something radically wrong with a situation in which some have too much and others too little.

Lenski- v. 5 Speed, this rider on the black horse is on his way. I looked = simply flash the image on the screen…. With a balance in hand.

v. 6 Something which resembled a voice was heard. It was not that the third living on e or one of the four spoke but like a voice amid all four. The speaker is not the point of emphasis – but what is said, **Judgment mission of this horseman**.

The commonly accepted view thinks that this horseman symbolizes famine, and the black signifies hunger (Lam. 4:8-9 *But now they are blacker than soot; they are not recognized in the streets. Their skin has shriveled on their bones; it has become as dry as a stick. Those killed by the sword are better off than those who die of famine; racked with hunger, they waste away for lack of food from the field*.)

The idea of famine, the idea of justice and of injustice, only approach what is here symbolized. Famine, real famine, appears in its place in v. 8

Mauro comes a bit nearer with his idea of industrialism, commercialism, international finance and commerce, which he blames onto the Jews. He loses what cue he senses when he spiritualizes the oil and with wine and identifies them with God's Spirit and his joy…

Sound/cry = is an offer made at market. These are high prices but not actual famine prices. (quart = slaves rations, 3 quarts = nourishment) barely keeps him alive, nothing for his many other needs and nothing for a family….. there seems to be enough product, but not enough wages.

Oil and wine do not damage… only the rich will enjoy them as they are only ones who have the money. These two are comfort for the common worker..not luxuries.

The judgment here is the calamity of dislocation, the failure of just, equitable distribution of the products of the earth.
What is measured out is not equal…..

Palmer – specter of famine. Overwhelming poverty and hardship-runaway inflation of an economy in ruins.

Verse 7-8

[7] When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!" [8] I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.

Palmer – just over the ¼ of the earth…limitation.

Lenski- this one presents, no death in general, but calamitous death as a judgment.

1. **Spiritualizing** Group = Matt 13:24, speaks of deadly spiritual forces.
2. **Preterite =** period between ad 248 and 296 when pestilence raged, whne 5,000 died daily in Rome itself.

This horse was given authority by means of the Lamb and not by the devil.
Hades = intermediate place into which all the souls of the dead go, and not to hell, the place of the damned. Death also strikes Christians and they are not damned to Hell in fact they do not go to Hades. This passage does not speak to where the Christians go.

Barclay – we must remember that this passage is telling not of the final end, but of the signs which precedes it.

Thanatos is used in a double sense.. death and pestilence

No man or nation can escape the consequences of their sin.

MacArthur – Death on a massive scale is the inevitable consequence of widespread war and famine. Hades = grave… the grave digger burying the remains of Death's victims. (with today's population being 6 billion that would mean 1.5 billion deaths.

Pestilence or plague = not only disease but broad enough to encompass natural disasters such as mentioned in Matt 24… earthquakes floods and volcanic eruptions… biological and chemical weapons.

Wild beast , the rats …. Black death 14th century outbreak wiped out ¼ to1/3 of Europe's population.

Palmer –The power of evil is permitted by God. We need to know these enemies of humanity; conquering, runaway, persecuting power is our enemy and always has been.

Rap up

MacArthur – nothing has happened up to this time in history. Terrors of the Tribulation…

2nd section begins

Verse 9-11 The Souls of the Martyrs

9 When he opened the **fifth seal**, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. 10 They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" 11 Then each of them was given a **white robe**, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.

Lenski- **verse 9**

No horse men appear, no living ones shout, "Be going" in the remaining seals. Altar – a temple scene. John is "in Spirit" in heaven. Each of the following visions are a separate entity and have their own meaning.
Question – does John see bodies in heaven? If not what would be the need of a robe? Remember John was "in spirit". God allows one to see whatever He desires!
Question – Martyrs under the altar? What does this mean? Why there? Space issues?

The souls of the martyrs who were slain for Christ's sake are connected with the altar of sacrifice because they were slain, because their blood was shed as holy blood, was poured out as a sacrifice to God and to Christ.

Beneath, Under = Lev 4:7 the priest "Shall pour all the blood of the bullock at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering."
The phrase is symbolical and lifts the blood of the slain martyrs into its true connection with God.

They had maintained – true to God's Word!

Verse 10

God is addressed with the Greek word that shows that He is the Absolute Lord of the universe (absolute power and authority).
Holy One = one who abominates all sin and who is real (**True**).

Are these both OT and NT martyrs?
Martyrs from the time of Stephen until the time of John's vision. OT martyrs would have cried out for the Jews….

There cry is not for vengeance upon the wicked who slew them; their cry involves something that is far greater. Their cry is for Judgment.

Relation of 5 seal to other seals – the relation is not chronological so that the work of the four horsemen is completed before martyrs are slain and cry to God.

> The four horsemen bring something to the whole world, and their work continues to the end of time.

How long = the martyrs point to the end.. the consummation at the end.

White robe = the heavenly white robes. White symbolizes the beauty of holiness. The martyrs' reward of grace.

They receive an answer--
Answer to Cry – until all is complete.

Fellow Servants and Brother, both which we as believers are called.

It is indeed a striking point and exceptional in every way, that God delays the final judgment until the world has killed off so many martyrs.

Barclay – At the breaking of the 5th seal comes the vision of the souls of those who had died for their faith.

Altar – the idea of an altar in heaven is one that occurs more than once in the Revelation (8:5 & 14:18)

Beneath the altar = the blood is offered at the foot of the altar in OT times. This is to say that the martyrs life blood has been poured out as an offering to God – a sacrifice.

The Eternal Cry - this cry was also the cry of the Psalmist (79:5-10). The thing to remember is that when the saints of God uttered this cry, they wer bewildered by God's seeming inactivity but they never doubted his ultimate action, and the ultimate vindication of the righteous.

Desire to see punishment – it is easy to stand aghast at the spirit of vengeance which could write like that. But we must remember what these men went through, the agony of the flames, the arena and the wild beasts, of the sadistic torture which they suffered. We have the right to criticize only when we have gone through the same agony. (weak – ronnie)

Rest in peace a little longer –all history is in the hand of God, and that in it and through it all he is working his purpose out to its certain end.

MacArthur – *it has been observed that God created man in His image and man has returned the favor*.

God is not only a loving God, but just God who has vengeance for those who reject Him. It is the anticipation of that coming great day of God's wrath known as the Day of the Lord that is in view in the fifth seal. That day will come during the 7 year period of Tribulation. (the last 3.5 years)
The 5th seal marks the mid point of the Tribulation period.

These saints – martyrs will be killed during the time of all the judgments. The persecution will reveal who is truly redeemed and who is not.

The world's hostility toward Jesus Christ and His followers will not be able to prevent the gospel of the kingdom from being preached.

The persecution which began early in the ½ of the tribulation, will intensify dramatically after the Antichrist sets him self up.

Saw **Under the Altar** – resurrection had not yet taken place… they are the first fruits of those who will be saved throughout the Tribulation. Some will be Jews.

Slain because of their loyalty to Jesus in sharing their testimony.

Verse 10 – **judgment is cried for**… A prayer for pardon is appropriate in a time of grace. But when grace is finished and judgment comes, prayers for divine, holy retribution are fitting. These prayers are not from a desire for revenge, but are a protest against all that is sinful.

This prayer will move God's hand in the 6th and 7th seals.

The bases for this appeal for vengeance is based on tow of God's attributes… **Holy and True**.

How long – they are asking the question because they have a desire to see Satan and Antichrist destroyed, iniquity defeated, the wicked judged and Jesus Christ reigning in glory on the earth.

The Promise – 2 fold

1. **White Robe** – reward of grace symbolizing God's gift of eternal righteousness, blessedness, dignity, and honor.
2. **Rest a little longer** – to enjoy the bliss of heavenly rest.
    a. Little longer – the time will not be long delayed.

Fellow servants and brethren – two classes of people

a. Those alive and willing to die – but won't.
b. Those who will be killed.

Palmer – this seal recognizes the reality of a suffering church set in the midst of the world.

There cry is very much like the cry of the prophets in the OT who lament the apparent slowness of holy judgment upon evil.

Verse 12-14

[12] I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, [13] and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. [14] The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

Lenski-

Barclay – John is using pictures very familiar to his Jewish readers. The end of time the earth would be shattered and there would be cosmic upheaval and destruction. 5 elements which can all be abundantly illustrated from the O T and from the books written between the Testaments.

1. Earthquake – Amos 8:8 at the coming of the Lord the earth will tremble. Ezekiel 38:19 there will be a great shaking in the land of Israel. Joel 2:10 the earth will quake and the heavens will tremble…. The Jewish prophets and seers saw a time when earth would be shattered and a tide of destruction would flow over the old world before the new world was born.

2. Darkening of Sun and Moon – Amos 8:9 the sun will set at mid-day, and earth will grow dark in the clear day light. Isaiah 13:10 the stars will not shine; the sun will be darkened in his going forth and the moon will not cause her light to shine….. Matthew 24:29, Mark 13:24 & Luke 23:45.

3. Falling of Stars - To the Jew this idea was specially terrible, for the order of the heavens was the very guarantee of the unchanging fidelity of God. The end time will be a time when the most reliable things in the universe will become a disorderly and terrifying chaos.

4. Folding up of the heavens – The picture in this passage is of a roll stretched out and held open, and then suddenly split down the middle so that each half recoils and rolls up. Isaiah 13:13 God will shake the heavens. Psalm 102:25 They will be changed like a garment and folded up. At the end the eternal heavens themselves will be rent in two.

5. Moving of the hills and the islands of the sea - Jeremiah 4:24 The mountains will tremble and the hills will be moved. John saw a time when the most unshakeable things would be shaken and when even rocky isles like Patmos would be lifted from their foundation.

We must not think that these pictures are to be taken literally. Their point is that John is taking every terrifying thing that can be imagined and piling them all together to give a picture of the terrors of the end time. Today, with our increased scientific knowledge, we might well paint the picture in different terms; but it is not the picture that matters. What matters is the terrors which John and the Jewish seers foresaw when god would invade the earth when time was coming to an end.

MacArthur -

Palmer –