

And what could the 7 seals, 7 trumpets, and 7 bowls of God's wrath be telling us?

Futurists say that "The book of Revelation details the horror" that we can expect in some coming 7-year Tribulation. The Symbolic camp has at least 3 other insights:

1. **Real history is made by God, who responds to the prayers of His people.** We see 4 horsemen, 4 active powers: Conquerors/Kings, Wars, Famines, Plagues. For all appearances, the 4 horsemen seem to be making history; actually, **they are not. History is really being made by the prayers and testimony of the martyrs**, the 5th and 6th seals. In this section, the only undisputable "good guys" are the martyrs, the Church turned to the Lord; they seem powerless, capable only of going to catastrophe. But **the real catastrophes are not wielded by horsemen, but by the judgments from God in response to their prayers** (6.12-7.3).
2. In each of the horrors, **God gives people an opportunity to repent**; but they do not, (Rev 9.20-21). **Instead, they curse God** (Rev 16.9, 11, 21).
3. **God's punishments are measured; He has put boundaries on them.** Eg, in Rev 8:
A third of the earth burned.
A third of the trees burned
A third of the living creatures in the sea died.
A third of the ships were destroyed
A third of the waters became wormwood
A third of the sun, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars were struck
A third of them would be darkened and the day would not shine for a third of it
It was not given to them to kill, but to torment for five months.
In their tails is **their power** to hurt people **for five months.**

The passage reminds me of a point that Joni Eareckson once made when being interviewed by Dennis Benson:

"When things are going well for us, God sometimes needs to make an appointment just to get our attention. Not so when we are hurting, whether physically or emotionally. God has our attention when we suffer."

(Benson did ~15,000 interviews for [United/Northern] Presbyterian Media Ministries from 1980-2021 on WDVE-FM, Pittsburgh, "Sunday Morning with Dennis Benson.")