

REVELATION MADE RELEVANT!

Friday Night Bible Study with Fr. Ward





† Cities of the seven churches
— Major travel route

(Constantinople)
Byzantium

BITHYNIA

• Nicaea

• Neapolis

• Samothrace

• Troy

• Troas

• Assos

• Lesbos

• Mitylene

• Chios

• Athens

• Samos

Patmos

• Cos

• Cnidus

RHODES

• Patara

• Myra

• Attalia

• Parga

• Hierapolis

• Laodicea

• Colossae

• Miletus

• Trogyllium

• Ephesus

• Smyrna

• Thyatira

PHRYGIA

• Antioch

• Iconium

• Lystra

• Derbe

CILICIA

• Tarsus

PAMPHYLIA

CYPRUS

• Salamis

• Paphos

• Antioch

• Seleucia

SYRIA



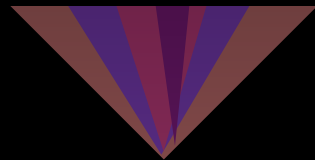
Introduction

Revelation: An Outline

- **Prologue (1:1–3)**
- 1. *Seven Messages to Seven Churches (1:4–3:22)*
- 2. *Seven Seals (4:1–8:5)*
- 3. *Seven Trumpets (8:2–11:19)*
- 4. *Seven Symbolic Histories (12:1–14:20)*
- 5. *Seven Bowls (15:1–16:21)*
- 6. *Seven Messages of Judgment (17:1–19:10)*
- 7. *Seven Visions (19:11–22:5)*
- **Epilogue (22:6–21)**

WORSHIP

Revelation 4 & 5



In Revelation 4, John sees that worship participates in the activity of heaven.

- ▶ Heaven is a place of worship
- ▶ When we worship God, we participate in a foretaste of our future before His throne.
- ▶ For this, the Spirit is given to us as a “downpayment” and “firstfruits.”
- ▶ Rev. 4 focus on God’s creative power while in Rev. 5 the focus is on His redemptive power

Revelation Chapter 4

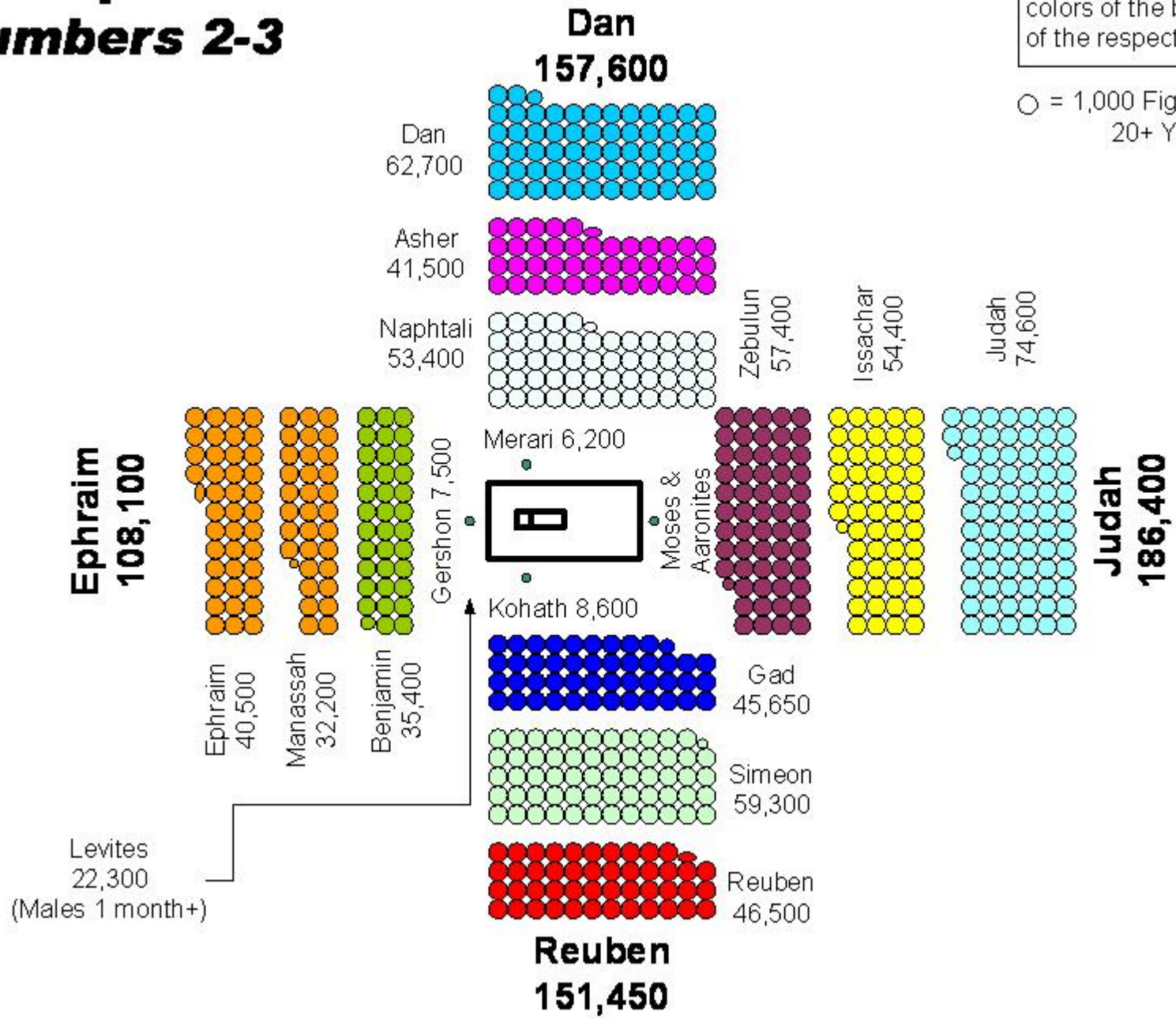
Enter the Throne Room



Encampments Numbers 2-3

Colors are close to the colors of the birthstones of the respective tribes.

○ = 1,000 Fighting Men
20+ Years



DAN
ASHER
NAPHTALI

NORTH SIDE
DAN
EAGLE

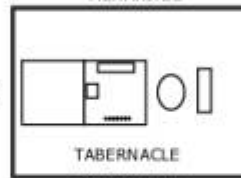


MERARITES

MOSES

PRIESTS

AARON



TABERNACLE

KOHATHITES

JUDAH
ISSACHAR
ZEBULUN



EAST SIDE
JUDAH
LION

WEST SIDE
EPHRAIM
OX

EPHRAIM
MANASSEH
BENJAMIN



GERSHOMITES



SOUTH SIDE
REUBEN
MAN

REUBEN
SIMEON
GAD

Heaven is a Temple in Revelation

- ▶ Tabernacle
- ▶ Ark of covenant (throne)
- ▶ incense altar, censers, incense bowls
- ▶ altar of sacrifice
- ▶ lampstands
- ▶ sea
- ▶ harps for worship



They cry out the Trisagion (4:8):

- HOLY, HOLY, HOLY is the Lord God
- Isaiah 6:
 - Isaiah a holy priest in a holy nation
 - But when he sees the LORD
 - he cries, "...I am unclean!"
 - only grace purifies him for his mission
- When we realize how "wholly other" God is, we realize our poverty before Him

Ark of covenant

- ▶ Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the **ark** of his covenant (11:19)
- ▶ In OT, **THRONE** also was ark (e.g., 1 Sam 4:4: “...the LORD Almighty, who is enthroned between the cherubim”)



Incense altar, censers

- ▶ **5:8:** elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of **incense**, which are the prayers of the saints
- ▶ **8:5:** given much **incense** to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. The smoke of the **incense**, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand





Altar of sacrifice

- 6:9: 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
- 9:13: I heard a voice coming from the horns **of** the golden **altar** that is before God
- 14:18: Still another angel, who had charge of the fire, came from the **altar**
- And I heard the **altar** respond



Sea

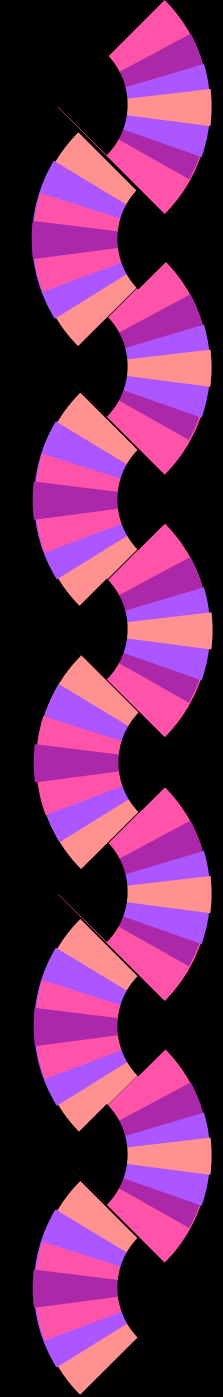
- ▶ Also before the throne there was what looked like a **sea** of glass, clear as crystal (4:6)
- ▶ And I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name (15:2)

- ▶ He made the **Sea** of cast metal, circular in shape, measuring ten cubits from rim to rim and five cubits high...Below the rim, gourds encircled it--ten to a cubit. The gourds were cast in two rows in one piece with the Sea. The **Sea** stood on twelve bulls, three facing north, three facing west, three facing south and three facing east. The Sea rested on top of them, and their hindquarters were toward the center (1 Kgs 7:23-25)
- ▶ the **Sea** and the twelve bulls under it (1 Kgs 7:44)



Revelation portrays heaven as a temple.

What do we do in temples?



*“Come up here” (4:1) resembles
call to Moses:*

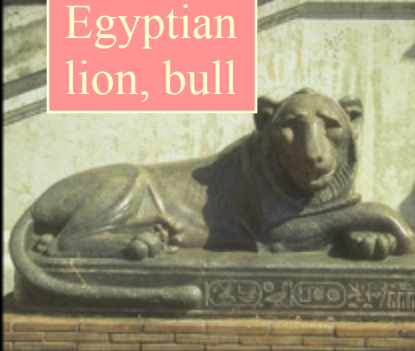
- Ex 24:12: The LORD said to Moses, “**Come up to me** on the mountain and stay here, and I will give you the tablets of stone...”
- Context of **Bible’s first throne-vision**: and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself.
¹¹ But God did not raise his hand against these leaders of the Israelites; **they saw God**, and they ate and drank (24:10-11)
- later tradition: Moses ascended to *heaven*

Lion, bull (here calf), eagle and human

- In Ezekiel, though, each creature had all four faces

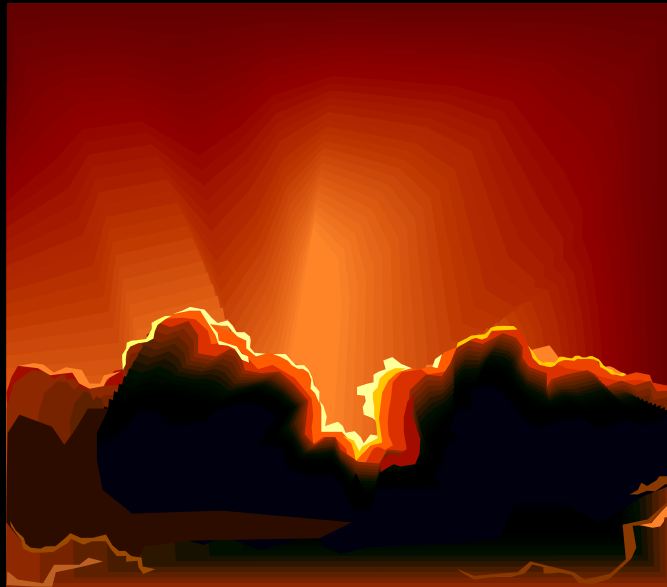


Egyptian lion, bull



Glorious as these creatures are, they serve NO other purpose but to extol God's greatness!

- So praise matters!
- And God is incomparably bigger than we can imagine!



LION

OF JUDAH



REVELATION 5:5



Lambs, by contrast



- ▶ Typically images of *helplessness*
- ▶ *Slaughtered* lamb: sacrifice
- ▶ Passover lamb's blood protected Israel from plagues!
- ▶ (if a will: death first attested)

Yeshua is thus the model for sacrificial martyrdom



- ▶ 6:9-11: 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. 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?" 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

Yeshua the Conqueror

- ▶ Yeshua “took” the Book (5:7; verb tense: dramatic action)
- ▶ Judaism: Angels offer prayers of saints to God (Tob. 12:15)
- ▶ Heavenly chorus here praises not Father, but LAMB (5:8)
- ▶ Lamb not only is worship (sacrifice) but receives worship!

Nations, kindreds, peoples, tongues



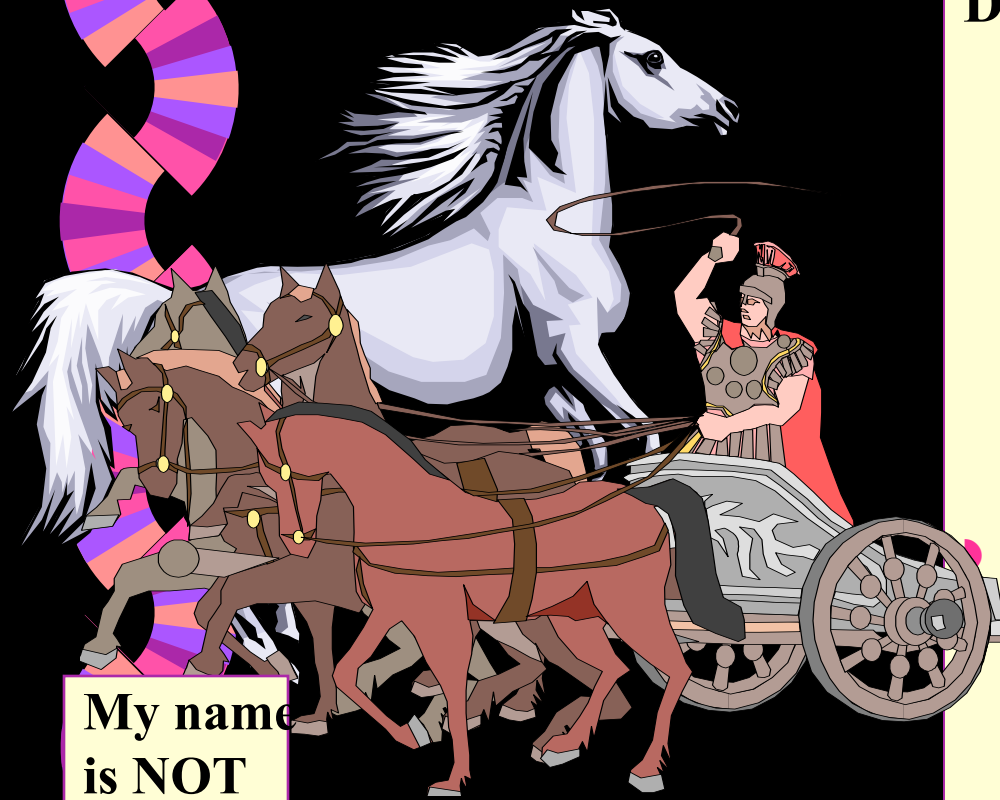
- 7 x Revelation includes this fourfold formula (in varying sequences)
- matches 3fold formula 6 x in Daniel (Dan 3:4, 7, 31; 5:19; 6:25; 7:14)
- 1st (Dan 3:4) is 4fold in Septuagint (Greek trans.)
- in some, worship image of beast (or Nebuchadnezzar)



Revelation 6

Seals of Judgment

Zechariah 1:8, 10; 6:2-4



**My name
is NOT
Mr. Ed**

During the night I had a vision--and there before me was a man riding a red horse! He was standing among the myrtle trees in a ravine. Behind him were red, brown and white horses....They are the ones the LORD has sent to go throughout the earth

The first chariot had red horses, the second black, the third white, and the fourth dappled--all of them powerful. ...These are the four spirits of heaven, going out from standing in the presence of the Lord of the whole world

The White Horse (6:2)



- White horses esp. prized
- “Bow” often = conquest in OT
- Mounted archers: esp. Parthians (9:14; 16:12)
- Parthians defeated Rome in A.D. 62
- Many Jews expected Parthians in end-time war

Rider #2: Red Horse (6:4)

- Later rabbis applied Zechariah's "rider on red horse" to judgment, "turning the world into blood"
- "Sword" = "war" over 100 x in OT
- Perhaps civil war here, considered worst kind





Are all the victims of war and conquest being punished for their own sins?

Or do these judgments address corporate guilt for societies and the world?

FAMINE (6:5-6)

6:5-6: 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. 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!"

- **Scales: balances used to weigh grain in market**
- **Staples for diet: barley, wheat, sometimes cheese, olives, fish, figs, eggs**
- **quart of wheat: feeds worker**
- **has family: buys 3x as much barley (cheaper)**
- **about 15 x usual prices!**
- **Many children would die**



DEATH on the pale horse (6:7-8)

Death often personified as an angel in Jewish sources

4 riders thus slay with:

- sword (violent death)
- famine
- pestilence
- added: wild animals (Ezek 5:17; 14:21)



*The evocative impact of such
judgment rhetoric:*

REPENT!





Martyrs as sacrifices (6:9-11)

Suffering is not just for the world:

1 Pet 4:17: For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

6:9: 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.

WHY were they
UNDER the altar?

In Leviticus, the blood of sacrifices was poured out at the base of the altar

Martyrs united with the sacrificial Lamb

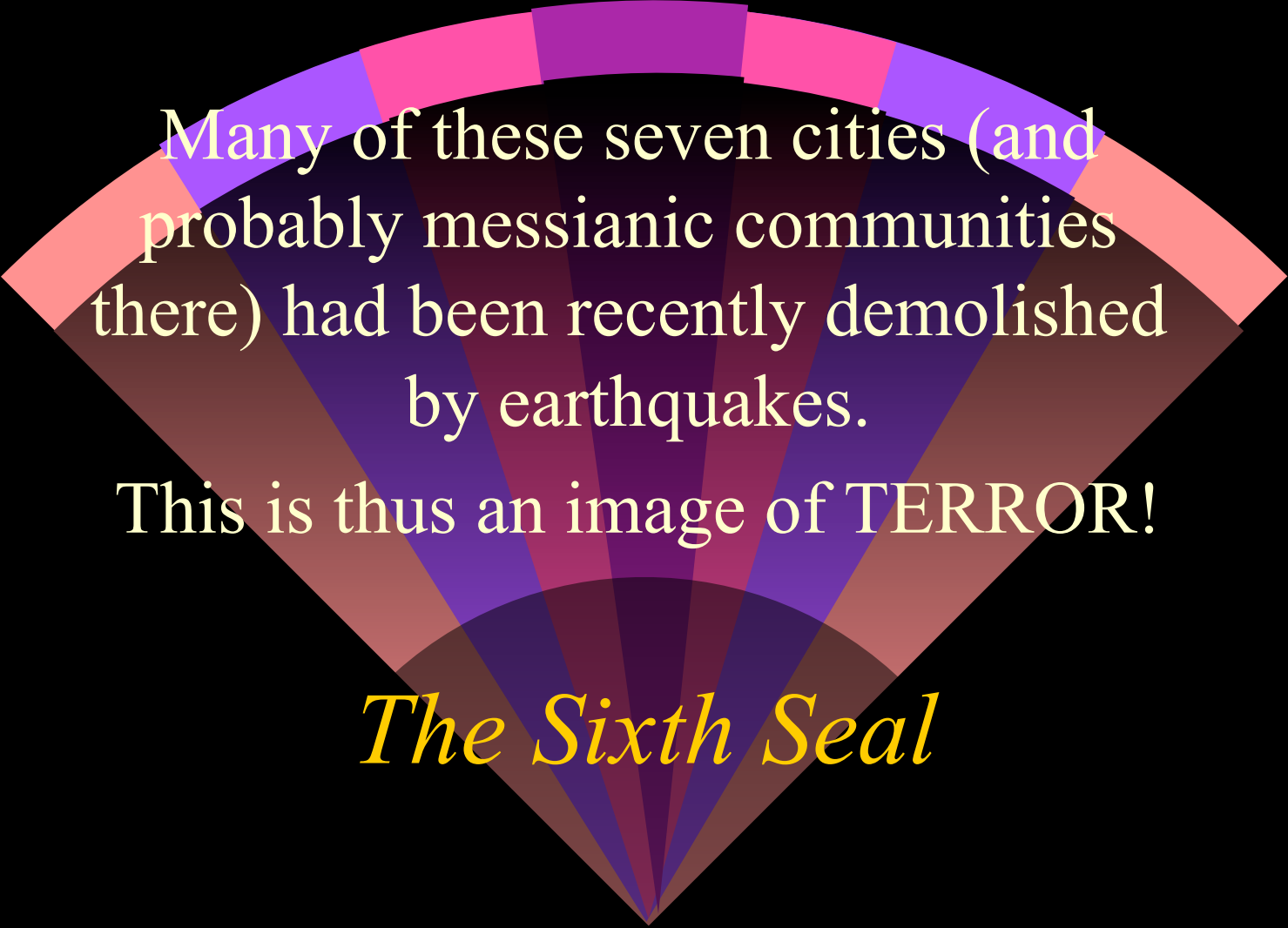




*Full number of martyrs
must be completed*

Prophets emphasized: witness to nations,
suffering of righteous in end-time

cf. Mk 13:9-12: You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them. *And the gospel must first be preached to all nations.* Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit. Brother will betray brother to death



Many of these seven cities (and probably messianic communities there) had been recently demolished by earthquakes.

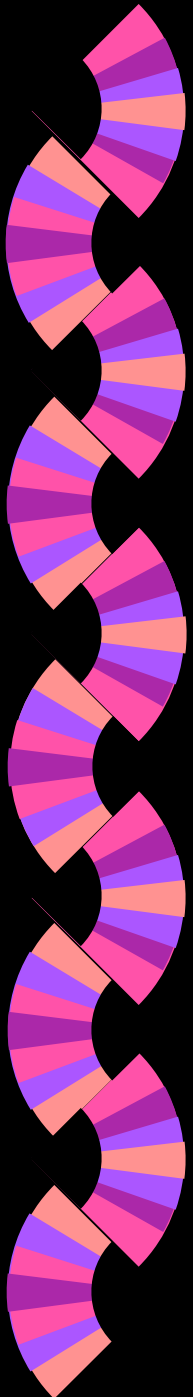
This is thus an image of TERROR!

The Sixth Seal

*But you'd never seen an
earthquake this big!*

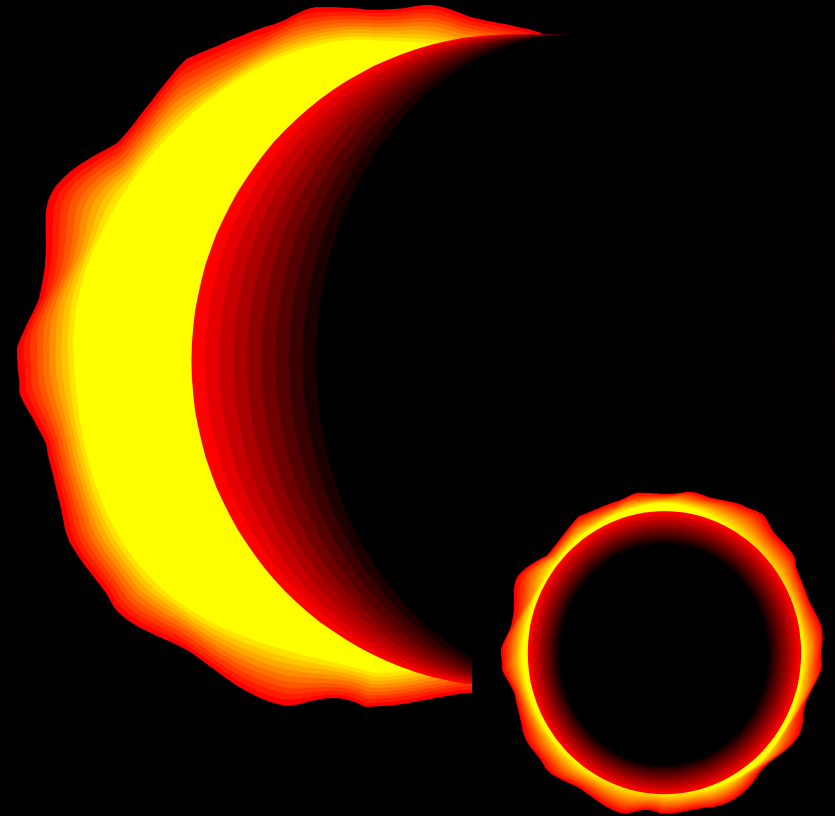


- OT spoke of an end-time earthquake that would move mountains (as here and in 11:13; 16:18)
- cf. Also Ps 97:5; Ezek 38:19-20; Zech 14:5
- They're not even in California!



*Most ancients were terrified by
the obscuring of sun or moon*

- ◆ But this is no little eclipse:
- ◆ 6:12: The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red

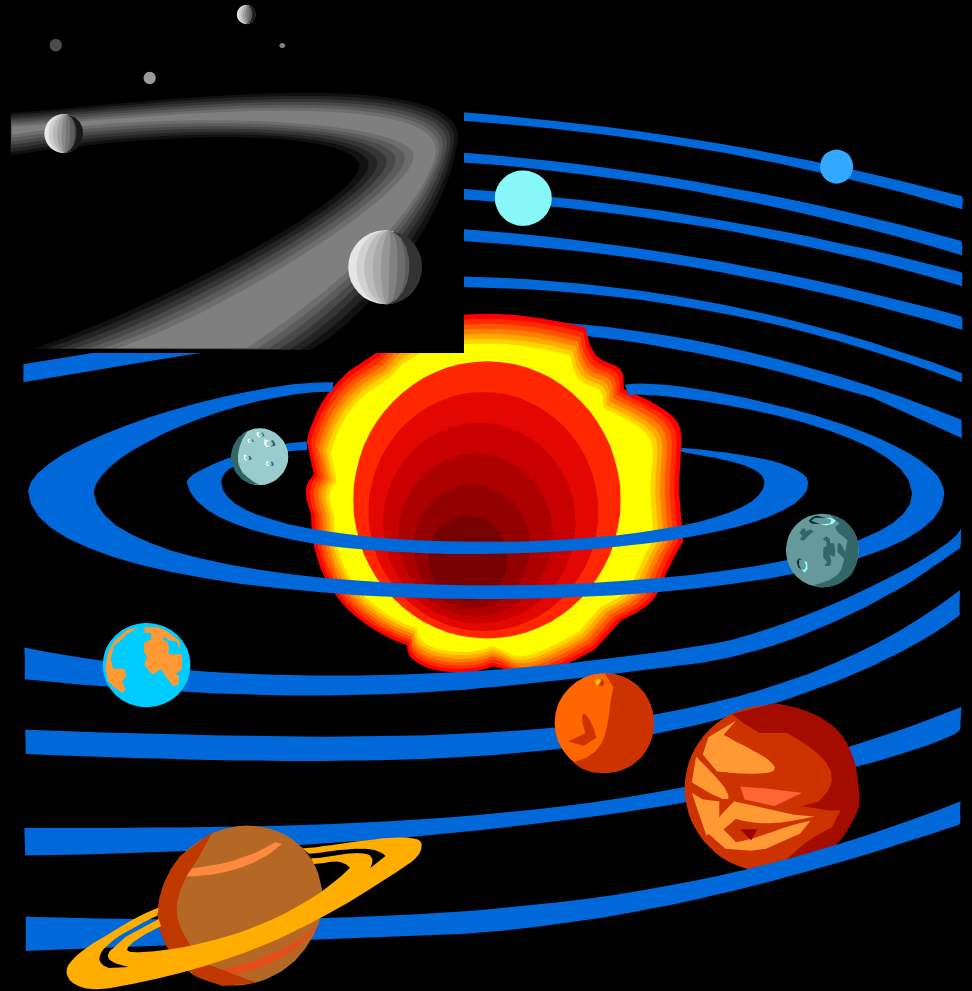


This is the dissolution of the cosmos

The end of the world
as we know it:

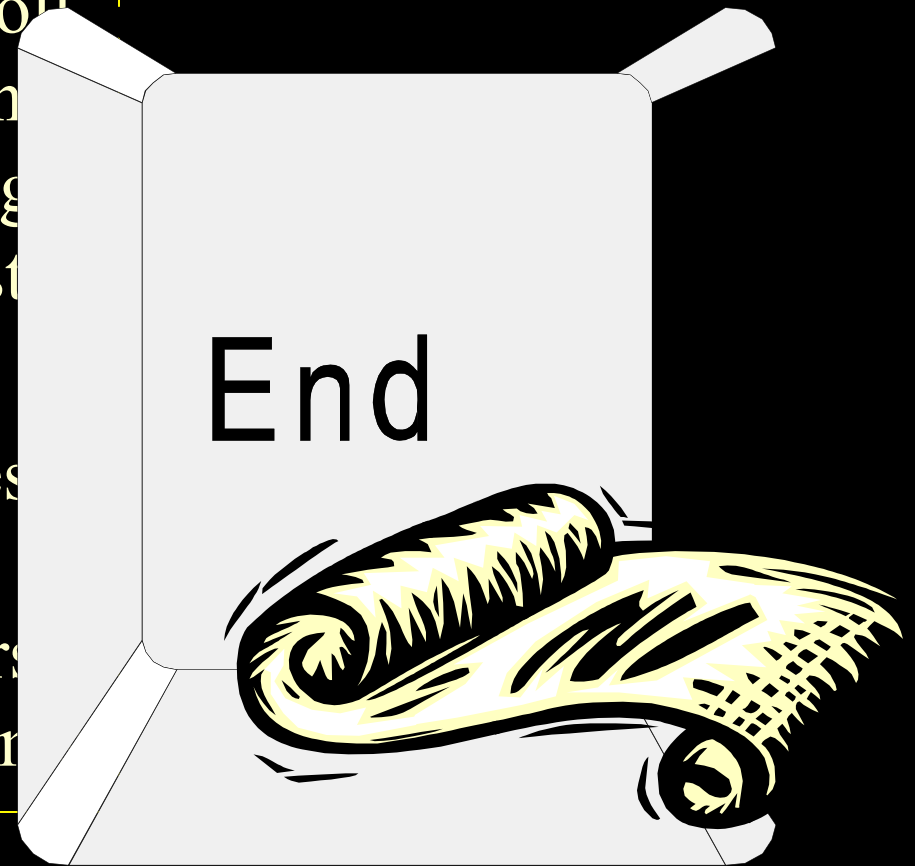
6:13: and the stars in
the sky fell to earth, as
late figs drop from a
fig tree when shaken
by a strong wind

Echoes Isa 34:4



6:14: The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

- Typically unroll scroll (with right hand) while rolling up what one had just finished (with the left)
- Other Jewish oracles used this image for end of age as universe unravelled at its search



People of ALL social stations will stand before Him in judgment

▶ 6:15: 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
▶ That includes Domitian!





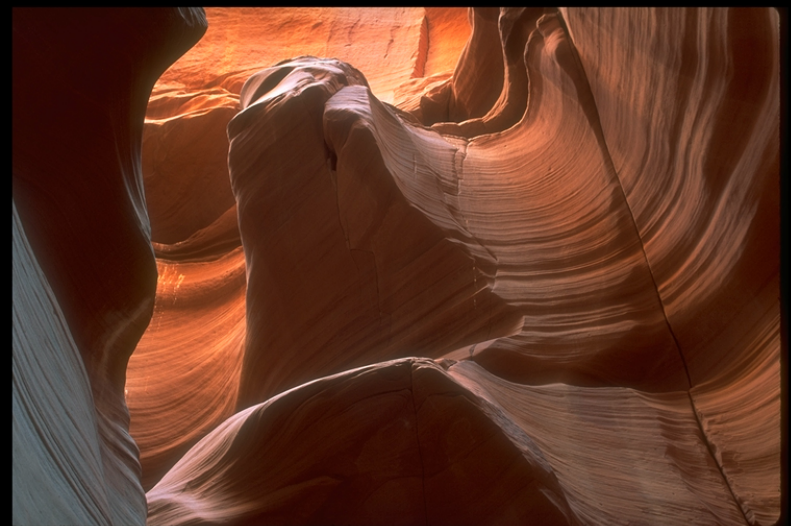
The Final Terror (6:16)

- 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!"
- **Hosea 10:8: Then they will say to the mountains, "Cover us!" and to the hills, "Fall on us!" (Israel in judgment)**
- **Isa 2:19: Men will flee to caves in the rocks and to holes in the ground from dread of the LORD and the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to shake the earth (Day of YHWH)**

6:17: For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?



*Caves and mountains were useful for
hiding from human enemies*



believers in Sardis
may have recalled the
mountain cave-tombs
facing their acropolis

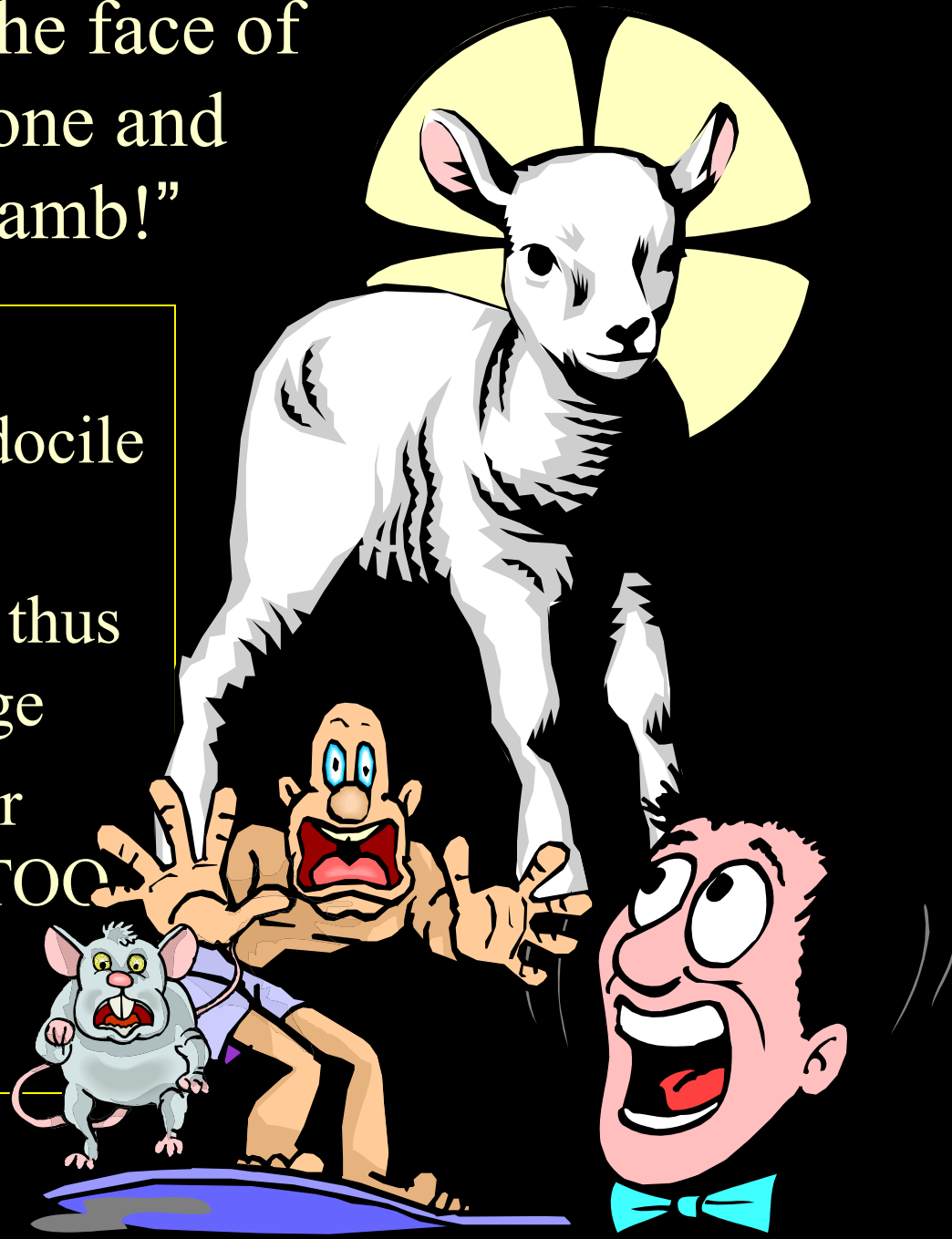


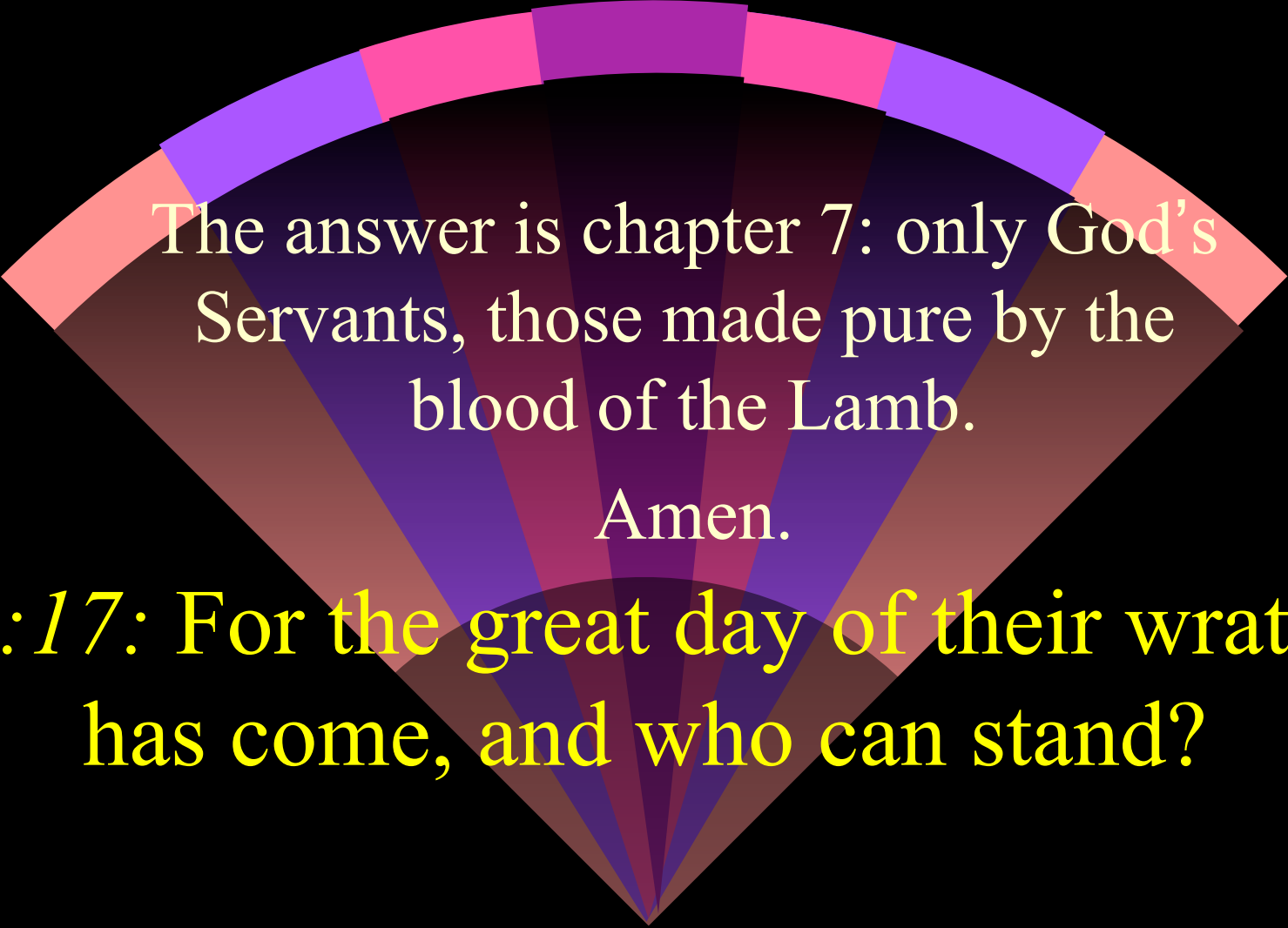


But such hiding-places
were futile before the
One who moves mountains (6:14)

6:16: "... hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!"

- Lambs normally among the most docile of creatures
- "Wrath of Lamb" thus a JARRING image
- They don't cry for mercy--it's now TOO LATE for that





The answer is chapter 7: only God's
Servants, those made pure by the
blood of the Lamb.

Amen.

6:17: For the great day of their wrath
has come, and who can stand?