

## THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Week 9 – Revelation 6 – The Remaining Seals are Loosed

March 21, 2017

### REVELATION 6:3-17

*When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, “Come.”*

*<sup>4</sup> Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.*

*<sup>5</sup> When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come.” So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand.*

*<sup>6</sup> And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine.”*

*<sup>7</sup> When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, “Come.”*

*<sup>8</sup> So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.*

*<sup>9</sup> When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.*

*<sup>10</sup> And they cried with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”*

*<sup>11</sup> Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.*

*<sup>12</sup> I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon<sup>l</sup> became like blood.*

*<sup>13</sup> And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind.*

*<sup>14</sup> Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.*

*<sup>15</sup> And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,*

*<sup>16</sup> and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!”*

*<sup>17</sup> For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”*

The seven seals encompass the entire period of the Tribulation culminating with the return of Jesus.

The seventh seal appears to contain the seven trumpets (Rev. 8:1-11:19); the seventh trumpet (Rev. 11:15) appears to contain the seven bowl judgments (Rev. 16:1-21). Thus, the seven seals contain all the judgments to the end when Jesus returns.

The unloosing of the 7 seals gives us the entire picture of GOD REDEEMING the earth, of God taking back the title deed to the earth which equates to the redemption of creation and the Lamb taking dominion over the earth!

Within these seven seals are found all the judgments to be poured out upon the earth and the “earth dwellers.” We must remember that of those left behind following the Rapture, there will be MULTITUDES who will come to know Jesus.

MULTITUDES will be saved. In the midst of unparalleled judgment, there is unparalleled evangelism and salvation! The glory of God in salvation through judgment!

Of course, this does now mean that we don’t share with those who don’t know Jesus now!

It is “all” those who are labeled as “earth dwellers” (non-believers) who will receive the mark of the beast which will ensure their being cast into the lake of fire!

All 7 seals enclose the scroll as a UNIT! All the seals encompass the seven-year Tribulation. Some commentators attempt to divide the seven years, contributing some judgments to the wrath of Satan and other judgments to the wrath of God. BUT, it is the Lamb Who opens all seven seals and we see the total bombardment of divine wrath against the domain of Satan and his forces. A study of Rev. 8:1 through Rev. 18 indicates that the seven seals will contain the seven trumpet and seven bowl judgments which will cover the entire seven years of the Tribulation up to Jesus’ coming immediately after God pours His Holy Spirit on the one third of the Jewish population left at the time of Armageddon.

REMEMBER: All seven seals will encompass the events leading up to the eviction of Satan and his forces and taking permanent possession of the earth.

Jesus broke open the first seal on the scroll that is the title deed of the earth and a rider on a white horse emerged with a bow seemingly desirous of bringing peace without violence. Yet, we note that he is going forth conquering and to conquer.

The coming of the rider, the antichrist, on the white horse correlates to Jesus’ “Olivet Discourse”:

Matt. 24:4-5 - *Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you.*

<sup>5</sup> *For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.*

In His “Olivet Discourse,” Jesus went on to say

Matt. 24:6-7 - *And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.* <sup>7</sup> *For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom*

And, so we read...

Rev. 6:3-4 - *When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, “Come.”* <sup>4</sup> *Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword. Observations...*

- Might this be the aftermath of the antichrist’s emergence? Some say the seals are the result of Satan’s wrath; however, Who is breaking the seals? Who is calling the riders to “come”?
- The Apostle John was in the Spirit (Rev. 1:10; 4:2). John was under the control of the Holy Spirit. John describes this supernatural revelation by means of a vision. John is in the throne room of God.
- John sees Him, Jesus, open the second seal.
- The second living creature (an angel) says, with no voice like thunder, “Come”. Why is there no voice like thunder? The loud command to the first rider, the antichrist,

appears to not be necessary for the other riders/horses because the next three riders follow as a train.

- Perhaps these next three horses speak to the impact of the peace treaty.
- The result of “Come” is “another” horse, the second horse.

The second horse is fiery red. Some have offered in their understanding of Revelation that the color red is symbolic of war and bloodshed. Some have likened the color red to Satan who is noted as the *great red dragon* in Rev. 12:3. Gk – *pyrros* – having the color of fire. The dragon, that old serpent, Satan, is described in the same fashion – *pyrros* (Rev. 12:2).

- *and it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.*

- How do we understand the taking of peace from the earth (note: no percentage of the earth is given), and the granting (?) of people killing one another, and the giving of the sword to the second rider? Ultimate power rests with God.

- The Gk. word for “kill” means “to slaughter,” “killing by violence,” “butchering.” This will be a time of unprecedented bloodshed.

- We have seen in Scripture where God, in judging nations, people groups, causes people ambushing people within their own ranks (Eze.38:21 – *every man’s sword will be against his brother* – War of Gog and Magog)

Matt. 24:7b - *And there will be famines,*

Rev. 6:5-6 - *When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come.” So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. <sup>6</sup> And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine.”*

- Worldwide war (second rider) can destroy the food supply which would lead to global hunger.
- *Scales* - used to weigh food which indicates a great scarcity.
- *A quart* – the amount necessary to sustain one person for one day.
- *A denarius* – one day’s average wage. One day’s work will provide food for one person – for one day.
- *Three quarts of barley* – barley was considered to be lower nutritionally. Cost: another denarius.
- *Oil and wine* –in the midst of common commodities being scarce, luxury items, oil and wine, will remain available for the upper class...it appears.

Matt. 24:7b - *there will be...pestilences, (fatal epidemic diseases)*

Rev. 6:7-8 - *When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, “Come.” <sup>8</sup> So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.*

- *Pale* – the color of a person who is sick.

- The name of the rider – *Death*.
- And, *Hades* (the grave) followed with him (perhaps on foot). Death and Hades are inseparable in that the grave, Hades, takes in all that Death supplies. Death comes first and the grave follows.
  - With this fourth rider we see Death and Hades are personified.
  - In Rev. 20:13 Death and Hades deliver up the dead that are in them at the Great White Throne judgment.
  - *Power was given to them* - we see God allowing the judgment for His purposes.
  - *Power over a fourth of the earth* (today's global population – 7.4B; one fourth equates to 1,850,000,000). With dying bodies scattered over the earth, we can understand a pandemic outbreak
    - Those who survive the sword, and hunger will be weakened and will become prey for beasts. What a reversal! Man had been given dominion over the beasts (Gen. 1:26-28; 9:2-3) and now in this judgment, man is given into the hand of beasts.

This is God's wrath well in advance of the sixth and seventh seals. In Eze. 14:21 God speaks of His four severe judgments that he had brought upon Jerusalem and will. Those severe judgments: the sword and famine and wild beasts and pestilence.

Jesus speaks of famines, pestilences and...

Matt. 24:7b - *And there will be...earthquakes in various places.*

Matt. 24:8 - *All these are the beginning of sorrows.*

These are the birth pangs – intensifying contractions prior to the delivery! Yet, what we see during the birth pangs: NO ESCAPE!

Matt. 24:9 - *Then* (after the birth pangs (we see a progression in the events during the seven years of Tribulation) *they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake.* We have arrived at the middle of the Tribulation – 3.5 years into the Tribulation. The deceptive peace treaty brokered by the antichrist has been broken by the antichrist. Persecution runs rampant (cross reference Rev. 12).

Rev. 6:9-11 - *When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.*<sup>10</sup> *And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"*<sup>11</sup> *Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.*

- *Under the altar* – there is speculation as to which altar. Many suggest that this altar is the altar of incense in the Temple from where prayers go up. The souls of the martyrs are crying out to God. Many suggest that this is the altar of burnt offering in the outer court of the Temple. The blood of the martyred Tribulation saints can be considered an "offering" before God.

- *The souls* – these martyrs are not yet resurrected. They will be resurrection at the end of the Tribulation (Dan. 12:1-2).
- Though the physical lives of these Tribulation saints were terminated, they are very much alive! The Apostle John “saw” them and heard them crying out with a loud voice.
- They *had been slain for the word of God* – It’s difficult to determine exactly when these saints were martyred. However, because of the persecution of believers at mid-Trib (Rev. 12), this fifth seal seems to mark mid-Trib. Remember, the seven seals take us through to the end of the Tribulation. It appears that the fifth seal brings us to the middle of the Tribulation.
  - Note that they *had been slain* which appears to indicate that this was prior to John’s seeing them. John saw their disembodied souls. Therefore, Jesus’ breaking the fifth seal did not prompt their deaths. AND, their death wasn’t due to war, famine, pestilence or beasts. They were slain for the word of God! Their testimony was seen as dangerous and undesirable by the false religious system that we’ll see in Rev. 17:6.
  - *How long, O Lord* – we see God’s ownership of these Tribulation saints.
  - *until You judge and avenge our blood* – What is the timeframe? We don’t exactly know other than it appears to be taking place at the mid-Trib point or afterwards. How will God judge and avenge their blood? At the end of the Tribulation.
    - Isa. 63:3-4 - *Who is this who comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, this One who is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength? “I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save.”*<sup>2</sup> *Why is Your apparel red, and Your garments like one who treads in the winepress?*<sup>3</sup> *“I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with Me. for I have trodden them in My anger, and trampled them in My fury; their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, and I have stained all My robes.”*<sup>4</sup> *For the day of vengeance is in My heart, and the year of My redeemed has come.* WHO is this? Jesus! He is coming from Edom/Petra w/ bloodied garments as He is treading the winepress of His wrath. This is part of His Second Coming. Jesus is the Kinsman Redeemer. He is the Blood Avenger! The Blood Avenger within a family was given the responsibility of avenging the blood of the family member who had been murdered!
      - *Then a white robe was given to each of them* – these are the white robes promised to the overcomers (Rev. 3:5, 18). This is the righteousness of God which is obtained not by works, but by faith (Rom. 3:21-26; II Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9).
      - *They should rest a little while longer* – their afterlife is seen as rest!
      - *...until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed* – God, Who has the power to step in and end this butchery at any moment, instead chooses to allow it to play out. Although we will never fully comprehend God’s divine patience, we know that it is explained in part by His great mercy toward those who have not yet turned. If God were to move immediately in vengeance mode at the time of the martyrs’ request, what does that say about those who were yet to become believers? They would be eternally lost.

- *Killed as they were* – these fellow servants and brethren of the martyred saints whose souls are under the altar, according to God’s plan, must be killed - for their testimony...just as these martyred souls were killed! Why? For God’s glory. That must be our answer!

The first four seals can be described as an intensification of what we have seen in history but with a global impact. The fifth seal brings us to the middle of the Tribulation. With the opening of the sixth seal, however, what spills out is unique!

Rev. 6:12 - *I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood.*<sup>13</sup> *And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind (that easily).*<sup>14</sup> *Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.*<sup>15</sup> *And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,*<sup>16</sup> *and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!”*<sup>17</sup> *For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”*

Jesus said earthquakes would be one of the signs of “the beginning of sorrows” (Matt. 24:7-8). The Hebrew prophets predicted a time where God would intensely shake the earth (Hag. 2:7).

In seal 6 there are five different “previews” of the remainder of the Tribulation period. These “previews” can be found in the trumpets. When the bowl judgments occur, they will do so in a very short period of time towards the end. At the opening of the sixth seal, perhaps we are looking at one of those “previews” of the rest of the Tribulation when we read...

*I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake. Joel 2:10 – in describing “the day of the Lord,” the prophet explains that *the earth quakes before them* (the enemy), *the heavens tremble; the sun and moon grow dark, and the stars diminish their brightness.* This catastrophic event extends beyond the geography of the earth to affect the cosmic realm...*

*The sun became black as sackcloth of hair* – Jesus said that cosmic signs would be associated with the time of the end.

*the moon became blood* – the entire moon will take on a reddish appearance.

*And the stars of heaven fell to the earth* – Gk word for star in this passage is *asteres* from which we get the word *asteroid*. Here and in Rev. 8:10 *stars* are said to fall to the earth. It seems best to understand these as asteroids (or meteors) for even the smallest sun would consume the entire planet should it ever fall to earth.

Since the seven seals encompass all the judgments and then the Second Coming, let’s look at what happens after the tribulation re: the cosmic disturbances...

Matt. 24:29-30 - *Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the*

heavens will be shaken. <sup>30</sup> *Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*

Rev. 6:14 – *Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up* – the Gk. word for “receded” is the same word that was used to describe the “parting” of Paul and Silas from Barnabas and Mark (Acts 15:39). The NASB - *The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up.* At the Great White Throne judgment – nonbelievers standing before God, *Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them* (Rev. 20:11). GOD is going to cause this to happen and He’s Almighty. HE created the earth. Certainly He can pull it apart! We see the universe coming apart in the book of Revelation as we look for new heavens and a new earth!

Timeframe?

Isa. 34:4, 6, 8 – Context: God has judged the nations and destroyed all their armies – utterly destroying them. Does this sound like near the end – Armageddon? <sup>4</sup> *All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll; ...For the LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Edom* (Petra – Isa. 63)... <sup>8</sup> *For it is the day of the LORD’s vengeance, the year of recompense for the cause of Zion.* When Jesus returns at His physical Second Coming, it is the day of vengeance, and the year of His redeemed has come!

After the heavens are shaken, we read...

Matt. 24:30 - *Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven....* Could it be that the sky recedes/parts to reveal Jesus return? Remember, the seals cover the seven year Tribulation to the Second Coming!

Continuing in Rev. 6...

and every mountain and island was moved out of its place – It has been suggested that the seismic disturbances will be of such magnitude that the entire geography of the earth is altered. This is a preview. In Rev. 16:20 we read that *every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.*

Rev. 6:15-16 - *And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, <sup>16</sup> and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!*

*The kings of the earth:*

Psa. 2:2 - *The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying* (timeframe of Psalm – directly before the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom).

Rev. 17:2 – the kings of the earth will commit fornication with Babylon.

Rev. 16:14 – when the sixth bowl is poured out the *spirits of demons, performing signs, go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.*

*the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men* – power given to the leaders during this time.

*every slave and every free man* – while this timeframe might be looked upon as being at the “height” of humanism’s achievements, at the time of the end, slavery will not yet have been abolished.

*hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains* – the magnitude of the judgments coming upon the earth affects every man! Why does every man hide? It is a vain attempt to hide from almighty God. Isn’t this a classic scenario of man’s response to his own sin? Hiding from God!

Rev. 6:16 - *and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!* It appears that they see God Who sits on the throne. They are not asking for God’s mercy, they are rather calling out to inanimate objects and asking for a covering instead of asking for the covering of God in Jesus, the Lamb of God! There will be no hiding at the Great White Throne of Judgment – God’s final judgment of the non-believers – at the end of the Millennial Kingdom.

How do people respond to us when we share Jesus?

II Cor. 2:15-16 - *For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.<sup>16</sup> To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?* We do not share in our own strength. We present the Gospel only through the power of the Holy Spirit.

*The wrath of the Lamb* – The Lamb Who was silently led to the slaughter (Isa. 53:7) at the cross, Who took our judgment at the cross, grants forgiveness to those who put their trust in HIM ALONE for their salvation...this Lamb is now meting out wrath. These who cry out to the rocks to fall upon them, had rejected Jesus. And now, upon seeing the Lamb and recognizing who He is, it’s too late!

Rev. 6:17 - *For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”* *has come* – the Gk. word *helthen* is aorist indicative which refers to a previous arrival of the wrath, not something about to take place. These who ask for the mountains and the rocks to fall upon them are recognizing the wrath of the Lamb!

*who is able to stand?* What a question! *Able* is in the present tense. These people are concerned about now! That's been the problem since the fall – not thinking about the future – not concerned about an afterlife!

### QUESTIONS

So?

V8 moments?

Impact?

What are you doing to do with these truths?

How will your walk with the Lord be impacted by these truths?

### HOMEWORK

Reread this handout and go over the Scripture passages.

Study the chart of the end times flow. Make observations. Note questions.

Read Revelation 7.