

## REVELATION CHAPTER SIX

### BOOK OF THE REVELATION

What follows represents the unedited lecture notes of Pastor Merritt's teaching of the book of the Revelation. Please feel free to reproduce all or part for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. The teachings of the Revelation represent a compilation of things learned from such men as Col. R. B. Thieme, Lewis Sperry Chafer, Charles Ryrie, Arno C. Gabelein, John Walvoord, Hal Lindsay, Dwight Pentecost, along with an exegesis of the Greek and Hebrew texts.

Revelation

Lesson 64

4-3-2001

1. Tonight we will continue our study of the Book of The Revelation.
2. Last week I finished the exegesis and analysis of Revelation chapter five. I think it is appropriate to stop and take our bearings before we start chapter six.
3. Chapter six recall describes the beginning of the wrath of God for planet earth.
4. To this end let me give you an expanded translation of Revelation chapters one, two, three, four and five with brief comment.

The Revelation Chapter One

This chapter deals with the introduction, occasion and person of the apocalypse.

1:1 "This is what God showed to Jesus Christ, so that He could tell his servants what must happen soon. Christ then sent an angel with the message to His servant John.

1:2 John related that which he heard from the angel of God.

1:3 God will bless everyone who teaches this book, and He will bless everyone who listens and concentrates on that teaching. When the prophetic events begin they will come in rapid fire order.

1:4 From John to the seven churches in Asia. I pray that you will be blessed with kindness and peace from the God, Who is and was and is coming. May you receive kindness and peace from the seven fold essence of God the Holy Spirit Who is there before the throne of God.

1:5 May kindness and peace be yours from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness. Jesus was the first to conquer death, and He is the ruler of all earthly kings. Christ loves us, and by His spiritual death on the cross He set us free from our sins.

1:6 We will rule with Him as kings and serve God the Father as priests. To Him be glory and power forever and ever! Amen.

1:7 Look! He is coming with the clouds. Everyone will see Him, even the ones who stuck a sword through him. All people on earth will weep because of Him. Yes, it will happen! Amen.

1:8 The Lord God says, "I am the Alpha and Omega, the One Who is and was and is coming. I am the sovereign and omnipotent God!"

1:9 I, John, am a follower of Christ just like you. We suffer because Jesus is our King, but He gives us the strength to endure. I was sent exiled to the island of Patmos, because I preached God's message and was a faithful witness of Jesus.

1:10 On the Lord's day the Spirit took control of me, and behind me I heard a loud voice that sounded like a trumpet.

1:11 The voice said, 'Write in a book what you see. Then send it to the seven churches in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.'

1:12 When I turned to see who was speaking to me, I saw seven gold lampstands.

1:13 There amidst the lampstands was someone Who seemed to be the Son of Man. He was wearing a robe that reached down to His feet, and a gold cloth was wrapped around His chest.

1:14 His head and His hair were white as wool or snow, and His eyes looked like flames of fire.

1:15 His feet were glowing like bronze being heated in a furnace, and His voice sounded like the roar of a waterfall.

1:16 He held seven stars in His right hand, and a sharp double edged sword was in His mouth. His face was shining as bright as the sun at noon.

1:17 When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead person. But He put His right hand on me and said: Don't be afraid! I am the first and the last,

1:18 and the living one. I died, but now I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys to death and the world of the dead.

1:19 Three things I want you to write about: (1) what you now see (2) what will be in the future for the universal church and then (3) what will happen after the universal church has been translated to heaven at the rapture.

1:20 I will explain the mystery of the seven stars that you saw and the seven gold lamp stands. The seven stars are the pastors of the seven churches and the lamp stands are the seven churches listed in chapters two and three.

## Revelation Chapter Two

In chapters two and three we find a message not only to seven extant churches located in Asia Minor, but interlaced in these chapters are several historical trends to be experienced by the universal church during the Church Age.

### Ephesus - The Universal Church From A.D. 32-100

Rev 2:1 "To the pastor of the church in Ephesus write: "These are the words of Him Who holds the seven stars in His right hand and walks among the seven golden lamp stands:

Rev 2:2 I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and found them false.

Rev 2:3 You have persevered and have endured hardships for My name, and have not grown weary.

Rev 2:4 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love.

Rev 2:5 Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lamp stand from its place.

Rev 2:6 But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the followers of Nicolaus with their heterodoxy and hierarchical distinctions, which I also hate.  
Rev 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

#### Smyrna - The Universal Church From A.D. 100-300

Rev 2:8 "To the Pastor of the church in Smyrna write: These are the words of Him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again.  
Rev 2:9 I know your afflictions and your poverty--yet you are rich! I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan.  
Rev 2:10 Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for a short time. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.  
Rev 2:11 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death.

#### Pergamum - The Universal Church From A.D. 300-800

Rev 2:12 To the pastor of the church in Pergamum write: These are the words of Him Who has the sharp, double-edged sword.  
Rev 2:13 I know where you live--where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to My name. You did not renounce your faith in Me, even in the days of Antipas, My faithful witness, who was put to death in your city--where Satan lives.  
Rev 2:14 Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality.  
Rev 2:15 Likewise you also have those who hold to the teachings of Nicolaus.  
Rev 2:16 Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come and fight against them with the sword of My mouth.  
Rev 2:17 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give you the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it.

#### Thyatira - The Universal Church From A.D.800-1517 (1517 is the generally accepted year of the Reformation)

Rev 2:18 "To the pastor of the church in Thyatira write: These are the words of the Son of God, Whose eyes are like blazing fire and Whose feet are like burnished bronze.  
Rev 2:19 I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first.  
Rev 2:20 Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel who represents the church at Rome, and calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads My servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols.

Rev 2:21 I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling.  
Rev 2:22 So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways.  
Rev 2:23 I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am He who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.  
Rev 2:24 Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets (I will not impose any other burden on you):  
Rev 2:25 Only hold on to what you have until I come.  
Rev 2:26 To him who overcomes and does My will to the end, I will give authority over the nations--  
Rev 2:27 "I will rule them with an iron scepter; I will dash them to pieces like pottery"--just as I have received authority from My Father.  
Rev 2:28 I will also give him the morning star.  
Rev 2:29 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

### Revelation Chapter Three

#### Sardis - And the Universal Church From A.D. 1517-2012

Rev 3:1 "To the pastor of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of Him Who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead.  
Rev 3:2 Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of the Father.  
Rev 3:3 Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.  
Rev 3:4 Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy.  
Rev 3:5 He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before My Father and Our angels.  
Rev 3:6 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

#### Philadelphia - The Church at the Moment of the Rapture

Rev 3:7 "To the pastor of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of Him who is holy and true, Who determines who are His at the rapture. What He opens no one can shut, and what He shuts no one can open.  
Rev 3:8 I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept My word and have not denied My name.

Rev 3:9 I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, those who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars--I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you. This will be done on earth at the marriage feast of the Lamb, when I return.

Rev 3:10 Since you have kept My command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth. You will not experience the trauma of the Tribulation.

Rev 3:11 I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crowns. Rev 3:12 He who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of My God.

Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven; and I will also write on him My new name.

Rev 3:13 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

### Laodicea - The world Church of the Tribulation

Rev 3:14 "To the pastor of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation.

Rev 3:15 I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other!

Rev 3:16 So, because you are lukewarm--neither hot nor cold--I am about to spit you out of My mouth.

Rev 3:17 You say, "I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing." But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.

Rev 3:18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.

Rev 3:19 Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent.

Rev 3:20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with Me.

Rev 3:21 To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with Me on My throne, just as I overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

Rev 3:22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

A Chart designating the seven churches by name, time period covered, meaning of the name, Scripture designation and remarks concerning each will serve as a good summary of what has just been taught.

<b>TIME</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>MEANING</b>	<b>SCRIPTURE</b> (Revelation)	<b>REMARKS</b>
32-100	Ephesus	Desired	2:1-7	Fair report, trial of Apostle. Time of sowing, organization & evangelism.
100-300	Smyrna	Myrrh	2:8-11	A good report: the church is persecuted & their true enemy is revealed, the Jew. Constantine

				ascends the throne.
300-800	Pergamum	Thoroughly Married	2:12-17	A bad report as the Church marries the world. Papal domination
800-1517	Thyatira	Continual Sacrifices	2:18-29	A bad report. The worship of Mary develops. Doctrine is corrupted. There are many empty confessions of faith. There is a rise of state religion.
1517-just before Rapture	Sardos	Escaping Brothers	3:1-6	The reformation occurs. Terrible report, once alive but now dead.
At Rapture	Philadelphia	Loving Brothers	3:7-13	Good. Kept from time of trial.
Tribulation	Laodicea	People Ruling	3:14-19	Bad report. Religion prospers.

## Revelation Chapter Four

In chapters four and five we find the church in heaven participating in several symbolic events. Rev 3:22 is the last time the church is mentioned as being on earth.

Verse twenty-two is the last verse of chapter three. Throughout the rest of the Revelation the church is always in heaven. Recall the Tribulation is a time Jacob's trouble. This because the Rapture of the church begins the last seven years of the Age of Israel, commonly called the Tribulation.

Rev 4:1 "After the warnings announced to the church at Laodicea, I looked and seriously pondered what I saw. A door in the third heaven was opened and purposefully left open, apparently so I could hear and see what was transpiring. Then I heard a voice, at first it sounded like a trumpet, the sound broke what was formerly an eerie silence. I then found myself engaged in a conversation with the trumpet, 'Come up here at once, and I will show you the things which must take place after the Church Age.'

Rev 4:2 Immediately I found myself under the absolute control of the Holy Spirit. I was commanded to consider what I heard and saw. A throne had been placed right in the middle of the third heaven. And there was One seated on the throne.

Rev 4:3 And He Who was seated was in appearance like a jasper stone, [Benjamin's] and a sardius, [Reuben's]. And encircling the throne there was a ring of light which was like an emerald, [Judah's]. All of which portrayed Christ at the right side of the Father as the Son of David--a very Jewish scene. Reuben the first born son of Jacob, Benjamin the last born son of Jacob and Judah the fourth born son of Jacob, and the tribe from which Christ came.

Rev 4:4 And encircling the throne there were twenty-four elders sitting as rulers. The elders were clothed in white garments and upon their heads were golden crowns. The elders represented the raptured saints of the Church Age. They were all decked out in their uniforms of glory proudly wearing their crowns which had earlier been awarded at the Bema--the judgment seat of Christ, an event "immediately following the Rapture.

Rev 4:5 And out from the throne proceeded lightnings and voices and thunders; a picture of the power and sovereignty of God. There were seven blazing torches burning before the throne, these represented the seven spirits of God to portray the omnipresence of God the Holy Spirit.

Rev 4:6 And before the throne, there was, as it were, a glassy sea like crystal--a picture of peace and stability, the personification of "still waters," that only an omnipotent God can bring. And in the midst of the thrones were four angels, full of eyes in front and in back.

Rev 4:7 The first angel was like a lion, and the second like a calf, and the third had a face like that of a man. The creatures represented the ministering angels who watched over God's beloved Son and His family.

Rev 4:8 The fourth angel was like an eagle. And each of the angels had six wings, and even their wings were full of eyes. And they rested neither day nor night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, blessed is the Christ Who was and Who is, and Who is coming.

Rev 4:9 These beasts were constantly praising the Father and giving thanks for the One Who sat on the throne--The One Who liveth forever and ever.

Rev 4:10 The four and twenty elders fell down before Him who sat on the throne, and they worshipped Him Who liveth forever and ever. As part of their worship they were casting their crowns before the throne, saying,

Rev 4:11 'You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Your pleasure and purpose all things were created.

## Revelation Chapter Five

Rev 5:1 "And there sitting on the throne was God the Father and in His right hand was a scroll. There was writing on both sides of the scroll but the scroll itself was sealed by seven wax seals.

Rev 5:2 And I saw a large angel fly around the throne. The size and strength of the angel was impressive. He landed upon the Father's throne and shouted with a loud voice in an urgent tone, 'Who is worthy to open the scroll, Who is able to break its seals?'

Rev 5:3 Sadly there was nothing but silence in heaven. There was no one found either in heaven or earth or under the earth who would even approach the scroll. There was neither angel nor man worthy enough to open the scroll.

Rev 5:4 I began to weep audibly, openly and profusely because no one was found worthy.

Rev 5:5 And one of the church age saints said to me, "Stop weeping and consider this; there is One from the Lion Tribe, the Tribe of Judah, the Son of David, Who by His victory on the cross has earned the right to open that scroll. He and He alone can break the seven seals.

Rev 5:6 It was then that I saw a diminutive Lamb; the young Lamb looked as if it had been slain. The Lamb was in the center of the throne room surrounded by the four special angels and the church age saints. The Lamb had seven horns representing His perfect kingdom which was purchased by His perfect work; the Lamb had seven eyes representing the Holy Spirit earlier sent into the world to assist and glorify Him.

Rev 5:7 Jesus Christ, as the Lamb of God boldly approached the throne and took the scroll out of the right hand of God the Father.

Rev 5:8 And when the Lamb took the scroll, the four living beings (four special angels) and the twenty four elders (representing all the translated saints) fell down before the Lamb. Each raptured believer of the church age was holding a harp and a golden bowl full of incense which represented the prayers of all of God's children.

Rev 5:9 And the Church Age saints sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seven seals, because as the Lamb of God You died spiritually to redeem mankind. Those availing themselves of His redemption came out from every tribe and language and people and nation. There were believers from all walks of life and nationalities entering the gates of heaven.

Rev 5:10 And I heard someone say, 'You have made them a kingdom of priests to serve our God, and they will reign with Christ on the earth.'

Rev 5:11 And I saw and heard the voice of many nondescript angels, the four special angels and church age saints who were too numerous to count.

Rev 5:12 They exclaimed in unison with a loud voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb Who was slain, by His victory on the cross He has earned the right to rule; to Him be riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory.

Rev 5:13 And every created being in the heavens and on the earth and under the earth and upon the sea were heard to exclaim, "To Him Who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb be the honor, and the glory and the power forever and ever."

Rev 5:14 And the four living beings repeatedly cried out, Amen, Amen, Amen and Amen! And the church age saints fell down and worshipped the Christ who lives forever and ever.

Now we are ready to begin Revelation chapter six. Introduction:

1. Many have assumed that the events of earth (which would certainly include the New Jerusalem in the sky above earth) in chapters 6 through 19 coincide with the seven years of Israel's program culminating in the second coming of Christ.

1.1 Some expositors of this point of view have usually taken for granted that the book gives a panoramic view of the entire seven years even though there is no explicit proof of this in the book itself.

1.2 Given the obvious fact that chapters 6-11 cover events also described in chapters 12-19, it makes an ordering of all events in chronological sequence difficult if not impossible.

2. It seems clear the events described in the seven seals, which would include the seven trumpets and seven vials more appropriately should be placed in the last half of the Tribulation or the Great Tribulation.

2.1 The more I study the more I am convinced the seals, trumpets and vial judgments occur during the Great Tribulation or last three and one-half years.

3. There is in fact considerable evidence, that the events pictured in the seals, trumpets, and vials are a concentrated prophecy of the latter half of this week, designated as a time of wrath and the great tribulation, culminating in the second coming of Christ.

3.1 Evidence for this is presented as the judgments unfold.



4. There is a remarkable similarity between the progress of chapter 6 as a whole and the description given by our Lord of the end of the age in Mat 24:4-31. The events are only similar given the fact that the Lord's message to the disciples had application for both Israel (primary) and the church (secondary).

End Lesson Taught 4-3-2001

REVELATION

Lesson 66

4-18-2001

1. Tonight we will continue our study of the Book of The Revelation. We are in lesson number 66.

1.1 Before we do though let's remember the application of 1Jo 1:9 as might be necessary.

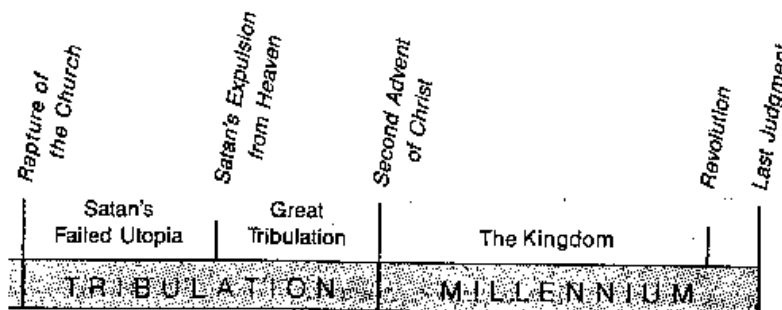
2. Last week I completed an introduction to Revelation chapter six, taught verses one and two and when time ran out I was in the process of analyzing verses three and four where we were studying the second seal, also called the second of the four horsemen.

3. I want to review for a moment and then we will pick up with the Red Horse and its rider described in verses three and four.

3. Chapter six recall describes the beginning of the wrath of God for planet earth.

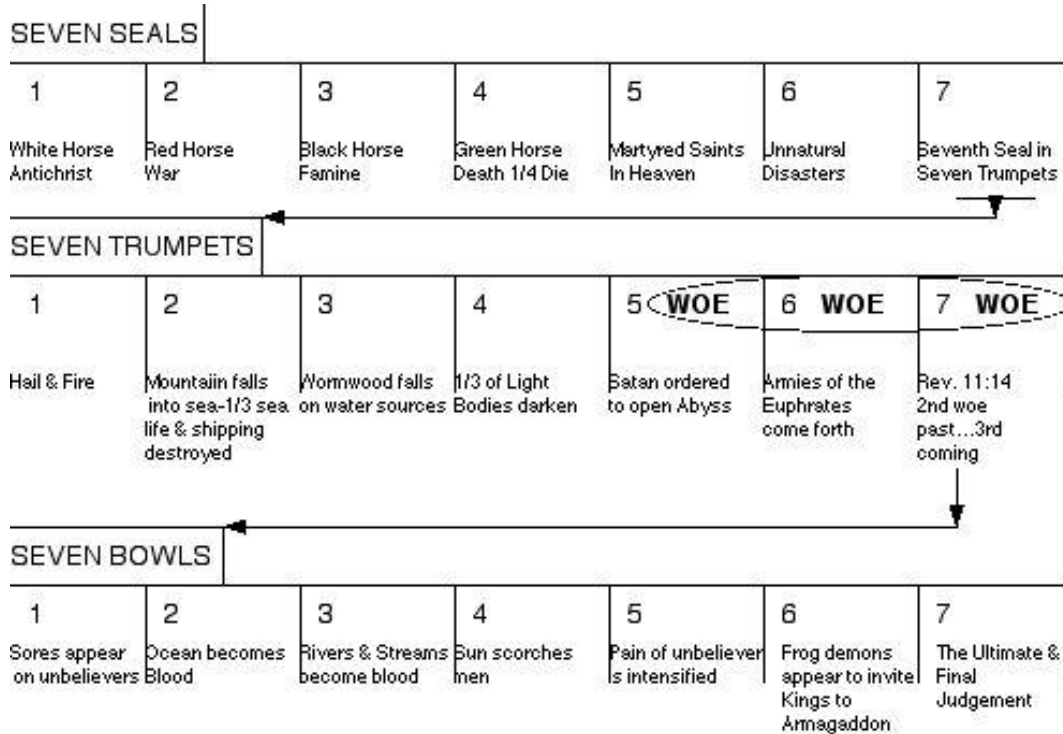
4. Many have assumed the events of the seven seals, trumpets and vials which are seen in chapters 6 through 19 coincide with the full seven years of Israel's program culminating in the second coming of Christ.

5. It is my view the events described in the seven seals, which would include the seven trumpets and seven vials more appropriately should be placed in the last half of the Tribulation or the Great Tribulation.



6. The more I study the more I am convinced, with the exception of the 1st seal, that each of the last six seals with their trumpets and vial judgments occur during the Great Tribulation or the last three and one-half years.

7. There is in fact considerable evidence to support the position that the events pictured in seals 2 through 7 together with the inclusive trumpet and vial judgments occur in the latter half of the Tribulation.



8. The white horse rider (seal one) would seem to appear early on just after the Rapture as the Tribulation begins.

9. You will no doubt recall in our study last week we compared the similarity of Revelation chapter 6 with the events described by our Lord in the Olivet Discourse recorded in Mat 24:6-39.



9.1 The events we noted were only similar given the fact that the Lord's message to the disciples had application for both Israel (primary) and the church (secondary).

10. After this comparison I then began an analysis of Revelation 6:1.

KJV

Rev 6:1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.

NIV

Rev 6:1 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!"

Principles:

1. As the first seal is opened, John in his vision hears the noise of thunder, a symbolic token of a coming storm.

2. We have the warning presaging the wrath of God but only under the permissive will of God. Remember it is Jesus Christ who controls history.

2.1 The Tribulation comes about only because of Israel's failure to accept their Messiah in the Age of the Incarnation.

2.1.1 Malachi had warned such a failure on their part would bring a terrible time of trial and a curse for planet earth.

Mal 4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

Mal 4:6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

2.2 But even given the trial, God will provide the grace for His people to get through for God's wrath is said to have been shortened for the believer's sake.

Mat 24:22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

2.3 There is no temptation or trial given to man over and above that which he or she can withstand; for with each such trial comes a way of escape.

1Co 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

2.4 That God often takes care of his people even in time of national disaster is established in the case of Jeremiah when Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem.

Jer 39:11 Now Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had given these orders about Jeremiah through Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard:

Jer 39:12 "Take him and look after him; don't harm him but do for him whatever he asks."

Jer 39:13 So Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard ...

Jer 39:14 sent and had Jeremiah taken out of the courtyard of the guard. They turned him over to Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, to take him back to his home.

3. We noted last week the revelation given in chapter six indicates a succession of events. The six seals seem to unfold one after another in a chronological pattern.

4. Different major actors are prominent, namely, the Lamb opening the seal, the angels sounding the trumpets, and various agents of God, including God Himself, pouring out the trauma.

5. The seven-sealed book therefore is the comprehensive program of God culminating in the second coming of Christ.

Now let's review what we learned from verse two.

KJV

Rev 6:2 And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

NIV

Rev 6:2 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.

1. The rider on the white horse clearly is the Antichrist himself!

2. As we saw last week establishing the timing of his entrance is more difficult.

3. I taught of two possibilities for the timing of that first horseman:

3.1 He may be seen as coming upon the scene of history as the King of the Ten Nation Federation to establish the peace promised to Israel; the peace will last for the first half of the Tribulation.

3.1.1 That he is a King with significant military power is obvious.

Dan 11:40 "At the time of the end the king of the South will engage him in battle, and the king of the North will storm out against him with chariots and cavalry and a great fleet of ships. He will invade many countries and sweep through them like a flood.

Dan 11:41 He will also invade the Beautiful Land. Many countries will fall, but Edom, Moab and the leaders of Ammon will be delivered from his hand.

Dan 11:42 He will extend his power over many countries; Egypt will not escape.

3.2 The other possibility as to the timing of his coming as a military power would be his crossing the Mediterranean in the middle of the Tribulation to meet the aggression of the King of the north and then his gathering of the nations for the last battle of the Armageddon campaign.

3.3 Given what we learned of the following three horsemen and their meanings, I believe the rider on the white horse is a picture of the Antichrist early in the Tribulation.

4. The rider of the white horse is the scintillating personality who will be personally indwelt by Satan and will have a spiritual magnetism causing Israel and the nations to worship him; the nations even being led to follow him in an outright war to annihilate Israel.

5. Clearly the rider on the white horse is none other than the Roman Antichrist establishing peace either by threat of military action or by a quick and decisive military campaign.

5.1 Do not forget Germany defeated Austria without a fight; Czechoslovakia fell in less than two days, Poland fell in less than two weeks and it took Germany all of six weeks to totally defeat France.

5.2 Need I remind you Iraq was removed from Kuwait in less than 24 hours. That a Satan indwelt Antichrist could bring about peace in the Middle East post haste is not at all far- fetched as some have alleged.

6. At this point the important thing to note about this charismatic leader is that he is presented as the first of the great judgments of God upon the Christ rejecting world.

6.1 This person whom the world will view as its savior will turn out instead to be its greatest possible curse!

7. Now let's return to our study of the second seal-- the rider on the red horse.

KJV

Rev 6:3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.

Rev 6:4 And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

NIV

Rev 6:3 When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!"

Rev 6:4 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.

1. As the Lamb opens the second seal of the seven sealed book, the second living creature invites John to come and see.
2. The better manuscripts again omit "and see."
3. John in this case observes another horse described as red and bearing a rider to whom power is given to take peace from the earth and to cause men to kill one another. As a symbol of this, he is given a great sword.
4. The Antichrist on the white horse makes quick conquest of some number of nations establishing peace and maintaining that peace for the first three and one half years of the Tribulation.
  - 4.1 When the second seal is broken, war breaks out between the King of the North and the King of the South with Israel geographically in the middle.
    - 4.1.1 It is here we jump from early in the Tribulation where we last saw the Antichrist coming on his white horse to sometime after the "Abomination of the Desolation" when the Antichrist breaks his treaty with Israel.
  - 4.2 The rider on the red horse then in the middle of the Tribulation or sometime thereafter destroys Israel's peaceful coexistence with her neighbors.
5. That Christ will judge the nations is made clear in several Scriptures as we have seen. Two such Scriptures are as follows:

Isa 2:4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Mic 4:3 And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.
6. The conflict will end when the saints come to reign with Christ and in some way judge with Him from our position in the New Jerusalem.
  - 6.1 That the saints (even including the evil Christians in Corinth) will somehow assist in Christ's judging is clear; it is the detail of how that is left open.
    - 6.1.1 Let me give you a few Scriptures which make this point.

Rev 5:9 And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

Rev 5:10 You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."

1Co 6:2 Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases?

1Co 6:3 Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!

Rev 20:4 I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

7. The seals with the trumpets and their associated vials would seem, as we have noted, to be poured out on the earth during the last half of the Tribulation or Great Tribulation.

8. The chronology of the events of the Tribulation are made difficult because our Lord has chosen to write the Book of The Revelation in an unusual outline.

8.1 This I earlier taught but just to remind:

8.2 Chapter 1 is an introduction as to what John saw,

8.3 Chapters 2 and 3 represent the message to the seven churches,

8.4 Chapters 4 and 5 represent a vision seen in heaven, a resumption of the vision earlier seen in Chapter 1 but none the less a vision which unfolds in Chapters 4, 5 and in part chapter 6,

8.5 Chapter 6 going all the way through Chapter 11 describes the Tribulation up to and including the Second Advent with emphasis on events,

8.6 Chapters 12 through 19 cover that same Tribulation up to and including the Second Advent with emphasis on the characters involved,

8.7 Chapter 20 is a description of operation clean-up and our Lord's judgments

8.8 and then Chapters 21 and 22 would seem to be a description of the New Jerusalem with perhaps an allusion to certain aspects of eternity future.

Now let's return to the 2nd of the four horseman, the Red Horse.

NIV

Rev 6:4 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.

1. Though "wars and rumors of wars" (Mat 24:6) are characteristic of all ages, it is evident that warfare occupies a larger place during the Great Tribulation where there is significant loss of life.

2. There apparently are a series of battles, the greatest of which (called the Battle of Armageddon) will be under way at the time of the second coming.

3. The hope of permanent peace by means of the United Nations and other human effort is doomed to failure says the Scripture.

4. In verses 5 and 6 the aftermath of war is seen and a great famine is revealed.

5. I want to close our study of the 2nd of the four horsemen by giving you what Hall Lindsey has written:

"During the first three and one-half years of the Tribulation the Antichrist will bring a pseudo peace to the world. Everyone will be singing his praises as the greatest leader in all human history. But at the midpoint of the Tribulation the second seal is opened and, according to Ezekiel 38 and Daniel 11, Russia, the rider of the red horse, snatches peace from the earth. With her Arab allies she invades the Middle East and attacks Israel. The war escalates until it involves all the major powers on the earth and becomes the greatest battle in the history of mankind the Battle of Armageddon. This is developed fully in Chapter 16."

Now let's see what we can learn of the 3rd Horseman and Rev 6:5-6.

KJV

Rev 6:5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

NIV

Rev 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.

KJV

Rev 6:6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.



NIV

Rev 6:6 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!"

1. The judgment symbolized by the rider of the black horse seems to be a worldwide financial catastrophe.
2. With war spreading across the world from the Middle East, food, fuel, and other life-supporting commodities will become very scarce.
3. The hungrier people become, the "itchier" become their trigger fingers!
4. The "pair of scales" indicates scarcity of food, for the food is weighed out as carefully as gold. Numerous passages in the Old Testament associate the weighing of food with its scarcity.
5. The frightening thing is that a day's ration of wheat will cost a denarius, the Biblical equivalent of an average day's wage. Let me explain:
6. In his vision John hears the third living creature invite him to come and see.
7. John records that he sees a black horse and one sitting on the horse with a pair of balances in his hand used to weigh different commodities.
8. A voice is heard from the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine."
9. In order to determine the meaning of this vision it must be understood that the silver coin designated as a penny is actually the Roman denarius, worth about fifteen cents.
10. In the wage scale of that time it was common for a person to receive one denarius for an entire day's work. For such a coin, one measure of wheat or three measures of barley could be purchased.
11. A measure of wheat is approximately what a laboring man would eat in one meal. If he used his penny to buy barley, a cheaper grain, he would have enough from an entire day's wages to buy three meals of barley.
12. Whether he bought wheat or barley there would be no money left to buy other things, such as oil or wine, which were considered essential in biblical times.

13. To put it in ordinary language, the situation would be such that one would have enough money from a day's wage for a "spartan diet" with no money left to buy anything else.

13.1 Just the basics necessities of life could be afforded, not so unlike much of the world today.

14. The symbolism therefore indicates a time of famine when life will be reduced to the barest necessities; for famine is almost always the aftermath of war.

15. The somber picture is emphasized by the color of the horse, black being the symbol of suffering.

Lam 5:9 We get our bread with the peril of our lives because of the sword of the wilderness.

Lam 5:10 Our skin was black like an oven because of the terrible famine.

Now let's see what we can learn from Rev 6:7-8 and the fourth seal - Death and Hades.

KJV

Rev 6:7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

NIV

Rev 6:7 When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!"

KJV

Rev 6:8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

NIV

Rev 6:8 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.

Principles:

1. Following close on the heels of the second and third horsemen is the pale horse.
2. With the grim companion Hades he brings the inevitable aftermath of war and calamity-- death on a massive scale.

3. It staggers the imagination to realize that one-fourth of the world's population will be destroyed within a matter of days. According to projected census figures this would amount to nearly one billion people!

3.1 By any standard of comparison this is an awesome judgment. One-fourth of the world's population is said to be destroyed in the fourth seal.

3.1.1 Such an action will represent the greatest destruction of human life ever recorded in history.

3.2 The population of the human race in Noah's day undoubtedly was far less than the figure here cited as dying. If such a judgment would fall upon a world population of approximately four billion people, it would mean that a billion would die.

3.2.1 Treated geographically it would be equivalent to the destruction of the entire population of the United States, Europe and Russia.

3.3 It should be clear from this description that the divine judgments being meted out to the earth are not trivial in character but describe a period of world history awful beyond any words, a period without precedent in its character and extent.

3.4 It should be equally clear that the destruction and loss of life described here must occur during the last three and one-half years.

3.5 Daniel indicates that the last three and one-half years are a time in which there is unprecedented trouble. In this period Israel becomes the object of persecution instead of being protected from her enemies.

3.6 The Prophet Daniel speaks of this period in Dan 12:1.

Dan 12:1 And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

4. Since one of these grim reapers of death is Hades, it means that only unbelievers will perish in this phase of the holocaust.

5. The events described here and in the two preceding seals are almost beyond our comprehension and yet as we read of wars, aids, starving Africans, hoof and mouth disease, mad cow disease, legionnaires disease, unexplained flesh eating staff infections and antibiotic resistant strains of pneumonia - rapid destruction as found described in these seals may not be so far-fetched.

5.1 Today, in fact, it isn't just the religious world that's warning us the world is headed for chaos. "Prophets" in the academic, scientific, and political world are telling us the same thing.

6. In a shocking study done at M.I.T. and presented in the book *Limits To Growth*, the computers time after time told the same story: "Without a complete change of basic values and goals at individual, national, and world levels there is no chance to avoid international catastrophe. Six thousand years of recorded human events makes it fairly obvious that man's trend is toward self-seeking not toward the noble goal of the world's best interests."

7. George Borgstrom in his book *Hungry Planet*, "It is sobering to realize that no part of the world, in the event of serious crop failure, is more than one year away from critical starvation, and even the rich United States with all its surpluses is not more than two years away."

8. William and Paul Paddock warned in their sobering book, *Famines 1975!* that "... the crisis of population explosion versus static agriculture is indeed formed. The nations of the undeveloped world are no longer grain exporters; they are grain importers. There is no more unused land to bring into cultivation; even the deficient marginal land is by now in use. Hunger is rampant throughout country after country, continent after continent around the undeveloped belt of the tropics and subtropics. Today's crisis can move in only one direction toward catastrophe. Today hungry nations; tomorrow starving nations."

9. The word "plague" found in the NIV of Rev 6:8 is another word for epidemic.

10. Hall Lindsay writes in his book *There's A New World Coming*

"Whenever you have a combination of poverty and famine, disease is often near. How could disease of epidemic proportions happen in a world of miracle drugs? There are two ways. There is today great concern over the new "super-bacteria" which seem to be resistant to all known miracle drugs. Doctors around the world are becoming increasingly alarmed at the possibility that certain of these bacteria could give rise to the greatest outbreak of dread diseases that the world has ever seen. Another way epidemics could sweep the world is through bacteriological warfare. For a fraction of the cost of a single hydrogen bomb, there are bacteriological bombs that could wipe out entire cities or regions!"

11. Nineteen hundred years ago as Jesus was telling His disciples what the world would be like just before He returned to set up His kingdom on earth, He said:

Luk 21:10 Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom:

Luk 21:11 And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.

12. Now let's catch our breath and return to Rev 6:8 and the fourth seal:

Rev 6:8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

13. In the fourth seal John describes a dramatic picture of divine judgment.

14. John is invited to witness the scene. He introduces the vision with the same dramatic expression he uses in verse 2, "I looked, and behold," indicating that what he sees again startles him.

15. He describes a horse on which Death is the rider and which Hell, or Hades, follows. The horse is an unearthly color described as "pale," literally a pale green.

16. In the context it is a ghastly color. The rider is pictured as Death and the aftermath of his ride, or that which follows, as Hades, the abode of the dead.

17. In keeping with this startling picture, it is revealed to John that this rider has power over a one-fourth part of the earth, to kill with the sword, hunger, and the beasts of the earth.

18. The area covered by this judgment is the earth; it is the common Greek word *Ge*. Here it would seem to be a reference to the inhabited world and in this context it apparently extends to the entire earth.

19. Now we come to a respite of sorts with the fifth seal. Instead of destruction and new calamities being announced we find another picture in heaven for both John's and our benefit. A picture of martyred saints.

KJV

Rev 6:9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

Rev 6:10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

Rev 6:11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto the 1m, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

NIV

Rev 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.

Rev 6:10 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?"

Rev 6:11 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.

End Lesson Taught 4-18-2001

Revelation

Lesson 67

4-25-2001

1. Tonight we will continue our study of the Book of The Revelation. We are in lesson sixty-seven.

1.1 Before we do though let's remember the application of 1Jo 1:9 as might be necessary.

2. So far in chapter six I have analyzed verses one through eight. Last week I taught verses seven and eight where we saw the fourth seal; Death rode a pale green horse and from behind the horse came Hades; this fourth horseman no doubt represented the horrible aftermath of war.

3. That the fourth horseman comes during the Great Tribulation seems certain. Death and destruction is the order of the day.

4. Let me give you two prophetic statements alluding to the awful nature of the Tribulation and by so doing we can better understand verses nine, ten and eleven and the lamentation of God's martyred saints.

4.1 Jeremiah the prophet refers to the Tribulation in Jeremiah 30:7 when he declares, "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but Israel shall be saved out of it."

Jer 30:7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.

Jer 30:8 For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him:

Jer 30:9 But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.

Jer 30:10 Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid.

Jer 30:11 For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet I will not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.

4.2 Other Old Testament passages bear witness to the awful character of this future time of trouble.

Joe 2:1 Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand;

Joe 2:2 A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great and strong people; there has not ever been the like, neither shall be any more. . .

Joe 2:3 A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them.

Joe 2:4 The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run.

5. Last week I gave you my view of the timing of the four horsemen and I also shared several alternative views. Let me give you one additional alternative from a most respected theologian, Doctor John Walvoord as he writes concerning the timing of the fourth seal.

“Inasmuch as the judgment described in the fourth seal is unparalleled, it seems to correspond with greater accuracy to the latter half of Daniel's seventieth week than to the earlier half and for that reason must be the time of great tribulation which Christ declared would exceed by far anything the world had previously known. So great will be the trial of that period that Christ exhorted those living in Palestine at that time to flee to the mountains to escape their persecutors ...”

Mat 24:15 "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel--let the reader understand--

Mat 24:16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

Mat 24:17 Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house.

Mat 24:18 Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak.

Mat 24:19 How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers!

Mat 24:20 Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath.

Mat 24:21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Mat 24:22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

5.1 Walvoord goes on to write.

“If the supreme mark of this great tribulation is unprecedented trouble, the fourth seal certainly qualifies as describing this period. Though some expositors believe the great tribulation does not begin until chapter 11, on the basis of this evidence, some have come to the conclusion that the great tribulation must begin much earlier, possibly as early as the first seal of Revelation 6. Though the book of Revelation itself does not state specifically what event begins the great tribulation, the characteristics unfolded in the fourth seal would indicate the great tribulation is under-way at the time.

5.2 The wars and famines predicted in the second and third seals are not unfamiliar events in the history of the world, but never before since the time of Noah has a judgment so devastating been consummated as to destroy one-fourth of the earth's population at one stroke. The fifth and sixth seals advance the narrative and describe the period specifically as "the great day of his wrath", which almost certainly is a reference to the great tribulation.”

5.3 Though it is impossible to settle conclusively the timing of the four horsemen, I believe that the rider on the white horse in the first seal is a picture of the prince (Dan 9:26) at that stage in his career where he assumes control over the entire world (Dan 7:23), which seems to coincide with the beginning of the great tribulation.

Dan 9:26 After the sixty-two sevens, (the first Palm Sunday) the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed.

Dan 7:23 Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.

5.4 Though the Antichrist comes as a pseudo prince of peace who will bring order to a troubled world, the peace is short-lived and is followed by the second horseman - war, the third horseman -famine, and the fourth horseman death.

5.5 Again, as earlier noted these last three horsemen all deposit their wrath during the last three and one-half years of the seven year Tribulation, a time called the Great Tribulation.

So much for review:



1. When time ran out I had just started teaching Rev 6:9, 10 and 11 where John is given a vision of many slaughtered saints of the Tribulation. They are complaining that God has been lax by not promptly indicating their deaths.

2. Before returning to verse nine, ten and eleven I want to review an expanded translation of Rev 6:1-8

Rev 6:1 I watched as the Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ, opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, "Get up here!"

Rev 6:2 There before me was a white horse! Its rider, the Antichrist, held a bow, a quiver of arrows hung from his shoulder and he wore a victor's crown, and he rode out as a conqueror; the Antichrist by military threat established peace in the middle east and signed a treaty with Israel guaranteeing a right to worship in their new ersatz Temple.

Rev 6:3 When the Lord opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come up here again John!"

Rev 6:4 Then I saw a Red Horse. Its rider, the King of the North, was given power to take peace from the earth. From the permissive will of God this King was given an awesome military capability; this King, reigning over what today we call Russia, was permitted to move his military machine through Israel on his way to defeat a coalition of Arab nations led by Egypt.

Rev 6:5 When the Christ opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come again!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse, its rider, representing the natural result of war, he was holding a pair of scales in his hand; the scales represented the scarcity of food; people were found existing on spartan diets due to the land having been ravaged by extensive military campaigns.

Rev 6:6 Then I heard one of the four living creatures explain the meaning, "people will be able only to purchase the bare essentials, most will find it difficult to buy sufficient food for even three squares a day"

Rev 6:7 When our Lord opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!"

Rev 6:8 I looked, and there before me was a pale green horse! Its rider, representing the horror and aftermath of war, was given the name Death and his horse was dragging behind him Hades and I could see the abode of the dead crowded with the beleaguered souls of those tormented in this place of pain. The rider of the horse was given power over a fourth part of the earth; more than one billion people were killed by constant war, famines and plagues, even the wild animals lost their fear of man; they aggressively attacked villages and cities carrying off men, women and children.

Now we return to a respite of sorts and the fifth seal.

2. Instead of destruction and new calamities being announced we find another picture, a picture of many martyred saints from the Great Tribulation.

KJV

Rev 6:9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

Rev 6:10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

Rev 6:11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

NIV

Rev 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.

Rev 6:10 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?"

Rev 6:11 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.

1. The opening of the fifth seal reveals something which has alarmed Christians for some twenty centuries. The knowledge that countless brothers and sisters in Christ must seal their new found testimony with persecution and martyrdom during the Great Tribulation. There are even those, and I recently spoke extensively with one of this persuasion, who think God is unfair to the Saints of the Tribulation great trial.

2. I want to give you four facts about these trials imposed on the believers of the Tribulation - both Jew and Gentile.

- firstly, as we noted last week 1Co 10:13 makes clear none of us will receive trial, suffering and or temptation over and above that which can be withstood. . .
- secondly, we must remember God has seen the time line and from His omniscience and sovereignty has developed a perfect plan for our lives even given our imperfect choices. . .
- thirdly, God has all of his players in their perfect positions at game time; this simply means Tribulation believers are selected and assigned after due consideration to their unique needs and qualifications. . .
- fourthly, God the Holy Spirit in the Tribulation is no longer indwelling but endowing, thus He comes upon special people in special situations, to enable the performance of special tasks just as He did in the Age of Israel.

We need not therefore question God's sovereign selections and assignments.

1. Said another way, in the Age of Israel God the Holy Spirit endowed certain people with special powers just as He will do during the Tribulation

1.1 For example, He came upon mild mannered Saul and made him vicious because he needed to save the people of Jabesh Gilead; and apparently this mind set continued with him for some time during his reign as King of Israel.

1.2 The coward Gideon was made a hero by the Spirit of God and the Philistines were routed.

1.3 The artisans were endowed with the Holy Spirit so they could construct Solomon's Temple and its accouterments.

1.4 The judges appointed by Moses were endowed with special skill and wisdom.

1.5 Joseph was given the endowment to sustain him during his trials in Egypt.

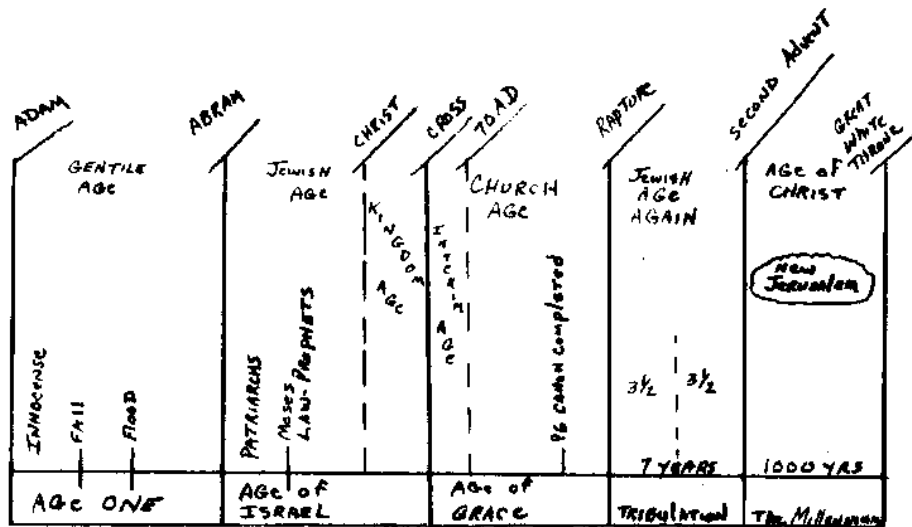
1.6 By special endowment men and women in the Age of Israel were equipped supernaturally to do special jobs and so shall it be in the seven year time of trial.

1.7 We must not therefore doubt the sovereign power of God and his omnipotence in keeping the blessed saints of the Tribulation.

1.8 After all, women like Leah, Rahab and Mary held up under great stress because of the endowing ministry of God the Holy Spirit.

1.9 Men like Moses, Abraham, Samson, David, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Isaiah and Jeremiah in like manner succeeded under the special ministry of God the Holy Spirit.

1.10 And so shall the Holy Spirit sustain those of the Tribulation.



Let me give several Scriptures with comment describing how the Holy Spirit operated in the Age of Israel; this will help us understand better how He will operate in the Tribulation.

1. In the Age of Israel there was no permanent and universal indwelling of God the Holy Spirit.

2. In the Church Age all believers receive at the moment of salvation the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and there is nothing we can do to lose that Indwelling.

1Co 3:16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

1Co 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

1Co 6:20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Rom 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Gal 3:2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

Gal 4:6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

3. In the Age of Israel there was instead an endowment or enduement of special powers to perform special functions.

4. A few examples of such unique endowments are:

4.1 Joseph in Egypt:

Gen 41:38 And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?

4.2 Bazaleel, a craftsman in gold, silver and bronze:

Exo 31:2 See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah:

Exo 31:3 And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship,

Exo 31:4 To devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass,

Exo 31:5 And in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship.

4.3 Those who made the priestly garments:

Exo 28:3 And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.

4.4 The 70 elders who assisted Moses:

Num 11:25 And the LORD came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease.

4.6 Joshua was endowed as the political and military leader of Israel.

Num 27:18 And the LORD said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him;

4.7 David was so endowed as King.

1Sa 16:13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

4.8 Elijah and Elisha had the special endowment.

2Ki 2:9 And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.

2Ki 2:10 And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.

5. Because of manifest failures certain Old Testament characters had the Holy Spirit removed from them.

1Sa 16:14 But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him.

6. Saints living in the Tribulation probably more so than any other Saints living in any other dispensation have special need for endowed power from God the Holy Spirit.

Now let's return to our lesson and the fifth seal, a scene in heaven where certain martyred saints want to know when they will be vindicated.

1. The Antichrist will require that all men on earth worship him as God. All who refuse to profess this allegiance by receiving the Antichrist's identifying mark on their forehead or hand will be prohibited from buying or selling.
2. Since Rev 14:9-11 warns that all who do receive the mark of the Beast (the number 666) will suffer eternal judgment at the hand of God, believers will obviously refuse the mark and suffer the wrath of the Antichrist.
3. It not doubt is the special endowing power of the Holy Spirit which makes this refusal possible - He will sustain them just as He has other Saints in other ages.
4. By living in a client nation we have been spared severe suffering therefore when we read of war, famine and plagues in the Tribulation, many have difficulty.

Let's look at the Doctrine of Persecution.

1. The movement of the church in history, beginning with the Acts of the Apostles, has been described as "the advance through storm."
2. No sooner had the Christian enterprise been launched at Pentecost than the apostolic leaders Peter and John were summoned before the Sanhedrin.

Acts 4:1 And as they taught the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, challenged them,

Acts 4:2 They were disturbed that they taught the people, and preached of Jesus being resurrection from the dead.

Acts 4:3 These leaders of Israel apprehended them placing them in the Sanhedrin's holding area until the next day: for it was now evening.

3. Soon the opposition had produced the first Christian martyr, Stephen.

Acts 6:11 Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God.

Acts 6:12 And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council,

Acts 6:13 And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law ...

Acts 7:57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,

Acts 7:58 And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.

Acts 7:59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

3.1 Before his conversion, Paul persecuted Christians to the death.

Acts 9:1 Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest

Acts 9:2 and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.

Acts 22:3 "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today.

Acts 22:4 I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison,

Acts 22:5 as also the high priest and all the Council can testify. I even obtained letters from them to their brothers in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.

End Lesson Taught 4-25-2001

Revelation

Lesson 68

5-2-2001

1. Tonight we will continue our study of the book of the Revelation. We are in lesson six-eight.

1.1 Before we continue let's remember the application of 1Jo 1:9 as might be necessary.

2. So far in chapter six I have analyzed verses one through eight. Last week I taught of the severity and horror of the Tribulation, I gave you several alternatives as to the timing of the four horsemen and then began teaching of the fifth seal described in verses nine, ten and eleven.

3. Let's begin with an expanded translation of Rev 6:1-8

Rev 6:1 I watched as the Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ, opened the first of the seven seals.

Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, "Get up here!"

Rev 6:2 Before me was a white horse! Its rider, the Antichrist, held a bow, a quiver of arrows hung from his shoulder and he wore a victor's crown, and he rode out, as a conqueror intent on victory; the Antichrist by military threat established peace and signed a treaty with Israel guaranteeing their right to worship in their newly constructed Temple.

Rev 6:3 When the Lord opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come up here again John!"

Rev 6:4 Then I saw a Red Horse. Its rider, the King of the North, was given power to take peace from the earth. From the permissive will of God this King was given an awesome military capability; this King, reigning over what today we call Russia, was permitted to move his military machine through Israel on his way to defeat a coalition of Arab nations led by Egypt.

Rev 6:5 When the Christ opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come again!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse, its rider, representing the natural result of war, he was holding a pair of scales in his hand; the scales represented the scarcity of food; people were found existing on spartan diets due to the land having been ravaged by extensive military campaigns.

Rev 6:6 Then I heard one of the four living creatures explain the meaning, "people will be able only to purchase the bare essentials, most will find it difficult to buy sufficient food for even three squares a day"

Rev 6:7 When our Lord opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!"

Rev 6:8 I looked, and there before me was a pale green horse! Its rider, representing the horror and aftermath of war, was given the name Death and his horse was dragging behind him Hades and I could see the abode of the dead crowded with the beleaguered souls of those tormented in this place of pain. The rider of the horse was given power over a fourth part of the earth; more than one and one-half billion people were killed by constant war, famines and plagues, even the wild animals lost their fear of man; they aggressively attacked villages and cities carrying off men, women and children.

1. Instead of destruction and new calamities being announced we find in the fifth seal, a picture of many martyred saints from the Great Tribulation.

NIV

Rev 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.

Rev 6:10 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?"

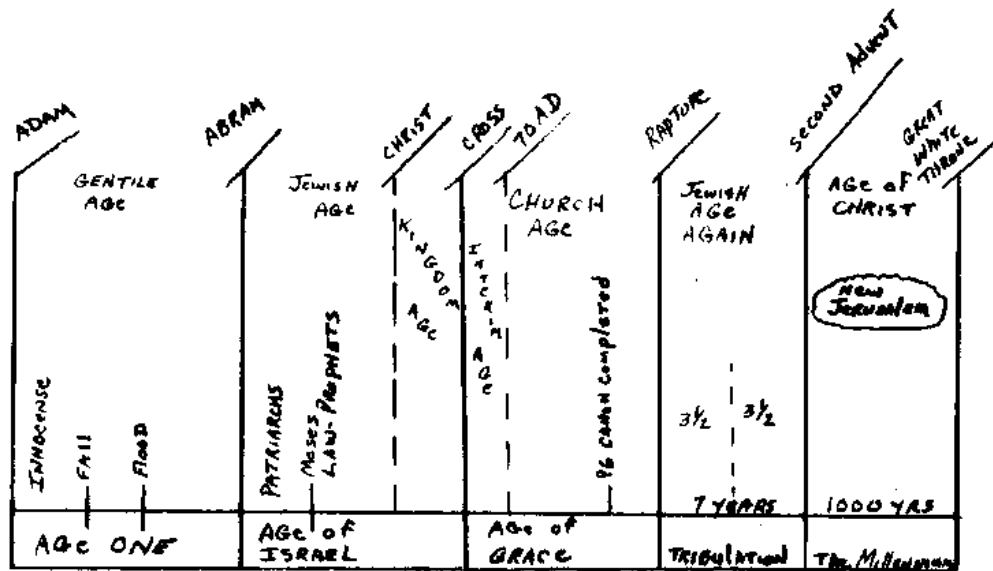
Rev 6:11 Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.

Last week I gave you four facts about the trials imposed on the believers of the Tribulation - both Jewish and Gentile believers.

1. We need not therefore question God's sovereign selections and assignments.

2. In the Age of Israel God the Holy Spirit endowed certain people with special powers just as He will do during the Tribulation





Let me review again several Scriptures describing how the Holy Spirit operated in the Age of Israel; this will help us understand better how He will operate in the Tribulation.

1. In the Age of Israel there was no permanent and universal indwelling of God the Holy Spirit; instead there was an endowment given to special people so they could perform special tasks and so shall it be in the Tribulation.

2. Last week we also looked at several examples of such unique endowments:

2.1 Joseph in Egypt:

Gen 41:38 And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?

2.2 Bazaleel, a craftsman in gold, silver and bronze:

Exo 31:2 See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah:

Exo 31:3 And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship,

Exo 31:4 To devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass,

Exo 31:5 And in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship.

2.3 Those who made the priestly garments:

Exo 28:3 And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to conse Écrate him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.

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2Ki 2:10 And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.

3. Because of manifest failures certain O.T. characters had the Holy Spirit removed from them.

1Sa 16:14 But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him.

4. Saints living in the Tribulation probably more so than any other Saints living in any other dispensation have special need for endowed power from God the Holy Spirit.

Now let's return to our lesson and some of that earlier learned about the fifth seal. We return to a scene in heaven where certain martyred saints want to know: "when they will be vindicated?"

1. The Antichrist will require that all men on earth worship him as God. All who refuse to profess this allegiance will be prohibited from buying or selling.

2. Rev 14:9-12 warns that all who do receive the mark of the Beast will suffer eternal judgment at the hand of God; accordingly, believers living in the Tribulation will refuse the mark and suffer the wrath of the Antichrist but they will eventually attain to their heavenly home.

Rev 14:9 A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand,

Rev 14:10 he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb.

Rev 14:11 And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name."

Rev 14:12 This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus.

3. It no doubt is the special endowing power of the Holy Spirit which makes this refusal of the mark possible - It is God the Holy Spirit Who will sustain them just as He has other Saints in other ages.

4. By living in a client nation we have been spared severe suffering therefore when we read of war, famine and plagues in the Tribulation, many have difficulty.

Now let's return to our study of the Doctrine of Persecution.

1. The movement of the church in history, beginning with the Acts of the Apostles, has been described as "the advance through storm."

2. No sooner had the Christian enterprise been launched at Pentecost than the apostolic leaders (Peter and John) were summoned before the Sanhedrin.

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3.1 Before his conversion, Paul persecuted Christians to the death. Acts 9:1-2 and Acts 22:3-4

Acts 9:1 Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest

Acts 9:2 and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.

Acts 22:3 "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous + for God as any of you are today.

Acts 22:4 I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison,

3.2 The early church, particularly in Judah was persecuted but none the less the body of Christ grew by leaps and bounds.

Acts 11:19 Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews.

Acts 11:20 Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus.

Acts 11:21 The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

Acts 12:1 Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.

Acts 12:2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

Acts 12:3 And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)

Acts 12:4 And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison ...

3.3 On the missionary journeys and that which fills the remainder of the Book of Acts, persecution continuously a problem, Paul and his associates were pursued from city to city.

4. Other books of the New Testament reveal this same pattern (the church always in the fire of persecution but never being consumed).

5. Therefore in his first letter to the Thessalonians Paul reminded them, "And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction."

1Th 1:6 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit.

5.1 Paul sent Timothy to the Thessalonians "that no one be moved by these afflictions. You yourselves know that this is to be our lot." 1Th 3:2-5

1Th 3:2 And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellow labourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith:

1Th 3:3 That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.

1Th 3:4 For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.

1Th 3:5 For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.

5.2 Peter encouraged his readers to "rejoice, though now for a little while you may have to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold ... may redound to praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

1Pe 1:6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

1Pe 1:7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

6. The last book of the canonical New Testament as we are seeing is an apocalyptic of suffering Saints waiting to be avenged and delivered.

7. Typical are the souls says our verse: "under the altar who had been slain for the word of God ... they cried out with a loud voice. 'O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before thou wilt judge and avenge our blood?'"

7.1 The answer as just noted is, "not until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren shall be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been."

8. Christ assured His followers that the disciple is not greater than his Lord. "If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you."

Joh 15:20 Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

9. In the world disciples are to expect tribulation; in fact we should be concerned when the world speaks well of us.

10. The disciples were told to rejoice when men speak ill of them (Mat 5:11-12). Men will do more than speak against His Name, they will kill the disciples, thinking themselves to have done God service thereby (Joh 16:2).

Mat 5:11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Mat 5:12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Joh 16:2 They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

11. Christ sent His followers out as lambs among wolves to be the victims of rapacity.

Luk 10:3 Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

12. The result of Christian persecution is often designed to remove hypocritical and nominal believers or to reveal and confirm the genuine ones, spread the church and glorify God.

13. It is no coincidence that the New Testament word for witness, *martus*, becomes our English word for martyr.

13.1 A witness is a martyr. He stands ready to die for following the orders of the Captain of his salvation. He does not count his life "of any value."

Acts 20:24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

13.2 A mature believer loves Christ more than his own soul. He rejoices and is exceeding glad (Mat 5:12). He counts it all joy even when persecuted (Jam 1:2).

Mat 5:11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Mat 5:12 Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Jam 1:12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

14. The wrath of man does not of itself work the righteousness of God but God does make even this wrath praise Him. Jam 1:20 and Psa 76:10

Jam 1:20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

Psa 76:10 Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.

15. The blood of martyrs became the seed from which the universal church grew or as Tertullian put it. "The storm of persecution advanced the church."

16. An evil world relentlessly and perpetually attacks a defenseless little flock. What is the result?

16.1 The result is that the world destroys itself and increases the church! The wolf attacks the lamb, but the lamb lives and the wolf dies!

16.2 Who but God could make the very wrath of men praise and glorify Him?

17. Persecution was needed in the early post-apostolic church. Christ's promise of tribulation for the disciples in this world was abundantly fulfilled and joyously met.

17.1 The first physical persecution of the church by Rome occurred under Nero (A.D. 64-68) in the capital city. It was reported in detail by Tacitus.

17.2 An even more determined and general persecution arose in various parts of the empire during the reigns of Trajan (98-117) and Hadrian (117-138).

17.3 Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, wrote many of his letters while being taken to Rome for probable martyrdom in A.D. 115, and Polycarp who was burned at the stake during a local persecution in Smyrna in A.D. 155 was said to have sung a song of praise even as the flames licked at his feet.

17.4 In 248 Rome was celebrating the thousandth anniversary of its founding. Their brilliant past made their national demise most alarming.

17.5 The barbarians were threatening. The rulers of Rome concluded the gods were angry for they were not being worshiped as they once were.

17.6 They concluded it must be the Christians at the heart of the problem, for they had refused to accept the Pantheon and now the Pantheon was mad.

17.7 The rulers concluded they could only do one thing--wipe out the Christian "atheists" and return to the true worship of gods.

17.8 An edict was issued in A.D. 249 requiring all Christians to offer sacrifice. Those who did not, suffered loss of property, imprisonment, torture, exile and even death.

18. Many bishops, presbyters and deacons were put to death. It was written of Christianity: "Their blood flowed in Roman streams."

19. In 295 Christian soldiers were ordered to sacrifice to the Roman gods or die. Persecutions multiplied in the army.

20. Many Roman military commanders were Christians and many died rather than sacrifice to the idols of Rome.

21. By 303 even Diocletian's Christian wife and daughter were required to sacrifice to the Pantheon.

22. Christian buildings were ordered destroyed. Bishops and presbyters were imprisoned.

23. Scriptures were burned. Christians lost all legal rights and there was wholesale torture.

23.1 Persecution lasted until A.D 311; especially in Palestine and Egypt was suffering the most severe.

24. In this great tribulation many Christians were martyred, but others denied their faith.

24.1 Persecution however only revealed the futility of trying to eradicate Christianity. The empire would fall, but not the church.

24.2 These early "killing times" produced two different reactions in the church--recantation and martyrdom.

25. There were those who folded but many accepted graciously their martyrdom.

25.1 Agnes, a noblewoman of Sicily, died for her faith. Carpus, a Thracian bishop, would say to his executioners, "I saw the glory of the Lord, and I was glad, and at the same time I was freed from you and am not a party to your misdeeds."



25.2 Carpus was nailed to a stake and a Cyprian, bishop of N Africa, was beheaded in 258.

25.3 A whole body of Asiatic Christians presented themselves to their proconsul, Arrius Antonius, for martyrdom, to show him what a bath of blood he must wade through to destroy Christ's church.

26. Amidst persecution, the Christian church grew.

26.1 Imprisoned and tortured confessors of the 3rd century might have uttered Martin Niemoller's words: "I believe my incarceration [under Hitler] is an instance of God's holy humor. They laugh scornfully, 'At last we have got him,' and arrest eight hundred more. But what is the result? Churches were full of praying congregations; 'it would be utter ingratitude to become bitter in the face of such facts.'"

27. As we earlier noted Christians are suffering today in many parts of the world. Let me read from the April 16th issue of Newsweek: "... What many U.S. Christians fail to realize is that when Asians convert to Christ it requires enormous courage. Converts typically are ostracized by family and neighbors - and often they are targeted for persecution. Over the last six months, Chinese communists have demolished some 1,500 houses of worship - most of them Christian-whose members refused to accept direction from the state. In officially secular India, scores of Christians have been murdered and their churches trashed since the rise of militant Hindu groups. On Christmas Eve, churches in nine Indonesian cities were bombed, killing at least 18 believers and wounding about 100 more. An additional 90 Christians were murdered for refusing to convert to Islam, and some 600 more are still being forcibly detained"

28. Though we shrink back in horror as we think of the Tribulation, we in this great land of ours need to be aware - the spirit of the Antichrist is indeed in the world today.

29. From our review of the Doctrine of Persecution and the judgments portrayed in the book of Revelation, it should be evident that the dreams of the optimist for a world becoming increasingly better is scientifically, intellectually, morally, and religiously does not fit the pattern of God's prophetic Word.

30. The ultimate triumph of God is assured; and as the book of Revelation makes plain, Christ will reign over the earth and bring in a kingdom of peace and righteousness after the time of trouble has run its course.

Dan 7:21 As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them,  
Dan 7:22 until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom.

31. First, however, there must be the awful time of the great tribulation. As we have seen from several quotations from academics and theologians, there is much in the modern world which seems to portend just such a period.

32. The introduction of modern means of warfare with new capacity to destroy life and property, the shrinking of the world by rapid transportation, and the invention of modern weapons of war make all the earth vulnerable to such scenes of devastation and destruction of human life.

33. The darkness of the human hour is in sharp contrast to the bright hope of the imminent return of Christ for His church as an event preceding the Tribulation.

1Th 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

1Th 4:17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Rev 3:10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

34. And standing even in greater contrast with that darkness of Jacob's trouble will be the victory of Christ and His coming to save the day for Israel. Zec 12:1-10 and Rev 19:11-15

Zec 12:1 This is the word of the LORD concerning Israel. The LORD, who stretches out the heavens, who lays the foundation of the earth, and who forms the spirit of man within him, declares:

Zec 12:2 "I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling. Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem.

Zec 12:3 On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves.

Zec 12:4 On that day I will strike every horse with panic and its rider with madness," declares the LORD. "I will keep a watchful eye over the house of Judah, but I will blind all the horses of the nations.

Zec 12:5 Then the leaders of Judah will say in their hearts, 'The people of Jerusalem are strong, because the LORD Almighty is their God.'

Zec 12:6 "On that day I will make the leaders of Judah like a fire pot in a woodpile, like a flaming torch among sheaves. They will consume right and left all the surrounding peoples, but Jerusalem will remain intact in her place.

Zec 12:7 "The LORD will save the dwellings of Judah first, so that the honor of the house of David and of Jerusalem's inhabitants may not be greater than that of Judah.

Zec 12:8 On that day the LORD will shield those who live in Jerusalem, so that the feeblest among them will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the Angel of the LORD going before them.

Zec 12:9 On that day I will set out to destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem.

Zec 12:10 "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.

Rev 19:11 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war.

Rev 19:12 His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself.

Rev 19:13 He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God.

Rev 19:14 The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean.

Rev 19:15 Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.

Now let's return to our study of the fifth seal and Revelation chapter six verses nine, ten and eleven:

Rev 6:9-11 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And when they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

1. In the fifth seal the scene shifts from earth to heaven where John sees a vision of those who have been martyred for their faith in Christ.

2. They are described as being under the altar, in keeping with the fact that the blood of the sacrifices of the Old Testament was poured out under the altar.

Exo 29:12 And thou shalt take of the blood of the bullock, and put it upon the horns of the altar with thy finger, and pour all the blood beside the bottom of the altar.

3. In this case it is the "souls of them that were slain for the Word of God" which are seen under the altar. John hears them crying with a loud voice asking why God has not judged their persecutors.

4. The introduction of these martyred dead in heaven immediately after the fourth seal seems to imply that these martyrs have come from the tribulation scene on the earth.
  5. As noted in our summary of the Doctrine of Persecution there have been many martyrs in every generation, and even in the twentieth century tens of thousands are still being martyred.
  6. There is however reason for believing that a greater period of martyrdom is yet ahead.
  7. The fact that the martyrs ask for judgment upon those that dwell on the earth makes apparent that their persecutors are still living; the vast majority of the persecutors of most church age saints would not of course be still living.
  8. Their cry for righteous judgment is in the same spirit as the Psalmist's call to God to vindicate His holiness and righteousness in dealing with the injustice and oppression which characterize the human race.
  9. In answer to their question as to how long it will be, the reply is given in verse eleven that there is still a little time required for the fulfillment of God's program, that other events must take place and that there are still additional martyrs yet to die.
  10. In a word, they are to wait until the time of Christ's return in power and glory when God will deal in summary judgment with the earth.
  11. The revelation of the fifth seal makes clear that in the future time of tribulation it will be most difficult to declare one's faith in the Lord Jesus.
  12. It may very well be that the majority of those who trust Christ as Savior in that day will be put to death.
- Rev 13:7 He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation.
- Rev 13:8 All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast--all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.
- Dan 7:25 And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.
13. Martyrdom in those days will be as common as it is uncommon today. Thousands will be martyred, sealing their testimony with their own blood.
  - 13.1 Those who trust in Christ in that day will be forced to stand the acid test of being faithful even unto death.

14. As we have noted, their ability is facilitated and driven by the endowment of God the Holy Spirit.

15. In Rev 6:11 the white robes given to every one of the martyrs are symbolic of their positional righteousness.

15.1 This introduces another question often debated by theologians, namely, what kind of a body will the saints have in heaven before their own bodies are raised from the dead?

16. The martyred dead are those who have come from the tribulation; according to Revelation 20:4 they do not receive their resurrection bodies until the end of the tribulation.

16.1 As we will see this has sponsored "thorny" theological debate.

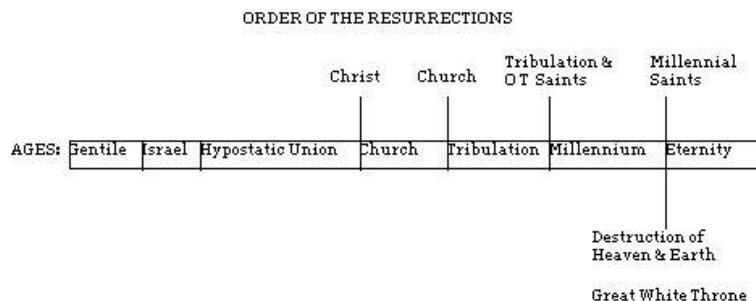
Rev 20:4 I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

17. Scholars have been divided as to whether the saints who die receive temporary bodies in heaven prior to the receipt of their resurrection bodies, or whether only their spiritual beings are in heaven before the resurrection.

18. In this verse we find some help here. The martyred dead here pictured have not been raised from the dead and have not received their resurrection bodies.

19. Yet it is declared that they are given robes. The fact that they are given robes would almost demand that they have a body of some kind.

20. A robe could not hang upon an immaterial soul or spirit. It is not the kind of body that Christians now have, that is, the body of earth; nor is it the resurrection body of which Paul described.



21. Col. Thieme has taught as shown above that these saints receive a temporary body suited for their presence in heaven but replaced in turn by their everlasting resurrection body given at the time of Christ's return.

End Lesson Taught 5-2-2001

Revelation

Lesson 69

5-9-2001

1. Tonight we will continue our study of the book of The Revelation. We are in lesson sixty-nine.

1.1 Before we do though let's remember the application of 1Jo 1:9 as might be necessary.

2. So far in chapter six I have analyzed verses one through eight. Last week I taught the Doctrine of Persecution and when time ran out I was in the process of teaching the fifth seal described in Rev 6:9-11.

3. I want to review some of that earlier learned and then we will return to our study of the unrequited martyrs of the Tribulation.

4. Let's first look at an expanded translation of Rev 6:1-8

Rev 6:1 I watched as the Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ, opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, "Get up here!"  
Rev 6:2 Before me was a white horse! Its rider, the Antichrist, held a bow, a quiver of arrows hung from his shoulder and he wore a victor's crown, and he rode out, as a conqueror intent on victory; the Antichrist by military threat established peace and signed a treaty with Israel guaranteeing their right to worship in their newly constructed Temple.

Rev 6:3 When the Lord opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come up here again John!"

Rev 6:4 Then I saw a Red Horse. Its rider, the King of the North, was given power to take peace from the earth. From the permissive will of God this King was given an awesome military capability; this King, reigning over what today we call Russia, was permitted to move his military machine through Israel on his way to defeat a coalition of Arab nations led by Egypt.

Rev 6:5 When the Christ opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come again!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse, its rider, representing the natural result of war, he was holding a pair of scales in his hand; the scales represented the scarcity of food; people were found existing on spartan diets due to the land having been ravaged by extensive military campaigns.

Rev 6:6 Then I heard one of the four living creatures explain the meaning, "people will be able only to purchase the bare essentials, most will find it difficult to buy sufficient food for even three squares a day"

Rev 6:7 When our Lord opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!"

Rev 6:8 I looked, and there before me was a pale green horse! Its rider, representing the horror and aftermath of war, was given the name Death and his horse was dragging behind him Hades and I could see the abode of the dead crowded with the beleaguered souls of those tormented in this place of pain. The rider of the horse was given power over a fourth part of the earth; more than one and one-half billion people were killed by constant war, famines and plagues, even the wild animals lost their fear of man; they aggressively attacked villages and cities carrying off men, women and children.

1. Instead of destruction and new calamities being announced we find in the fifth seal, a picture of many martyred saints from the Great Tribulation.

NIV

Rev 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.

Rev 6:10 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?"

Rev 6:11 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.

2. From our review last week of the Doctrine of Persecution and the judgments portrayed in the book of The Revelation, it should be evident that the dreams of the optimist for a world becoming increasingly better is scientifically, intellectually, morally, and religiously bankrupt.

3. The ultimate triumph of God is assured; and as the book of Revelation makes plain, Christ will reign over the earth and bring in a kingdom of peace and righteousness after Jacob's time of trouble has run its course.

4. In the fifth seal the scene shifts from earth to heaven where John sees a vision of those who have been martyred for their faith in Christ.

5. They are described as being under the altar, in keeping with the fact that the blood of the sacrifices of the Old Testament was poured out under the altar.

6. In this case it is the "souls of them that were slain for the Word of God" which are seen there. John hears them crying with a loud voice asking why God has not judged their persecutors.

7. The introduction of these martyred dead in heaven immediately after the fourth seal seems to imply that these martyrs have come from the tribulation scene on the earth.

8. The fact that the martyrs ask for judgment upon those that dwell on the earth makes apparent that their persecutors are still living; the vast majority of the persecutors of most church age saints would not of course be still living.

8.1 It would seem to be clear the martyrs are only those killed during the Tribulation period.

9. Their cry for righteous judgment is in the same spirit as the Psalmist's call to vindicate God's holiness and righteousness in dealing with the injustice and oppression which characterize the human race.

10. In answer to their question as to how long before their vindication, the reply is given in verse eleven that they are to wait until the time of Christ's return in power and glory when God will deal in summary judgment with the earth.

11. The revelation of the fifth seal makes clear that in the future time of tribulation it will be most difficult to declare one's faith in the Lord Jesus.

12. It may very well be that the majority of those who trust Christ as Savior in that day will be put to death.

13. Martyrdom in those days will be as common as it is uncommon in the USA today. Thousands will be martyred, sealing their testimony with their own blood.

13.1 Those who trust in Christ in that day will be forced to stand the acid test of being faithful even unto death.

14. As we have noted, their ability is facilitated and driven by the endowment of God the Holy Spirit.

15. In Rev 6:11 the white robes given to every one of the martyrs are symbolic of their positional righteousness.

15.1 This introduces another question often debated by theologians, namely, what kind of a body will the saints have in heaven before their own bodies are raised from the dead?

16. The martyred dead are those who have come from the tribulation; according to Revelation 20:4 they do not receive their resurrection bodies until the end of the tribulation.



Rev 20:4 I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

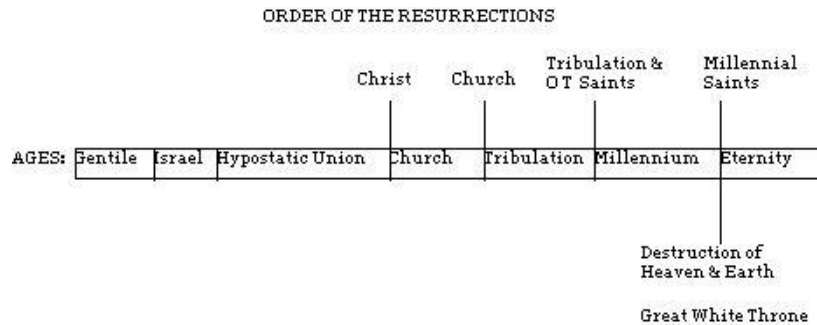
17. Scholars have been divided as to whether the saints who die receive temporary bodies in heaven prior to the receipt of their resurrection bodies, or whether only their spiritual beings are in heaven before the resurrection.

18. In this verse we find some help here. The martyred dead here pictured have not been raised from the dead and have not received their resurrection bodies.

19. Yet it is declared that they are given robes. The fact that they are given robes would almost demand that they have a body of some kind.

20. A robe could not hang upon an immaterial soul or spirit. It is not the kind of body that Christians now have, that is, the body of earth; nor is it the resurrection body which Paul described.

20.1 It might best be simply described as "an interim" body.



21. Col. Thieme has taught "these saints receive a temporary body suited for their presence in heaven but replaced in turn by their everlasting resurrection body given at the time of Christ's return." This explanation is somewhat problematic given the fact a millennial body must be capable of procreation and yet in heaven there is no gender distinction. It would seem, therefore, that millennial saints will have a special ageless and perfect body capable of enjoying an earthly perfect environment and one capable of procreation. With that said let's continue to see what others have said.

22. Let me share what Lewis Sperry Chafer has written concerning the relationship of Tribulational and Millennial Saints and their resurrection bodies.

"The Resurrection of Tribulation Saints

“Special mention is made of the resurrection of those who died as martyrs in the Tribulation as being raised in connection with the second coming of Christ to establish His kingdom. In Revelation 20:4 John writes that he saw "the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

“This statement is explicit that the martyred dead of the Tribulation will be raised when Christ comes to establish His kingdom. Revelation 20:5 declares, "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection." A natural question follows as to how this resurrection could be first when there have been other resurrections preceding it, such as the resurrection of Christ, the resurrection of the church, and the resurrection of the Old Testament saints. The answer is that the term "the first resurrection" refers to all resurrections of the righteous even though they are widely separated in time. They all are "first," that is, before the final resurrection of the wicked. Accordingly, the term "first resurrection" applies to all the resurrections of the saints regardless of when they occur, including the resurrection of Christ Himself.

#### The Resurrection of the Millennial Saints

“Scripture in no passage clearly predicts the resurrection of the millennial saints, and some have concluded that saints who enter the Millennium will never die. Scripture, of course, is also silent about a Rapture (resurrection) of living saints at the end of the millennial kingdom. Both these items of prophecy are of no immediate concern to saints living today, and truth relating to it can be disclosed after Christ's return to set up His kingdom. The presumption is, however, that some saints who survive the tribulation time will be already advanced in age, and in any case it is doubtful whether anyone will survive for the entire thousand year reign. Even Adam and the early Christians did not live to attain the age of one thousand years. Accordingly, it may be assumed that even those who are saved will die in the Millennium even though their life may be greatly prolonged.

“According to Isaiah 65:20, "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed." This statement, on the one hand, indicates that life will be greatly lengthened, that is, that at the age of 100 a person is still in his youth. In the Millennium, believers who are old men will fill out their days, meaning that they will live to a ripe old age. On the other hand, this does not state that they will not die. By contrast, a person dying at the age of 100 will do so because of sin, and death will come as a form of judgment. The evidence remains that there will probably be saints who die in the Millennium and that they will be raised at the end of the millennial kingdom. This doctrine, however, is not built upon explicit Scripture, but is probably the best explanation.

“At the same time millennial saints are raised, undoubtedly living millennial saints will be raptured or taken from the earth without dying in the same fashion as the church is raptured. This will be in preparation for the destruction of the present earth and heavens.”

23. The introduction of these martyred saints in heaven also has a bearing upon the chronology of Revelation chapter 6.

24. In support of the common interpretation that the seals cover the entire seven years of Daniel's seventieth week (Dan. 9:27), it is sometimes pointed out that two classes of martyrs are here mentioned, namely, those already slain, and those who are yet to be slain.

25. It has been inferred, accordingly, that those previously slain were killed in the first half of Daniel's seventieth week whereas those who are yet to be slain will perish in the great tribulation or the last half of the week, as A. C. Gaebelein suggests.

26. Confirmation is found in the expression "for a little season" in verse one. There is no reason, however, why the last three and a half years could not have the same distinction, namely, certain martyrs at the beginning as contrasted to martyrs at the end.

27. Before analyzing the last six verses of chapter six; let me give you an expanded translation of Rev 6:9-11:

Rev 6:9 When John opened the fifth seal, he saw under the Altar of God those believers who had been slain during the Tribulation; these saints of God had been murdered because of their Christian testimony.

Rev 6:10 The saints from under the Altar cried in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, before you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our deaths?"

Rev 6:11 Then each saint was called before the Throne of God and given a white robe as a symbol of their positional righteousness; they were there told to wait just a little longer, because there were many other saints yet to be executed.

Now let's see what we can learn from Rev 6:12-17 where we see God directly delivering His wrath upon planet earth.

KJV

Rev 6:12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;

Rev 6:13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

Rev 6 14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

Rev 6:15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains.

Rev 6:16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

Rev 6:17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

NIV

Rev 6:12 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,

Rev 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.

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

Rev 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.

Rev 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!

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

1. It would be difficult to paint any scene more moving or more terrible than that described at the opening of the sixth seal.

2. All the elements of a great catastrophic judgment of God are here present, namely, a great earthquake, the sun becoming black, the moon becoming as blood, the stars of heaven falling like ripe figs, the heaven departing as a scroll, and every mountain and island moving.

3. This is an awe inspiring scene, but what does it mean prophetically?

4. Students of the book of the Revelation have had difficulty interpreting this passage, and the tendency has been to regard these judgments as symbolic rather than real.

5. The motive behind this interpretation has been a reluctance to accept a literal interpretation of these judgments falling on the earth at this time.

5.1 The disturbances of the heavens have been taken to refer to changes in human government, and disturbances in the earth as referring to the upsetting of tradition and commonly fixed ideas.

6. H. A. Ironside, for instance comments: "It is therefore not a world-wide, literal earthquake that the sixth seal introduces, but rather the destruction of the present order political, social, and ecclesiastical reduced to chaos; the breaking down of all authority, and the breaking up of all established and apparently permanent institutions."

7. On the other side, Peake urges interpretation of Revelation in its plain sense unless good reasons indicate otherwise:

“The Apocalypse is no doubt often obscure and its language is often allegorical. But it has to be interpreted in its plain sense far more frequently than many expositors are willing to admit. Much is written in simple characters which expositors have insisted on treating as hieroglyphics. In particular natural phenomena have been interpreted of historical events and the author has been credited with describing a political movement when he has been really speaking of God's judgments through nature. And the temptation has been especially great to find allegories where the author describes things in a matter-of-fact way, when the descriptions are bizarre and uncongenial to modern taste.”

8. There are a number of reasons for preferring to take this passage in its literal meaning. While this is not the final breakup of the world as described later when a further period of terrible judgments are poured out upon the world, it does seem to indicate that beginning with the sixth seal God is undertaking a direct intervention into human affairs.

9. The judgments of war, famine, and death, and the martyrdom of the saints have largely originated in human decision and in the evil heart of man.

9.1 The judgments described here, however, originate with God; seemingly His very own divine punishment inflicted upon a blasphemous world.

10. In view of the catastrophic and climactic character of the period, there is no good reason why we should not expect the agents to be precisely the elements mentioned, namely certain disturbances in the heavens and earthquakes on the earth.

11. This is borne out by the effect upon the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the chief captains, the mighty men, bond men, and free men mentioned in verse 15, who hide themselves in dens and in the rocks of the mountains.

12. The events are of such character that all these men, though clearly heterogeneous, are impressed with the fact that the day of the wrath of the Lord has come and that their judgment is now about to take place.

12.1 In support of this, E. W. Bullinger writes, "It is impossible for us to take this as symbolical; or as other than what it literally says. The difficulties of the symbolical interpretation are insuperable, while no difficulties whatever attend the literal interpretation."

13. It is questionable whether changes in government and in human affairs would have brought such a striking transformation in the hearts of these wicked people.

13.1 As is often the case with desperate men, instead of availing themselves of the grace of God, they attempt to hide from the wrath of the Lamb by seeking escape in death.

14. However their hope is futile, for death is not an escape but merely a change from one state to another.

14.1 Those who escape through death from the immediate judgment of God are destined for eternal judgment at the judgment of the great white throne.

15. The earth today so indifferent to the claims of God, so bent upon pleasure, luxury, and fame, will face in that day its terrible need.

16. All levels of society are here. Some are great men, some are slaves. In relation to the judgment of the Lord Jesus Christ, however, everyone is exactly in the same predicament. Success in the world does not help; no one escapes.

End Lesson Taught 5-9-2001

Revelation

Lesson 70

5-16-2001

1. Tonight we will continue our study of the book of The Revelation. We are in lesson seventy.

1.1 Before we do though let's remember the application of 1Jo 1:9 as might be necessary.

2. So far in chapter six I have analyzed verses one through eleven. Last week I finished teaching the fifth seal and the timing of the Resurrections.

3. When time ran out I was in the process of teaching the sixth seal described in Rev 6:12-17.

4. I want to review some of that earlier learned and then we will return to our study of the sixth seal and God's direct imposition of His wrath on earth.

5. First however an expanded translation of Rev 6:1-11:

Rev 6:1 I watched as the Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ, opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, "Get up here!"  
Rev 6:2 Before me was a white horse! Its rider, the Antichrist, held a bow, a quiver of arrows hung from his shoulder and he wore a victor's crown, and he rode out, as a conqueror intent on victory; the Antichrist by military threat established peace and signed a treaty with Israel guaranteeing their right to worship in their newly constructed Temple.

Rev 6:3 When the Lord opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come up here again John!"

Rev 6:4 Then I saw a Red Horse. Its rider, the King of the North, was given power to take peace from the earth. From the permissive will of God this King was given an awesome military capability; this King, reigning over what today we call Russia, was permitted to move his military machine through Israel on his way to defeat a coalition of Arab nations led by Egypt.

Rev 6:5 When the Christ opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come again!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse, its rider, representing the natural result of war, he was holding a pair of scales in his hand; the scales represented the scarcity of food; people were found existing on spartan diets due to the land having been ravaged by extensive military campaigns.

Rev 6:6 Then I heard one of the four living creatures explain the meaning, "people will be able only to purchase the bare essentials, most will find it difficult to buy sufficient food for even three squares a day"

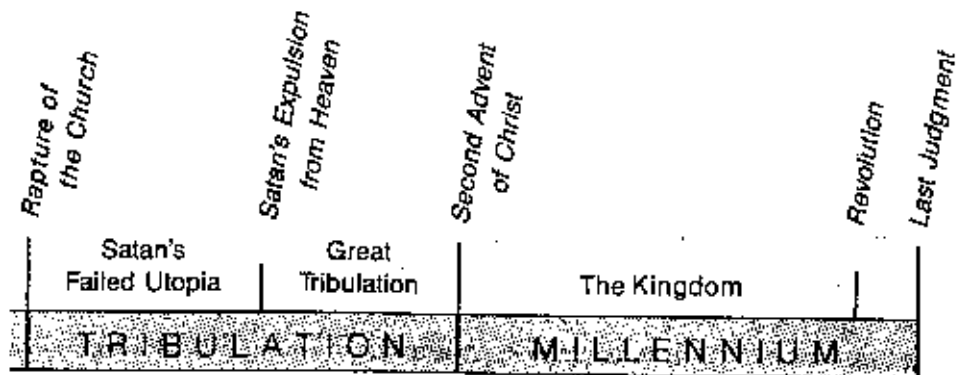
Rev 6:7 When our Lord opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!"

Rev 6:8 I looked, and there before me was a pale green horse! Its rider, representing the horror and aftermath of war, was given the name Death and his horse was dragging behind him Hades and I could see the abode of the dead crowded with the beleaguered souls of those tormented in this place of pain. The rider of the horse was given power over a fourth part of the earth; more than one and one-half billion people were killed by constant war, famines and plagues, even the wild animals lost their fear of man; they aggressively attacked villages and cities carrying off men, women and children.

Rev 6:9 When John opened the fifth seal, he saw under the Altar of God those believers who had been slain during the Tribulation; these saints of God had been murdered because of their Christian testimony.

Rev 6:10 The saints from under the altar cried in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, before you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our deaths?"

Rev 6:11 Then each saint was called before the Throne of God and given a white robe as a symbol of their positional righteousness; they were there told to wait just a little longer, because there were many other saints yet to be executed.



Now let's see what we can learn from Rev 6:12-17 where we see Christ opening the sixth seal.

NIV

Rev 6:12 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, Rev 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.

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

Rev 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.

Rev 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!"

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

1. It would be difficult to paint any scene more moving or more terrible than that described at the opening of the sixth seal.
2. All the elements of a great catastrophic judgment of God are here present.
3. This is an awe inspiring scene.
4. Students of the Revelation have had difficulty interpreting this passage, and the tendency on the part of some, like even H. A. Ironside, has been to regard these judgments as symbolic rather than real.
5. The motive behind this interpretation has been a reluctance to accept a literal interpretation of these judgments.
6. The disturbances of the heavens have been taken to refer to changes in human government, and disturbances in the earth as referring to the upsetting of tradition and commonly fixed ideas.
7. On the other side, the renowned eschatological expositor Peake urges a literal interpretation:

“The Apocalypse is no doubt often obscure and its language is often allegorical. But it has to be interpreted in its plain sense far more frequently than many expositors are willing to admit. Much is written in simple characters which expositors have insisted on treating as hieroglyphics. In particular natural phenomena have been interpreted of historical events and the author has been credited with describing a political movement when he has been really speaking of God's judgments through nature. ... temptation has been especially great to find allegories where the author describes things in a matter-of-fact way, when the descriptions are bizarre and uncongenial to modern taste.”



8. Men like Thieme, Walvoord, Chafer and Pentecost have also subscribed to the literal interpretation of this sixth seal.

8.1 After due consideration of the great writings of past expositors from both camps and from comparisons of related Scriptures in both the Old and New Testament, there is no doubt in my mind a "literal meaning is required."

9. The judgments of war, famine, and death, and the martyrdom of the saints have largely originated in human decision and in the evil heart of man.

9.1 The judgments described here, however, originate with God; seemingly His very own divine punishment inflicted upon a blasphemous world.

10. In view of the catastrophic and climactic character of the period, there is no good reason why we should not expect the agents to be precisely the elements mentioned, namely certain disturbances in the heavens and earthquakes on the earth.

11. This is borne out by the effect upon the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the chief captains, the mighty men, bond men, and free men mentioned in verse 15, who hide themselves in dens and in the rocks of the mountains.

12. The events are of such character that all these men, though clearly heterogeneous, are impressed with the fact that the day of the wrath of the Lord has come and that their judgment is now about to take place.

12.1 In support of this, E. W. Bullinger writes, "It is impossible for us to take this as symbolical; or as other than what it literally says. The difficulties of the symbolical interpretation are insuperable, while no difficulties whatever attend the literal interpretation."

13. It is questionable whether changes in government and in human affairs would have brought such a striking transformation in the hearts of these wicked people.

13.1 As is often the case with desperate men, instead of availing themselves of the grace of God, they attempt to hide from the wrath of the Lamb by seeking escape in death.

14. However their hope is futile, for death is not an escape but merely a change from one state to another.

14.1 Those who escape through death from the immediate judgment of God are destined for eternal judgment at the judgment of the great white throne.

15. The earth today so indifferent to the claims of God will face in that day its terrible need.

16. All levels of society are here. Some are great men, some are slaves. In relation to the judgment of the Lord Jesus Christ, however, everyone is exactly in the same predicament. Success in the world does not help; no one escapes.

17. The elements of divine judgment pictured here are common in the prophecies pertaining to the end of the age. Christ Himself predicted earthquakes.

Mat 24:7 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places.

18. Both earthquakes and the sun becoming black are predicted by Joel.

Joe 2:1 Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming. It is close at hand--

Joe 2:2 a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. Like dawn spreading across the mountains a large and mighty army comes, such as never was of old nor ever will be in ages to come.

Joe 2:10 Before them the earth shakes, the sky trembles, the sun and moon are darkened, and the stars no longer shine.

Joe 2:30 I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke.

Joe 2:31 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

19. The heavens departing as a scroll are mentioned in Isaiah 13:13 and 34:4.

Isa 13:13 Therefore I will make the heavens tremble; and the earth will shake from its place at the wrath of the LORD Almighty, in the day of his burning anger.

Isa 34:4 All the stars of the heavens will be dissolved and the sky rolled up like a scroll; all the starry host will fall like withered leaves from the vine, like shriveled figs from the fig tree.

20. The resulting impression upon the unbelieving world is that the time of the judgment of God has come. They themselves say "let the mountains and rocks" ... Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

21. It is apparent that creatures of earth have had some foreboding that their blasphemous unbelief and worship of the beast pictured in Revelation 13 are in defiance of the true God.

Rev 13:1 And the dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name.

Rev 13:2 The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority.

Rev 13:3 One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was astonished and followed the beast.

Rev 13:4 Men worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, "Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?"

22. The world now however as the sixth seal falls seek refuge from the Christ and apparently realize that the day of divine wrath has come.

23. The day of wrath in one sense is the whole period of the Great Tribulation, when God will deal in direct judgment with the world, climaxing with the return of Christ in power and glory and divine judgment upon all who oppose His coming.

24. There are those like Hal Lindsey who place modern weapons on the scene as the direct cause as over against the direct work of God.

24.1 His position is certainly not like that of Ironside who allegorized away the literal meaning but rather Lindsay sees modern weapons as more than sufficient to do the job or jobs described by John.

25. There is certainly a great deal to support both the indirect and direct interpretations.

25.1 The opening of the sixth seal introduces a tremendous earthquake.

25.1.1 Earthquakes have always been a particularly terrifying experience for people to go through.

25.2 It has been estimated that in the past four thousand years earthquakes have caused a loss of thirteen million lives!

25.3 Experts agree that the frequency of earthquakes is increasing significantly, and that "killer quakes" are happening more often now than ever before."

26. Professor R. A. Daly in *Our Mobile Earth* says that "by far the most awful earth shock is yet to come. So many authorities have warned Californians to expect a giant quake along the San Andreas Fault that the people who live anywhere near it tend to keep their fingers crossed!"

27. Hal Lindsey writes; "But the earthquake of this sixth judgment will be "the grand-daddy of them all." The particular Greek word used here actually means "a violent, catastrophic shaking. This meaning, coupled with the darkening of the sun and moon, leads me to believe that the Apostle John is describing an earthquake set off by a nuclear explosion. Remember, John had to describe phenomena of a very advanced technical age in terms of his first century understanding."

27.1 The words "great earthquake" in verse twelve in the Greek is **megas seismos**. We of course get our word seismic from **seismos** and our prefix mega from **megas**.

28. Lindsey goes on to write: "Recently as I was studying about nuclear weapons I discovered that science has perfected a cobalt bomb one of the most lethal weapons known to man. A cobalt bomb is made by placing a shield of cobalt 59 metal around a hydrogen bomb. By this comparatively simple operation the destructive capacity of the hydrogen bomb is doubled. More significantly, however, the radioactive contamination of the cobalt bomb is tremendous. Scientists have dubbed it "the dirty bomb" because of its fallout. This is what I believe may be pictured in Revelation 6:12."

29. Verse 13 states that "the stars of heaven fell to the earth." This word for star (**asteres**) can refer to either a star or a meteor.

30. In this verse it seems more likely that meteors are intended. When meteors first strike the atmosphere of the earth they glow with a fiery red color. The Mir space station glowed in the same way when it returned to earth.

31. It is possible as some have conjectured that the meteor may be referring to more than ordinary celestials falling to earth. Both the United States and Russia have sophisticated ballistic missiles which can be fired from aircraft, hardened silos, submarines and aegis class destroyers.

32. Since such missiles come straight down from the sky, they can strike several cities simultaneously and with virtually no warning. When these missiles streak through the air they'll look like meteors showering the atmosphere!

33. The statement in Rev 6:14 "And the atmosphere was pushed apart like a scroll when it is rolled together" sounds a great deal like a description of a nuclear explosion.

33.1 Dr. Edward Teller once wrote similarly in his description of an atomic explosion "the air pushes apart forming a giant vacuum in which the entire atmosphere rolls away and then back into that vacuum."

34. John's words in this verse may be a picture of an all-out nuclear exchange. When this happens, John says every mountain and island will be jarred from its present position. The whole world will be literally shaken apart!

35. In describing the period of judgment as a day of wrath, reference is not to a twenty - four hour period but longer.

35.1 The "Day of The Lord" is a technical term for the Tribulation, the Second Advent of Christ and the immediate aftermath thereof.

36. Chapter six would seem to be a summary of what will occur in "The Day of the Lord" - that which occurs in the Tribulation, the 2nd Advent and the immediate events subsequent thereto.

37. The day of wrath is in contrast to the day of grace. Though God in every dispensation deals with all believers and saves them by grace, the present age is supremely designed to manifest grace not only as the way of salvation but as a way of life.

38. Today God is not attempting to bring divine judgment to bear upon sin. Though there may be some forms of immediate retribution; for the most part God is not settling accounts now.

39. Neither the righteous are rewarded nor the wicked judged in a final sense today. Our day of grace will be followed by the day of the Lord which features His day of wrath.

40. By contrast to the judgments which are inflicted upon a Christ rejecting world, believers in this present age are promised escape from the judgment which the world richly deserves.

Joh 3:18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

Joh 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

41. The person who trusts in Christ is not only un-condemned in this world but he has eternal life and is a member of God's forever family. By contrast the unbeliever shall never see life, but abides under the wrath of God which in due time will be inflicted.

42. The Revelation discredits those who hold that God is so loving and kind that He will never judge people who have not received His Son.

43. Although the modern mind is reluctant to accept the fact that God will judge the wicked, the Bible clearly teaches that He will.

44. The Scriptures reveal a God of love as clearly as they reveal a God of wrath. The passages before us reveal God's solemn word that there is an inevitable judgment ahead for those who do not accept Christ as Savior.

45. The close of chapter six advances the narrative to a new high in the progress of the book. In some sense chapter 6 is the outline of the important facts of the period of the great tribulation.

45.1 The rest of the events of the book of The Revelation are comprehended in the seventh seal which is later introduced in chapter 8.

46. Chapter 6 closes with a pointed question: "Who shall be able to stand?" The answer is obvious: Only those who avail themselves of the grace of God, even though they suffer a martyr's death in this future tragic period.

47. This is brought out in the next chapter. Chapters six and seven emphasizes the importance of partaking of the grace of God in this present age with the bright prospect of the Lord coming for His own.

48. Before we begin a study of chapter seven I want to give you an Expanded Translation of Rev 6:12-17:

Rev 6:12 John watched as Christ opened the sixth seal. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, the entire planet was violently shaken. The sun turned black as rough sackcloth, the moon turned blood red,

Rev 6:13 Several of the stars fell to earth, just like fruit shaken loose by a sudden windstorm.

Rev 6:14 The sky was rolled up like a scroll and all the mountains and islands in the sea were torn from their places, tossed in the air and sent rolling in all directions;

Rev 6:15 Then the various heads of state and their appointees, the generals, the rich, the famous, the ecclesiastical leaders, and even the lowliest members of the human race, they all ran and hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains.

Rev 6:16 It was from these remote hiding places that they begged to die; "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb of God" they cried!

Rev 6:17 "For the great day of His wrath has come, and there is no one who can stand up under His judgment?"

Now let's take a look at chapter seven and the seventh seal:

1. In contrast to chapter six which seems in the main to give a chronological sequence of major events of the great tribulation, chapter seven does not advance the narrative but directs attention to two major groups of saints in the tribulation.

2. The opening portion of the chapter pictures the 144,000 Jewish evangelist; they are representative of a godly remnant of Israel on earth in the great tribulation.

3. The latter part of the chapter describes a great multitude of martyred dead in heaven, those who died as a testimony to their faith from every kindred, tongue, and nation.

4. The question has often been asked, Will anyone be saved after the rapture? The Scriptures clearly indicate that a great multitude of both Jews and Gentiles will trust in the Lord after the church is caught up to glory.

5. Though the children of God living on earth at the time will be translated when Christ comes for His church, immediately a testimony of Christ is raised up.

5.1 Though these are never described by the term church," they are constantly called saints, that is, those set apart as holy to God and saved through faith alone in Christ alone.

6. The presence of saved people in the world after the rapture has puzzled some because according to 2Th 2:7 the one who now restrains sin, often identified as the Holy Spirit, is pictured as being removed from the world.

2Th 2:6 And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time.

2Th 2:7 For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way.

2Th 2:8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.

2Th 2:9 The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders,

7. The question then is how can people be saved in the tribulation if the Holy Spirit is taken out of the world? The answer, of course, is that the Holy Spirit is removed from the world in the same sense in which He came on the day of Pentecost.

8. We spent some time earlier reviewing the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Age of Israel.

8.1 We called the Old Testament work of the Holy Spirit in the Age of Israel an "Endowment"; this in contrast to the convincing/indwelling/filling ministry of God the Holy Spirit in the Age of the church.

9. People were saved before the day of Pentecost and He, the Holy Spirit, will continue with His work in the Tribulation just as He did in the Old Testament.

10. Though the special ministries which are characteristic of the present dispensation may cease, there will be the continued ministry of the Spirit in a similar way to that which existed before Pentecost.

11. Walvoord has written: "The Holy Spirit will continue to be working in the world, but in some particulars in a different way. There is good reason to believe, however, that the Holy Spirit will lead people to Christ, and many will be saved during the tribulation time. A description of this is given in the seventh chapter of the book of Revelation, which is so plain that no one should question whether people will be saved after the rapture."

End Lesson Taught 5-16-2001





