

## **REVELATION 6**

### ***The Seals***

Revelation chapter six is shocking. In the past two chapters, we have been allowed to witness scenes of heavenly worship where there was praise and shouting. In this passage, we are going to see images of God's divine wrath. We are about to examine a scene filled with pain and suffering. In this passage, the seven seals on the book in the hand of the Lord Jesus begin to be broken, one by one. As the seals are opened, a series of divine judgment is poured out upon the earth and those who dwell on the earth. We are about to witness a time of destruction, devastation and death that can hardly be comprehended by our mortal minds. These verses describe events that will take place on the earth after the church has been removed in the Rapture. This is a world that is in rebellion against its Maker; and it is a world that stands on the brink of terrifying judgments.

Beginning in chapter six all the way through chapter nineteen, we are placed in the "Tribulation Period", or the time known as the "Great Tribulation. This period of time is clearly described in the Word of God.

Jeremiah 30:7, "How awful that day will be! No other will be like it. It will be a time of trouble for Jacob, but he will be saved out of it."

Daniel 12:1, "At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered."

Matthew 24:21, "For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again."

***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!"***

We are told in verse one that when the Lamb opens the first seal, there was "the voice like thunder" in Heaven. Just as thunder signals the approach of a storm, this heavenly thunder indicates that a storm is about to be unleashed upon this world that is almost beyond description.

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***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.***

There are some who read this and say that this rider is Jesus Himself. They cite the similarities between these verses and those in Rev. 19:11-16. While there are some similarities, there are many more differences. The man on this horse is not the Christ, he is the Antichrist! There are several reasons why this man cannot be Jesus.

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He (the Anti-Christ) will come as a man of peace. Notice that this rider has a "bow" in his hand, but he has no arrows. This implies that he will conquer the world without bloodshed. He will accomplish this by providing the answer to the problems faced by the world today. He comes on a white horse, bringing a promise of peace to this world. When the Antichrist comes, he will come with the solutions for the world's problems. He will come with an explanation concerning the disappearance of all the Christians. He will come with a plan to bring peace to this world. When he comes, the world will fall at his feet and honor him as their ruler. He comes as a Savior to a world desperate to be saved. Our world is in a state of turmoil, and things are only going to get worse. Historian Arnold Toynbee said, *"We are ripe for someone who can promise to give peace and to give tranquility to the earth. We will deify that individual if he comes."* Well, he is coming, and the world will love him.

Most of the turmoil centers on the nation of Israel. Iran, the Palestinians, and the rest of the Arab world, desires to wipe Israel from the face of the earth. When the Antichrist comes, he will have the solution to the problem and he will establish a peace plan that will satisfy the world, *"He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."* (Dan. 9:27.)

He is also a man of power. We are told that ***"he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest"***. We are also told that a crown was "given to him". By whatever means he uses, the Antichrist will be given the key to the world. The leaders of the nations of earth will bow at this man's feet and grant him the right to rule over the entire world. They have denied this right to the King of Kings, but they will grant that privilege to this child of Hell. When you reject the Truth all that is left is a lie.

He is a man of deception. The Antichrist is NOT the man that he appears to be. He comes riding a white horse. We have been taught to trust the person in white, or on the white horse. He is the good guy. The Antichrist comes portraying himself as a man of peace because he will appear on the world stage promising peace, safety and prosperity; but he will be the most evil, dictatorial ruler the world has ever seen. Everything he is and everything he says will be a lie (John 8:44).

Some say the world leaders would never be so stupid as to fall for such a deception. In case you have not noticed, we don't have the best/brightest leading us. Also, just look at what Hitler did prior to WWII. Hitler had outlined in detail his plans for conquest in his book Mein Kampf, which was published more than a decade before WWII began. Yet, the Western Allies, persisted in believing Hitler's false claim to be a man of peace. The deception was nearly universal. Only after Hitler invaded Poland in 1939 did the allies acknowledge the truth. By then it was too late. The anti-Christ will be the same and do the same, only on a world-wide scale. This world is ripe for such a person to step to center stage.

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

Imagine a world that knows no peace at all. In every corner of the globe, violence and war will rage. That is the world that every lost sinner will face during the Tribulation.

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This horse is red. Red is the color of fire and of blood. Fire has the power to devour and to destroy. And when the fires of this war are unleashed upon this earth, there will be bloodshed on an unprecedented level. This seal unleashes a time of war such as the world has never known

The peace instituted by the Antichrist seems to be short lived. War breaks out all over the world. Of course, this is what Jesus said would happen during the Tribulation, (Matt. 24:6-7). We should not put too much stock in our world leaders to save us, (1 Thess. 5:3). When the Antichrist first steps onto the world stage, he will be hailed as a man of peace. However, after he is given the keys of power, he will display his true colors, and will demand absolute control/power. When this happens, many of the powerful countries of this world will rebel against him and the world will experience war on a scale that it has never before witnessed. This rider is given a "LARGE sword". The word "LARGE" refers to the extent of the warfare. It will be great/worldwide in its scope. The word "sword" refers to an instrument of war.

During WWII some 50 million people died worldwide. That number will fall far short of the millions who will die during the wars that will rage during this period of time. It is during this period that Russia and her allies will invade Israel in fulfillment of Eze. 38-39. Their armies will be defeated by divine intervention, and Israel will burn the weapons of warfare for seven years, (Eze. 39:9-10).

***5 When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. 6 Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, "Two pounds of wheat for a day's wages, and six pounds of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!"***

Black is a color associated with famine. Famine always follows in the aftermath of war. Thus, worldwide wars will spawn worldwide famines. Jesus spoke of this in Matthew 24:7. The rider on this horse has in his hands a set of scales. This indicates that the Tribulation Period will be marked by severe shortages in the necessities of life. Apparently, the famines will be so severe that food and other basic necessities will have to be rationed.

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Here in America during Word War II there were great shortages so they had to ration certain goods. We know nothing about that in our day! We can go to a grocery store or to a restaurant and buy all the food we can eat. Our cabinets, our refrigerators and our freezers are filled to capacity. We know nothing about having to do without or about having to make do with just a little. But, that day is coming. During WWII ration books were handed out and people used the coupons in those books to obtain the things they needed. Things that we take for granted like sugar, coffee, butter, meat, cheese, canned good, shoes and gasoline were all carefully rationed. Sugar was limited to 12 ounces per week. Gas was limited to 3 gallons per ration period. Coffee was rationed at 1 pound for a five-week period. Those must have been difficult times to live through, but the shortages of Word War II will pale in comparison to the famine/suffering by those left to endure the Tribulation.

Verse 6 tells us something of the problems that will exist during that time. Here's the image of a man who will work all day just to be able to buy enough good food to feed him. People will have to make some hard choices! People who cannot get out and work for themselves will be left to starve to death.

It will be a terrible time, marked by terrible starvation. Today in world, every 3.6 seconds someone dies of starvation, every year 15 million children die of starvation and of hunger related illness. 1.3 billion people live on less than \$1.00 of income per day. However, as horrible as those figures are, they will be dwarfed by the starvation problem this world will face in the Tribulation.

The phrase ***“do not damage the oil and the wine”*** may indicate that luxury items will not be affected by the famines. Oil and wine have always been the items of the wealthy set. Oil is used in the manufacture of cosmetics, and alcohol has always been associated with the high life. In other words, while most of the world is plunged into poverty and starvation, the rich will continue to get richer and enjoy the extravagant lifestyles they enjoy now.

Much of this great divide already exists. I read that the average American puts enough food in the trash can each day to feed a family of six in India. For the price of one missile, a school full of hungry children could eat lunch every day for 5 years. The division between the “haves” and the “have nots” is vast today, but it is only going to grow wider during the Tribulation.

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

The word pale comes from the same Greek word that gives us the English words “chlorophyll” and “chlorine”. The word means, “Green”. It refers to the “sickly, yellow-green pallor of a corpse”.

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The events that take place with this horse and rider are also the things that inevitably follow a time of war. We are told that the rider of this pale horse is “death”. The word “death” speaks of the death of the body. We are also told that “hell” follows behind him. The word “hell” reminds us that there is a horrible place waiting to receive the souls of lost people when they are taken by death.

We are told that death will claim one-quarter of the world’s population. That is one out of every four people living during those days. If you take today’s population of six billion people, you are talking about the death of 1.25 billion people in a short period of time. Wow! The methods death will use to claim this great number of people are listed in this verse. The four methods mentioned are:

- Sword – This refers to warfare. During this period of time, it is almost certain that wars will be both conventional as well as nuclear and biological and chemical weapons as well. The numbers that will die in these wars will be astronomical!
- Famine – We have already talked about the problem of starvation that will become worldwide in its scope during the Tribulation. Many millions will meet their deaths this way.
- Death – This refers to deaths apart from warfare and famine. Perhaps due to “pestilences.” (worse than COVID)
- Beasts – Animal attacks will account for many deaths. The word “beasts” can refer to “small animals” or to “rodents”.

Perhaps with all the warfare, the death and the carnage, the rat population of this world will explode in great numbers. Rats are nasty animals. They carry around 35 known diseases. They were responsible for killing 1/3 of the population of Europe during the Middle Ages as the bubonic plague raged. Rats also carry typhus, which has killed nearly 200 million people during one 400-year period. Rats destroy some \$1 billion in food in the United States every year.

When I read these things, first, I praise the Lord that I am saved by His grace! I do not have to worry about these things. Now, none of us knows how bad things will get before the Lord Jesus will come again. We are already seeing the beginnings of some of these things in our world. I praise the Lord that I am leaving here before the bottom falls out. Second, I grieve for those who do not know the Lord. My family, friends and acquaintances; neighbors, and people we meet everyday who do not know Jesus. All of these people will be left behind to face these things. All they have to look forward too is a life of pain and misery here and an eternity in Hell. That breaks my heart! It should yours too.

***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.***

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These sacrificed saints are under the altar! They are in the place where the blood ran down. They are in a place of safety, salvation and security. They paid a terrible price for their faith, but now they are home and they are safe. We will say more about these people and the price they paid for their faith in Jesus when we get into chapter 7.

Remember, the book of Revelation was not written in chronological order. It was written cyclical A-B-C-D-C-B-A. The events do not necessarily take place in order in which they are written. The events of this book overlap in time. As we continue to move through the book, we are going to be seeing events that will overlap one another from time to time.

In our verses today, we see people in Heaven and people on the earth in prayer. We see both saints and sinners engaged in prayer. Maybe you might think that the Tribulation Period will be a time period where there is no prayer and religious activity. However, just the opposite is true. There will be prayer in Heaven and there will be prayer upon the earth. History's greatest prayer meeting will take place during the latter portion of the Great Tribulation, as saint and sinner alike lift their voices in prayer.

These verses take us back up into Heaven and we are shown a scene of souls under the altar. There are a few things I want to call your attention to:

- 1) When Moses was instructed to build the Tabernacle, he was to build it after the pattern of things in Heaven, Heb. 8:5. That altar was merely a shadow of the altar in Heaven. Everything Moses built for Hebrew worship was only a shadow of what actually exists in Heaven.
- 2) These souls are people who have given their lives for the cause of Christ.
- 3) These souls under this altar demonstrate that our souls do not sleep. These souls are not lying in the grave in a body awaiting a resurrection. They are in Heaven. They are aware and talking. They are very

much alive and in the presence of the Lord. When our loved ones die, when we die, we do not go to the grave! We rise to be with our Savior, (2 Cor. 5:1-8). Souls do not go to the grave! They either go to Heaven to be with the Lord, or they go to Hell, depending on what they have done with Jesus! Alao, there is no "Purgatory." There is absolutely no Scripture that people go to a place of fire where they atone for their sins. Then, when they have suffered enough, they can be set free and go to Heaven. That is Roman Catholic superstitious nonsense! There is no biblical foundation for such a doctrine. The Bible makes it clear that when (not if) death comes; there are only two possible destinations. You can either go to Heaven, or you can go to Hell. There are no other choices!

Here is a multitude of people who have been "slain" for "*... the word of God and the testimony they had maintained*." These are people who turned to faith in Jesus after the Rapture of the church. They held fast to their testimony and to the testimony of Scripture. Even the threat of death could not cause them to turn away.

Yes, there will be people saved during the Tribulation (proof that the Holy Spirit has not been removed). The Bible tells us that an army of Jewish evangelists are going to cover the globe preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom. These evangelists will see a multitude of people that no man can number come to faith in Jesus. Most of the people who come to faith in Jesus during this time period will be called upon to lay down their lives for Jesus (Luke 9:23). These Tribulation saints will refuse follow the Antichrist. They will reject him and his system. They will be hunted down and they will be executed for their testimony of faith in Jesus Christ.

The history of the church is a history of persecution and martyrdom. Since Stephen was stoned to death in Acts 7, many millions have been put to death for their faith in Christ. From the coliseums of ancient Rome, ( Emperor Nero tied Christians to poles, dipped them in wax and set them on fire to light the streets), the Spanish Inquisition, to the death camps of Nazi Germany. Christians have always been called upon to pay for their testimony with their blood. There is no way we can tally the total of those who have been killed for nothing more than professing faith in Jesus. Over the last 2,000 years, believers have been crucified, burned alive at the stake; sawn in half; drowned; stoned; sewn into the skins of dead animals, wild beasts were released on them; shot; stabbed; sealed in their churches and burned alive; raped; humiliated and tortured. You can have your best life now. LOL. Things are only going to get worse! Already, even in America, we are seeing the tide of public opinion turn against believers. Christians are singled out and attacked more and more for their faith. No one would dare say a word about a Muslim or a Jew; but Christians are fair game! When the Great Tribulation comes upon the earth, millions of believers will be put to death for their faith.

***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?"***

These martyred saints are involved in prayer. "They called out with a loud voice." The prayer they offered up is not a prayer for mercy for their enemies (like Jesus prayed at Calvary, Luke 23:34. Or Luke prayed as he was dying, Acts 7:60.). It is prayer for judgment. This kind of prayer is called "imprecatory" prayer. It is the kind of praying that calls on God to move in judgment. It is the kind of praying you read about in the Old Testament, such as Psalm 94:1-4. In the New Testament age of grace, we are taught to pray for those who wrong us, (Matt. 5:44). Jesus set the example for us as He was dying on the cross.

We are in a day of mercy and grace in this age. When the church and the Holy Spirit are removed and the Tribulation Period begins in this earth, it will not be a time of grace and mercy. It will be a time of justice and judgment. These saints pray this way out of a desire to see the name of God vindicated and honored. They call on God to judge the world and those in it, and so glorifying His Own name!

***11 Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers and sisters, were killed just as they had been.***

These saints are given “white robes”. This signifies their purity and their saved condition. They are clothed in white because they have been washed in the blood of the Lamb. They are told to wait/rest a little while. They are being told that more blood must yet be shed and they are to be patient until the Lord finishes His work upon the earth. They are comforted here by the Lord’s words, as He tells them to just be patient for a while; things are going to get worse before they get better.

In the same way, we must learn to take our comfort in the fact that our God is working out an eternal plan. It will be better down the road. He will make all things right one of these days. Our duty now is to only remain faithful even when we don’t understand what He is doing. Let’s not try to dictate what He should/shouldn’t do.

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

Read page 84 in book

These verses describe a universe caught in the grip of a terrible cataclysmic event of an earthquake (or nuclear explosion). Great clouds of dust and ash will be thrown into the atmosphere, dimming the powerful light of the sun. The “Sackcloth made of goat hair” refers to the black garments worn by mourners. The moon will take on the appearance of blood as it tries to shine through the dust/smoke in the atmosphere.

This “great earthquake” is the first of three earthquakes mentioned in the book of Revelation. They will all be terrible. I read that scientist tell us that more than 13 million people have died in earthquakes over the past 4,000 years.

On May 18, 1980 Mount St. Helen’s in Montana, a volcano, erupted. This eruption was triggered by a violent earthquake that caused a rockslide comprised of one-half cubic mile of rock. As the summit and north slope of that volcano slid down her sides, pressure was released inside the volcano – where super hot liquid water immediately flashed to steam. The northward-directed steam explosion released energy equivalent to 20 million tons of TNT, which toppled 150 square miles of forest in six minutes. In Spirit Lake, north of the volcano, an enormous water wave, initiated by one-eighth cubic mile of rockslide debris, stripped trees from slopes as high as 850 feet above the pre-eruption water level. The total energy output, on May 18, was equivalent to 400 million

tons of TNT - approximately 20,000 Hiroshima-size atomic bombs. The explosion showered town as far away as 250 miles with volcanic ash. But it will be nothing compared to the big one – the earthquake of God's wrath.

We are also told that the stars of Heaven will fall down to the earth like the fruit of a fig tree that is shaken by a violent wind. This verse is telling us that there will be tremendous meteor showers that will fall upon the earth in those days. These meteor showers will cause tremendous death and devastation. Whole cities and countries may be destroyed as the heavens come crashing down to the earth. There is no stability as the heavens above appear to roll up like a book and as the mountains and islands are moved out of their places by the devastating earthquakes in those tragic days.

***15 Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and everyone else, both slave and free, hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. 16 They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! 17 For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can withstand it?"***

We are told that people from all walks of life are overcome with fear. When God's wrath is finally poured out upon this world, people will be reduced to the same economic/social level. Fear in the face of wrath will be the great equalizer.

They run to the caves and among the rocks to find a refuge from the presence of God. They want to hide themselves from the face of God and from Jesus. They use a strange statement. They say they want to hide themselves from "***the wrath of the Lamb***". There is probably no animal more tender or gentle than a little lamb. Yet, these big, powerful men want to be delivered from the "wrath of the Lamb". These people sense that their time is up and that they are about to face the wrath of Almighty God; through His Son Jesus Christ, and they are absolutely right! Judgment is coming! They pray to the rocks to save them, rather than to God, but their prayers will go unanswered. Nothing can deliver them from the judgment of God. They call on this natural world. That is where their faith is and this world. There is no cry for grace or mercy from God. There is no confession of sin. There is only a desire to be free from God's wrath. Even in the midst of judgment, lost sinners are still selfish and unchanged!

The martyred saints in Heaven are praying for God to judge sin. The lost sinners on earth are praying to be delivered from the wrath of God. We would not want to face God in our own righteousness. We will stand before Him one day clothed in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, Phil. 3:9. Sadly, many will face Him as their Judge, ( Rev. 20:11-15). How will you meet Him?