

Revelation A Wednesday Night Bible Study

Lesson #18 is a continuation of Lesson #16 & #17

11/08/2006

The Judgment of God, The Great Tribulation, The Great Day of God's Wrath

FIFTH SEAL: Souls of those martyred for the Word of God are seen under the altar

Represents those who have already died unjustly for their faith during the Tribulation

With the witness of the **"two prophets"** of God having its effect upon the peoples of the world, many have made decisions to receive Christ as Lord. These would have largely been people who had not had the Gospel previously presented to them (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12). It has long been true that the warmest responses to the Gospel are found among those who are hearing it for the first time. Those who have heard it over and over again, but rejected it acquire hard and unrepentant hearts which simply continue to reject it again and again. However, God had sealed and empowered these two to go about the world presenting His Word. They had done their job well and many, many were quickly saved.

However, with one out four living on the earth being killed when the **"fourth seal"** was opened many of the newly converted would have died for their faith. They are now seen under the altar before God calling out **"How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"** These saints were already in heaven and fully aware of what God was doing and could do. Impatiently, but understandably, they were eager for God to punish those who had been so vicious towards them.

But, God gave them **"white robes"** of righteousness and told 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."** There would be many more, just like them, to die at the hands of the enemy during the Tribulation period, but God had heard them and would act when the time was right according to His plans. The time would pass quickly and their enemies would pay a awesome price when God did act!

SIXTH SEAL: God begins to pour out His wrath upon wicked man

REPRESENTS: The judgment of God as He uses nature to pour out His wrath

Revelation 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;

Revelation 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.

Revelation 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.

When the time comes for God to pour out His wrath upon man, He uses His own tools and weapons of His creation. He is not dependent upon nor has any use for the weapons of man. **"A great earthquake"** moves and produces destruction. The sun refuses to shine and the moon turns to blood. The stars, asteroids, of the heavens begin to fall and the sky rolls up like a scroll. Man has no defense nor protection against God's expression of His wrath. They try to **"hide themselves in the caves,"** but it doesn't work. They have never seen anything like this. They give up and beg to die, but there is no place of relief or escape from the wrath of the rejected **"Lamb of God"** Who had died to take away their sins. Grace is wonderful. It enables us to be saved from our sins. But, grace rejected brings forth justice and every sinner deserves damnation. Reject grace and that's what man will get!

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THIRD SEAL: Rider on a Black Horse

Represents the famine that follows the war

Revelation 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.

Revelation 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.

Jesus opened the third seal and a rider on a **"black horse"** appeared. The meaning here is not mysterious for God explains it. **"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."** Famine almost always follows war and this will lead into the next result which will be widespread death across the earth. Notice, that the **"oil and wine"** are not to be affected. It is just one more illustration of how the wealthy and powerful are able to protect their interests and provide for themselves even when the rest of humanity suffers — another example of the injustice of man towards man that exists in our wicked world.

FOURTH SEAL: Rider on a Pale Horse

Represents the widespread death that is the result of famine

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

Revelation 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.

Jesus opened the fourth seal and a rider on a **"pale horse"** was seen. It also is explained by God for it is death. But, there is something interesting added. **"Hell (Hades) followed."** **"Hades"** is the temporary place where those go who die with Christ. It is a place of torment which Jesus described in Luke 16:19-31 when He told about the rich man and Lazarus dying. Those who go to **"Hades"** will be resurrected and summoned by Jesus to appear before Him when He sits upon His **Great White Throne** (Rev. 20:13-15) to be sentenced to their eternal destiny in the **"lake of fire and brimstone."** Here, in the opening of the fourth seal, they are apparently enabled to return to the earth to kill and destroy others. This is simply giving freedom to their criminal and wicked nature and allowing it to express itself. They, joined by various wild beasts, along with the famine, will kill one out of four people still living on this earth.

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peace” In addition, Paul wrote to the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3 that **“for yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them ...”**

It is clear that when Anti-Christ appears on the scene he seems to be a person who brings peace to the world, but it is temporary and, in actuality, a delusion. It doesn't last long. When Christ comes and establishes peace it will be eternal. The rider on the white horse is Anti-Christ.

SECOND SEAL: Rider on a Red Horse

Represents the war that follows the false peace

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

Revelation 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.

Jesus opened the second seal and a rider on a red horse was seen. The meaning of this judgment is not mysterious because God explained it — it is war that brings about the end of the false peace introduced by Anti-Christ.

The only mystery concerns the interpretation of Scripture passages that might describe this. Ezekiel 38 and 39 present an awesome picture of war. There are various opinions about when the events described there fit into the history of man. Those events fit better here than any other place.

Notice some of God's statements recorded in Ezekiel 38 & 39. In 38:8 and 16 God says that the attack upon Israel by armies from the north will happen in **“the latter days,”** an expression often found in the Old Testament to refer to the period of Tribulation. Furthermore, God said in 39:8: **“Behold, it is come, and it is done, saith the Lord GOD; this is the day whereof I have spoken.”** God says that He will use the power of nature in His judgment against the invaders: **“...the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.”** And in 38:22 God said, **“And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.”** In addition, in 39:4 God said that He would feed the birds and beasts with the flesh of His enemies just like He describes in Revelation 19: **“Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured.”** Besides all of this, God said in 39:9 **“And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the handstaves, and the spears, and they shall burn them with fire seven years.”**

The descriptions of these events harmonize very closely with the events found in the Tribulation period and no where else in all of man's history. These items are strongly supportive of the placement of the events of Ezekiel 38 and 39 at the time of the opening of the second seal.

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As we proceed in our study of chapter six we need to recognize that we are viewing the beginning of the seven year period of the Tribulation. The overview chart presents how the three series of Judgments are consecutive and generally form a framework for this seven year period. On the chart it can be seen that, as these judgments are taking place on the earth, God explains to us some of the other things which are happening, both in heaven and on earth, while these judgments are taking place. We have called those times of explanations **“Explanatory Interludes”** to indicate what God is doing so that we do not get confused about the flow of the events.

For instance, in 11:3 God introduces us to His **“two prophets”** and tells us that they prophesy for a period of “a thousand two hundred and three score days,” or half of the Tribulation period. In 11:17 God tells us that when **“the beast ascended out of the bottomless pit (he) shall make war against them and overcome them, and kill them.”** We know from these two statements that when this happens the **“two prophets”** have already been prophesying for 3-1/2 years (vs. 3) and the beast is introduced to us in 13:1. Therefore, we can deduce that this is the mid-point of the Tribulation period and also that the **“two prophets”** began their prophesying at the very beginning of the period. It is also possible to conclude that the sealing of the 144,000 Jews happened near the beginning of the Tribulation period. The other scenes and events presented in chapters 10-14 describe some actions which happen, either in heaven or on the earth, concurrent with the first two series of judgments upon the earth. The **“Bowl Judgments”** presented in chapters 15 and 16 take place in the second half of the Tribulation period. Now, to turn our attention back to the first of the judgments, **“The Seal Judgments”** in chapter six.

Jesus, whose authority had clearly been established in chapters four and five, describing Him as worthy to open the seals on **“The Book,”** the title deed to creation, is presented as **“the Lamb”** opening the seals to activate the first series of judgments upon the wickedness in His creation.

Revelation 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.

THE FIRST FOUR SEAL JUDGMENTS — THE FOUR HORSEMEN

**FIRST SEAL: Rider on a White Horse
Represents The Anti-Christ Bringing False Peace**

Revelation 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.

Jesus opens the seals. He is not the one seen on the horse. He is presenting that person. In Daniel 9:27 we are told that Anti-Christ will make a covenant (with Israel) **“and he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week (a seven-year period of time): and in the midst of the covenant he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”** This is a covenant established between Anti-Christ and Israel that falsely presents conditions of **“peace.”** In a description of Antiochus Epiphanes, who was a **“type of Anti-Christ,”** we are told in Daniel 11:21 that **“he shall come in peaceably and obtain the kingdom by flatteries.”** Pertaining to this time and describing, not only his own time, but **“the last days,”** God told Ezekiel in 13:10 of his book that false prophets had told lies and **“seduced my people, saying Peace; and there was no**