

Come and See!

Revelation Six

The Bible indicates that the Antichrist will not be revealed and come to full power until after the Spirit-filled church is taken up in the rapture. (See 2 Thes 2:7-12.) So most of you, if not all will not need the message contained in chapter six of Revelation. However, it just may be that this little essay will find its way into the hands of someone who does need to know the truth during the time of earth's greatest trial. For his or her sake, let's examine it verse by verse:

Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

Here, in chapter six of the Revelation, we find the beginning of earthly events subsequent to the rapture of the church. In the previous chapter, a tremendously important scroll was displayed and the question asked, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?" And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it. John, who recorded this, wept greatly for the consequences of this were staggering – they implied an eternal subjection of earth to Satan's rule.

However, one of the elders there in the heavenly scene said, *"Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals."*

So John looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain... Then He came and

took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

Only One person could open these seals – Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. The worthiness of perfect obedience, a flawless character and life, gave Him the right to release the binding seals on the scroll. Though the scriptures are not explicit, much Biblical scholarship concludes that this book may represent a deed and/or an inheritance document. Seals on such documents pertained to liens.

Now, as we observe the opening, seal by seal, each one has a consequence and as we shall see, they all pertain to a specific period of time generally known as the tribulation or the last week of Daniel's 70 week prophecy in Daniel nine otherwise known as the time of Jacob's trouble mentioned in Jeremiah 30:7.

Bible teachers have long said that the dire events that unfold throughout this book come upon a Christ-rejecting sin-filled world. Certainly, this is so, yet we should add some additional clarification – specifically, it is directed at those who rejected the One who came to them on a donkey (Zech 9:9, John 12:14,15). By contrast, they will, with this seal, receive the counterfeit who comes to them riding upon a majestic white steed. The tribulation's primary purpose is to deal with the Jews.

Note, that this imposter messiah is unleashed by the genuine and herein is a spiritual principle – if you reject the truth, you will encounter a counterfeit. This apert of Christ will look good – the Jews who have longed for a messiah have envisioned just such a man. He goes forth conquering and to conquer. Jesus said, *"I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive."* (John 5:43) This anti-Christ will fit the job description of

the Jewish messiah in a seemingly perfect way but only for a time.

We can consider the results of opening these seals as the wages of rejection. Paul wrote, *"For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness."* (2 Thes 2:7-12)

However, even as catastrophic events come upon the whole world, we must understand that the principle purpose is to deal with the Jewish people who are in rebellion against their true Messiah. Metaphorically, the Jews in rejecting Christ returned, if you would, to Egypt. As happened there before, when they finally recognize 'Pharaoh's' cruel bondage, their 'Goshen' won't look so good and they'll be ready for a real Deliverer.

Now, "conquering and to conquer" may indicate that this anti-Christ will initially subdue the enemies of Israel but that his true intent is to destroy God's people. The bow is symbolic for it was King David who first emphasized its military importance to the host of Israel. David, of course, subdued all the neighboring nations to Israel. In addition, the rider is wearing a crown – a stephanos (Greek) which is a woven crown like that given to

victorious Olympians in the past. Recall, Jesus first wore such a crown – woven of thorns.

It is interesting that the invitation spoken by each of the four living creatures in turn at the opening of each seal is to "Come and see". The three times in the New Testament apart from this passage that this phrase is used in addressing someone other than Jesus, it is specifically an invitation to know Christ better (John 1:39, 46; 4:29). The one time it is used in the Old Testament, we read:

*Say to God,
"How awesome are Your works!
Through the greatness of Your power
Your enemies shall submit
themselves to You.
All the earth shall worship You
And sing praises to You;
They shall sing praises to Your
name." Selah
Come and see the works of God;
He is awesome in His doing toward
the sons of men.
He turned the sea into dry land;
They went through the river on foot.
There we will rejoice in Him.
He rules by His power forever;
His eyes observe the nations;
Do not let the rebellious exalt
themselves. Selah (Psa 66:3-7)*

Clearly, both of these echo with that spoken by the four living creatures. And who are better suited to offer this final invitation? No other creatures have come closer to the throne of God and they are described as being full of eyes. To approach the throne, to know the Lord and His ways more perfectly, to see Him more clearly – this is the comprehensive nature of the invitation extended to all God's children. Come and see!

Yet as we shall see, the dire outcomes which follow are not the

results of God's pronouncement but the consequences of satisfying the debts represented in each seal – they are the wages of sin. Those who have rejected the One who paid for our sins have only one other option – to receive the wages they have earned – “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom 6:23) The debt will be paid one way or the other.

When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come and see." Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.

The typology here is clear – a fiery red color reminds us of the hellish inferno of a bloody war. Now, to this rider it is given to take peace away; the result is that men start killing each other. The sense of it is not so much an organized warfare as it is a chaotic ubiquitous conflagration – person against person. In addition, this great sword may speak of a horrific new weapon, perhaps nuclear in nature or even worse.

And it is significant that he takes away peace for it is the first rider, the anti-Christ of whom it is written that “by peace [he] shall destroy many” (Dan 8:25 KJV) This word for peace in the original language means “to be at rest, to prosper, to be quiet or to be at ease”. So the first rider conquers using peace as a weapon then the second destroys by simply removing it. Clearly, it is a phony peace to begin with and something that only masks a deep underlying hatred.

Again, as you keep the Jewish people in mind, it is relatively easy to imagine such a scenario transpiring in

the Middle East.

When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come and see." So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine."

A denarius was a typical day's wage for the average worker. Based upon the cost of the staples, wheat and barley, it seems that scarcity of basic goods may follow. Otherwise, this could imply an emerging economy that is controlled so as to oppressively subjugate its participants. The word translated “harm” is perhaps better understood to mean to “deal with unjustly” or behave in a criminal manner towards. You could say that the rider of this black horse does not want a ‘black market’ in these more costly goods. Perhaps, it is because such trade would bypass the system – the “mark of the beast” without which no one is to buy or sell.

When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see." So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.

The translation, “pale horse” is better translated “green horse”. It is the Greek word “chloros” that typically means just that and comes from a word describing a young plant. This, I find significant in light of the fact that the color of Islam is green. Could this indicate that in a world filled with

rebellion to Christ and which is ultimately hateful of the Jews, that the power which will bring death and hell to so many will spring from Islam?

Power here in this passage means a power of choice or an authority, that is, the power of government. Recall, it is fundamental to Islamic rule to oppressively subjugate or kill any who will not become a Muslim. Now, approximately one fourth of the earth is dry land so this could mean that Islam becomes the predominant world governing power of the tribulation or it could mean that it rules over one quarter of the world's people. In either case, the point of focus is upon Israel. Will subjugating the Jews to the rule of Islam be the anti-Christ's true goal?

The weapons which support this rider's ruling power include a “large sword” (again reminiscent of Islam), “famine” by the control of the availability of goods, death or more likely “death comprising all the miseries arising from sin”, and beasts or literally, “little beasts” which could speak of germs and bacteria.

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

“That these souls are *under the altar* emphasizes that their life blood has been poured out as an offering to God; it draws from Leviticus 4:7: *And*

he shall pour the remaining blood at the base of the altar of the burnt offering” The blood of Abel cried out from the ground for vengeance (Genesis 4:10), as did the blood of unavenged murders in the land of Israel (Numbers 35:33).” (David Gusik)

These are clearly martyrs but are they gentile Christian martyrs? Perhaps so, but let me suggest that they may rather be Jewish. Why? First, in chapter five, we see the 24 elders clothed in white raiment (Rev 4:4) lauding the Lamb indicating that they represent the church when they sing:

“You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain,

And have redeemed us to God by Your blood

Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,

And have made us kings and priests to our God;

And we shall reign on the earth.” (Rev 5:9,10)

Yet, it is afterward that these chapter six martyrs are given white robes – there is evidently some delay in the receiving of these robes which represent the righteousness of Christ (Rev 7:14; 19:8). Second, they are associated with the altar – definitely a Jewish symbol. Third, they cry for vengeance upon those who have persecuted them rather than, as Jesus taught, to love our enemies and to forgive. Fourth, it is said to them to wait a bit longer upon two groups – their fellow servants (gentile believers?) and their brethren (Jewish believers?).

You see, the very next event to occur is in chapter seven, where 144,000 of their brethren, 12,000 from each of 12 tribes, are going to be sealed and evidently sent to preach

the gospel for the very next scene is of "...a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" And they are described as, "... the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Can you imagine 144,000 Jewish Billy Grahams??

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

The fig tree is generally a type or symbol in scripture of the nation of Israel. Thus, its usage herein should serve as a reminder of where our focus of attention is fastened. Stupefying events on earth and in the heavens will indeed terrify every man and those who can will hide underground. But how strange that they say, "Hide us from the wrath of

the Lamb!" Evidently, they will understand that this tribulation period is unleashed by the Lamb of God. And it is true that no one can stand against Him. However, recall that this hopelessness and fear is the perspective of rebellious men. Sinful Adam and Eve hid from God as well. Rather than accept that these events are the consequences of their sinful rebellion to the Lamb, they perceive Him as utterly wrathful. They evidently believe their unalterable state is to be damned and doomed. Who will be teaching them this? The anti-Christ? The false prophet?

Now, the entire tribulation is rightly characterized as the outpouring of God's wrath but sinful men are always misinterpreting the nature of His judgments. Someone or rather some group of 144,000 someones is going to counter this teaching with the good news. In fact, they're 'on deck' in the next chapter!

God wants you to repent from your sin and to simply call out to Him in faith for your salvation. Even during this terrible time, you can still be saved. You can still make heaven your eternal home. No matter what you've done with your life, just pray right now and ask God to forgive you your sins and failures. Accept the fact that Jesus Christ, the true Savior of the world, died on Calvary's cross for you – it's a gift. Receive His Spirit into your heart and be at peace. All hell may indeed be breaking out around you, but your Savior is in control and your destination is heaven.