

4,7,22 Rev. 6:1-8, The Seal Judgments

Now, the Tribulation judgments begin.

And, again, I just want to emphasize the importance of making sure we are seeing all we're about to look at as absolutely certain and real. Don't let the symbols and the fascination with these events distract you from realizing the implications in real life.

The people on this planet when these things are occurring will experience them in the same way we just experienced the pandemic, the lockdowns and the vaccine bioweapon. Only *their* events will be a million times worse than anything we've experienced.

Those on earth after we're gone, will know the horrible reality of the labor pains leading up to the birth of the kingdom of Christ.

I love this introduction to chapter six by H.A. Ironside;

"I believe church attendance will ramp up for a little while after the rapture of God's people; those left behind will be crowding into the churches as never before. I think I see the Rev. Smooth-talker standing in his pulpit, with pale, concerned face. He looks at scores of parishioners he hasn't seen for many years and thinks to himself, 'Now, I have to explain to these people. I have been telling them for twenty years that this talk of the rapture is false.' People who believed in it were looked on as idiotic ranters who didn't know what they were talking about. I think I hear mutterings down in the congregation: 'We trusted our souls to you. You had been to the colleges, seminaries, and universities, and read a whole library of books. We believed you when you told us the old idea of salvation by the blood of Christ was all worn out and that we could save ourselves by culture. We believed you when you said Christ's second coming was only a fantastic notion. Now explain this to us!' Another cries, 'What about my grandmother? She believed in her Bible to the end. She was reading just the other day, 'In an hour when you think not, the Son of man comes.' Now Grandmother is gone, and I am here. So, reverend, explain all this!' Oh, there are going to be some interesting meetings after the Lord has come! The world is seething with corruption, men's hearts failing them for fear. People of all ranks who

knew Christ will have disappeared. Cities and communities will be in turmoil. What are they going to do?"

I just thought we might need a visual before we begin, but as I said, all of this is very real, it's not fantasy, and we need see that. Joseph Seiss adds this;

"The scene and actors are unchanged, but the manifestations all move earthward. The sealed book has been lifted out of the hand of the One on the throne. It is in the possession of Him found worthy to take it, and able to break its seals. The universal thrill of exultation over this fact has subsided. Everything in the heavenly presence has become quiet with reverent expectancy. And the Lifter of the document now proceeds to destroy its seals. May God help us to a right comprehension of this mysterious transaction!"

To help avoid some interpretative confusion as we move through Revelation, we need to realize that much of what we will see are events in heaven while the judgments are taking place on earth. And the scenes in heaven *always* precede what happens on earth.

It's just like John seeing the vision of Christ in ch. 1 as the revealing of the measure and standard that will be used to evaluate the seven churches in chs. 2 & 3.

So, before the opening of the six seals in chapter 6 we see a vision of the Lamb in heaven, worthy to break the seals in chs. 4; 5. The judgments of the seven trumpets are preceded by a scene in heaven shown from 7:1 to 8:5. The events of chapters 11, 12 & 13 are preceded by a series of instructions to John. The seven plagues in chs. 15 & 16 are preceded by the announcements of the angels and the showing of "the temple ... in heaven."

One very obvious thing this shows us is that what is about to take place on earth, though completely unexpected by the earth-dwellers, is known to those in heaven.

In several past studies we saw that the Lord always reveals His plans to His people (those with ears to hear) before implementing those plans. It's a sign of trust, love, friendship and also an appeal to prayer.

When we study Revelation, we are reading things angels longed to look into – things the prophets desired to see but were unable because they were reserved

for us, who have access to the finished, eternal plan of God written out for us in the Bible.

As we saw last week, this isn't just interesting information for our consideration; this is God graciously taking us into His personal, eternal counsels.

And we will always need to keep the eternal picture in our minds as we move through this book.

Humanity was allowed 6000 years after the fall to live in the results of Lucifer's reign and their compliance with him. It's 6000 years of suffering, deception and temptation. God broke into this world with an offer of salvation and deliverance, but the majority chose self over Christ.

For the last 2000 years the Lord has called out and formed the body of Christ, and specifically, He has trained those within that body of believers who will be His governmental, administrative arm during His coming kingdom.

Then, following the judgments of Revelation chs. 6-19, Christ will return and establish His 1000-year reign in perfect environment – Satan is bound and the earth is initially populated with those who have just passed through the Tribulation and survived.

The full program for the citizens of earth will have been 7000 years (7 is the Bible number of completion).

We are at the end of the 6000-year mark in history and there still remains the 1000-year Millennial Kingdom before God's purpose in testing Man is ended; and the new creation can be formed and move us into eternity.

This is simply the reality of where we are in history in relation to God's purpose, whether most of the Church believes this or not.

Eric Sauer does an excellent job of summing up the reason and outcome of the Millennial Kingdom;

“At last, this brilliant period of the visible kingdom of God must be tested by the results. Even the peoples of this kingdom shall have the possibility of a free decision. No one shall be compelled to serve God in eternity.

Therefore, after the thousand years, Satan *must* be set free, if only for a

short time (Rev. 20:3,7). The effect is shocking. Men reject the gracious God Who, during a thousand years in which peace ruled, had showered upon them with inconceivable fulness of blessing, and they choose His enemy the Devil. Therefore, world judgment and world destruction are the only answer the holy God can now give (Rev. 20:7-15).”

So, let’s see if we can identify the four horsemen of the apocalypse.

(Rev. 6:1-2) “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.”

The Tribulation period begins with the arrival of the rider on the white horse. This matches what Paul tells us in 2 Thess. 2:3-12;

“Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you, I told you these things? And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. 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.”

Daniel calls this white-horse rider, “the prince who is to come” in Dan. 9:26-27;

“And the people of the prince who is to come . . . shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week, he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one

who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.”

I’m going to be calling this ‘prince who is to come’ the “beast”. I’ll go in to more detail and explain why I’m using this title when we look at the two “beasts” in Rev. 13.

This beast comes at the beginning of the seven-year Tribulation. Some commentators think that this is the Lord, but Christ comes at the *end* of the Tribulation;

(Rev. 19:11-16) “Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful *and True*, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”

Also, something to never forget about the *ambition* of the white horse rider is recorded in Lucifer’s boast in Isaiah 14:14; “I will climb to the highest heavens and be like the Most High”.

Satan’s ultimate goal has always been to “be like God” – Satan imitates God to try and show that he can do what God does. Here’s some examples;

- God has children

Satan has children: Matthew 13:38, “The field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one.”

- God marks those who belong to Him: In Rev. 7:3 we read, “Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.”

Satan will mark those who are his: Rev. 13:16, “And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the bond, that there be given them a mark on their right hand, or upon their forehead.”

- God is worshipped

Satan will be worshipped as God – in the temptation of Christ, Lucifer said to the Lord, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” (Matthew 4:9); and in Rev. 13:4 we read, “People worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast.”

I shared this next quotation a few years ago, but we definitely need to have this in mind as we trace the activity of the two beasts of Rev. 13 (which we’ll look at in more detail when we get there).

This is from a book called, “Christianity and Anti-Christianity in Their Final Conflict”,

“The antichrist will present himself to men as the object of divine honor. The world sees in him the representative of their own ideals. He will not come as a specter of the night, but as an angel of light, the morning star of a new age. In him the modern spirit will find its truest representative and exponent. He will be regarded by his generation as the highest type of our evolved humanity, the noblest embodiment of its dignity, its consummate flower. He will be recognized as a natural king of men and his kingdom, rising grandly before the world, will be welcomed as the full evolution of the democratic idea, the realization of popular aspirations, the end of social strife, the unity of nations, the natural outcome and highest product of our civilization and the ultimate goal of all human history. It will be welcomed by the multitudes as the long-promised Kingdom of God. But his appearing cannot occur until the antichrist spirit of leaven has spread through Christendom. This will be the final test of Christian faith and discernment.”

The world will worship this man as the fulfillment of all their hopes. He will solve the world’s problems at a level they never dreamed possible and he will convince the nations of his supernatural power and seek to establish his alleged deity through miracles.

The author goes on to say,

“Before the world will be two kings and two kingdoms. He who is to set up the true Kingdom of God is the incarnate Son returning from Heaven; he who will set up the kingdom of man, is a son of the earth; and the question which must then be answered is, Which king and which kingdom will the nations have?”

And these are some comments by Archbishop Trent;

“We learn that evil is not, as so many dream, gradually to wane and disappear before good; but is ever to develop itself more fully, even as on the other side good is to unfold itself more and more mightily also. Thus, it will go on until at last they stand face to face, each in its highest manifestation in the persons of Christ and of Antichrist. Both are to grow, good and evil, till they come to a head, one for destruction, and the other for full deliverance.”

So, here’s the overview of what we’ve seen in Daniel and Revelation. The rider on the white horse will make a treaty with Israel for seven years, and the Jews will begin the Levitical sacrifices.

When that period has run half of its course, (3 ½ years), he will order the sacrifices to cease and then will perform some act which our Lord calls, “the abomination of desolation”. That will initiate the most intense and destructive judgements of all - in the second half of the Tribulation.

Something to keep in mind - after the first seal, we aren’t told specifically when each of subsequent seals begins. One theory is that the rider of the white horse brings 3 ½ years of peace, so the second seal (as well as the trumpet and bowl judgments) doesn’t begin till the midpoint of the Tribulation.

But that peace *could* be short-lived; it doesn’t have to last 3 ½ years. Clarence Larkin and others have these seals happening in succession in the first half of the Tribulation.

(1 Thess. 5:3) “When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them.”

You’ve probably heard a large number of podcasters and pastors talk about this verse and give their opinion on when it occurs.

Here's my opinion to throw in the hat with the others.

After the Church is removed and the world is in chaos, the beast brings in an imitation Millennial Kingdom. For the first time in history, the world has universal peace.

But we can tell by the second seal (the second horse), that this global peace will end in bloodshed, greater than has ever been known before.

(Rev. 6:3-4) "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 first rider brings peace and the world rejoices saying, "peace and safety" – finally! The second rider "takes peace from the earth"; and "sudden destruction" falls upon the inhabitants of the earth.

Something unique about the results of the second seal, something we wouldn't ordinarily see in the wording, is that this isn't talking about war.

Notice the specific wording in verse 4... "that they should kill *one another*".

This isn't nations fighting nations; its people killing each other. In some mystical, demonic way, the red horseman unleashes the murderous passions of the human heart and the world is filled with man pitted against man.

Here's how Walter Scott summarizes this;

"War, whether aggressive or defensive, is surely at all times deplorable enough, but a state of open, armed civil rebellion of man against man, glutting their vengeance and spilling blood like water is infinitely worse than any state of war conceivable..."

It reminds me of the 'terrorist' approach to war, though on a much larger scale. No armies or identifying uniforms or national boundaries – just multitudes of individual insurgents killing almost randomly.

Our world is becoming convinced that man will create a New World Order characterized by peace and harmony - and that this can be done without Christ.

The 'second seal' destroys that myth.

Man will be seen for what he really is, as children of the Devil doing the deeds of their father, "Stealing, killing, and destroying "; for Satan was a murderer from the beginning.

As we get closer to that time in history, we will be seeing, more clearly, how this could all play out. A hundred years ago, the idea of random anarchy and bloodshed on a global scale would have been hard to imagine. But it's not that hard to imagine anymore.

So, the red horse indicates global, violent chaos. Just one example before we go on: In the book, "The Black Awakening" by Russ Dizdar, Russ describes futuristic super-soldiers and documents how they are the product of MK Ultra and Satanic Ritual Abuse ceremonies, and are specifically programmed, like Manchurian candidates, to bring about exactly this kind of chaos.

Ironside probably gives the best description of this;

"Men drunk with their false liberty, and rejoicing in the triumph of a blatant God-defying, so-called 'savior', will turn this earth into a great madhouse. The vile, murderous orgies of those days will be indescribable until it dawns on multitudes that the Lamb of God whom they had rejected and whose gentle rule they had spurned has in some way brought the punishment for their sins on their own heads."

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I think it might be a good idea, for just a few minutes, to look at the work of the Antichrist spirit as it applies to the Church.

As we watch world events, we are seeing Satan building the global infrastructure for the beast's kingdom, and even though the Church will not be here when that kingdom launches, the fact that we are seeing the pieces fall into place now not only shows us how close we are to being removed from this planet, but seeing the underlying *philosophy* of this kingdom can help us avoid being taken in by this deception.

As one author puts it,

"We are to learn from the scriptures what the religious condition of the world and of the Church is at the period immediately preceding Christ's

return; and what is predicted of the Antichrist. So, we must look at the nature of the apostasy as preparatory to the coming of the man of sin. Having a clear conception of that apostasy in its final development, we can examine the theological and philosophical tendencies of the present time in order to see how far it is a preparation for the fulfilment of the scriptural predictions.”

Satan has intensified his efforts to bring about apostasy within Christianity.

It may be difficult for some to get their minds wrapped around the idea that the spirit of Antichrist is at work within the Church to draw her away from the truth - but it's clearly predicted, so it's a reality we have to face.

Our goal is to see if there are any similarities between what the Antichrist will do in deceiving the nations and whether that approach is already active within Christianity.

As S.J. Andrews writes,

“In this enquiry we are especially concerned with the doctrine of Paul and John respecting the nature of the apostasy as preparatory to the coming of the man of lawlessness; we must proceed to examine the religious tendencies of the present time. . . Do we see in its spirit and principles a preparation for the Antichrist?”

In 1 Tim. 4:1 Paul calls this apostasy a ‘departure’; “Some shall depart from the faith . . . and embrace doctrines of demons.”

In his warning to the elders at Ephesus in Acts 20:29-30, Paul said,

“I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among you men will arise, speaking that which is false, to draw away the disciples after them.”

Some of you may remember this quote from Vance Hafner that I shared a couple years ago,

“The devil is not fighting Christianity. He's too smart for that. He is producing a counterfeit Christianity, so much like the real one that good Christians are afraid to speak out against it. We are plainly told in the

Scriptures that in the last days men will not endure sound doctrine but will heap to themselves teachers to tickle their ears. Popular preachers have developed ear-tickling into a fine art.”

The enemy doesn't try to destroy the church by persecution alone, but also by deception – the substitution of the imitation for the real, so that when those in our churches believe they are experiencing genuine spiritual reality, they are actually experiencing what is coming from the principalities and powers who disguise themselves as angels of light.

Because of the extent to which the spirit of Antichrist has penetrated the Church, I don't think Spark's words on this are an exaggeration.

“It seems a terrible thing, even to think, but as we have experienced so very much of what is called 'Christianity' we are bound to believe that, because vast numbers of Christian are in an utterly false position, and the system itself has become so largely an earthly, traditional, formal, and unspiritual thing, this worldwide shaking our Lord has promised to do is quite necessary and will be eventually justified. If we were writing a treatise, we could show that what is called 'Christianity' is really the greatest enemy of Christ. There is no blue-print for churches in the New Testament, and to try to form New Testament churches is only to create another system which may be as legal, sectarian and dead as others. Churches are organisms which spring out of Life, which Life itself springs out of the Cross of Christ wrought into the very being of believers. Unless believers are crucified people, there can be no true expression of the Church.”

It's ultimately going to come down to how successful the Antichrist is able, through imitation, to convince the world that he is their savior. And as related to the Church, there is an intensifying effort on the part of the enemy to convince Christians that an imitation Christianity is the real thing.

This is not only necessary to bring about the deception of God's people, it's also necessary in order to lay the *theological* foundation for the apostate, global Church of the Tribulation that we see in Rev. 13.

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Let's move to the next seal;

(Rev. 6:5-6) "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.'"

This is "hyper-inflation" gone wild. We can almost see this coming.

In Rev. 6:6, the word translated "measure" means just enough wheat or barley to make one person one meal - at the cost of a denarius (one full-days' wages).

This would be like getting 1/2 loaf of bread for about \$100.

Again, you can see by what's happening in the world now, with the wars and rumors of wars, the dismantling of the global economies, the blocks in the global supply chain and many other examples, that a pre-Tribulation famine is already in the works.

Of course, what *we're* seeing is Satan setting the stage for a savior to come in and bring peace and prosperity, but it still gives you an idea of how quickly that peace can turn to panic.

It's also easy to see how the second seal leads to the third. When the world is as chaotic and dangerous as we saw in the results of the rider on the red horse, famine and starvation are inevitable.

Let's allow our minds to imagine what this might look like.

What happens to a world, which has just experienced global peace, only to discover that that peace is shattered and chaos is now overwhelming the world in global anarchy?

What happens to the souls of men and women who find hope after centuries of despair and then suddenly watch that hope completely destroyed?

That's where the black horse comes in.

"Black" is used in Scripture for starvation. In Lamentations 5:10, Jeremiah writes, "Our skin was black like an oven, because of the terrible famine..."

Culturally, during the time when John wrote this, wheat and barley were the food of the poor; and oil and wine were characteristic of the rich; so, apparently the rich

escape the third seal judgment. They sit in selfish squalor in their mansions and observe the pain of the poor. It's the "Let them eat cake" mentality. Which was what Marie Antoinette, the queen of France during the French Revolution, is quoted as saying in response to being told that her starving peasants had no bread.

The final horse is the pale horse;

(Rev. 6:7-8) "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."

Things are intensifying with this color. The Greek word translated "pale" is a leprous, green color, as of a corpse or of putrefying flesh.

1/4 of the earth's population (approx. 2 billion people by today's standards) will die by sword, hunger, and apparently animal attacks. There's some confusion about this among commentators; they are unsure if this is meant to be taken literal, but I see no reason *not* to. The sword and hunger are literal.

One possibility is that, at this point in history, God removes the natural fear of man that animals have had since the fall. What would happen if every animal on the planet decided that humans were easy prey?

And notice Death's companion, "Hades". Here's the word picture John gives us - Death and Hades are hunting companions. Death kills and Hades draws in the results. In the Old Testament, Hades was the "region of the dead".

I don't want to be morbid about this, but you can't help but appreciate the graphics John lays out in describing the behind-the-scenes terror of this time in history.

We can only see the surface, but John was allowed to go 'back stage'. When someone outside Christ dies – hell opens its mouth and devours the soul. Death hurls its conquests into hell.

There are two more seals, but they will take some time, so we will pick up here next week.

To close, I want to make an application.

(Matt. 24:21) “For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.”

We’ve only touched the tip of the iceberg in looking at the unimaginably horrible conditions that will characterize the last seven years of history prior to Christ’s return. So, it may be premature to stress how thankful we should be that we won’t be here; we’ll be even more thankful when we finish chapter 19.

Listen to these comments by Watchman Nee about what it means to be “waiting for the Lord” to take us out of here.

“A brother during the first year of his salvation spent much time in searching the Scriptures. He studied especially concerning the second coming of the Lord. He managed to analyze the events surrounding the Lord’s return. And as a result, he felt fairly proud of himself. One day he met a sister who had deep experience with the Lord. They conversed together on the second coming. She, however, did not analyze as he did. What she stressed was how to ‘wait’ for the Lord’s return. On that day, that brother learned a deep lesson. He had been one who talked about the second coming of the Lord Jesus, but here was another person who was ‘anticipating’ the Lord’s return. Whoever merely talks about Jesus’ second coming is poor, whereas the one who’s heart searches the skies for the Lord’s return is quite rich.”