

Chapter 6

I. Tribulation Begins

The seven-year tribulation period is the same 7-year period as Daniel's 70th Week (Dan.9).

- True Church has been caught out (Raptured) - (Rev.4:1)
- Holy Spirit no longer restrains evil (II Thes.2:6,7).
- Satan knows his time is fast running out.
- God begins to pour out judgment upon the earth.

Note: Tribulation doesn't break across the earth suddenly, like a tornado or cyclone. The opening of the 'seals' is gradual and chronological. They are opened one at a time; although there will be some over-lap.

v.1. Jesus, the Lamb, takes the Seven-sealed Book and begins to open the seals. Remember: He, alone, was found worthy; and He is now in complete control. Every creature in heaven and earth will move at His command.

- A. First Seal broken, and one of the 'four living creatures' invites John to 'Come and see'.
- a. 'A white horse' (v.2). In Biblical terms, a 'horse' always represents 'power'; and 'white' represents peace or righteousness. Therefore, many believe this suggests a great 'spiritual awakening', as mentioned in Joel 2.
 - b. 'Rider' has a 'bow'; is given a 'crown'; and goes 'forth, conquering, and to conquer'.

Who is the 'rider'? (There are various opinions.)

- a. Christ.
- b. Symbolic of some world power.
- c. Antichrist, imitating Christ. (I agree.)

Note: (1) He has a 'bow', but no arrows. (A weapon of war, but is still unarmed.) Undoubtedly, speaking of 'world disarmament'. (2) He will conquer by diplomacy, offering peace to a troubled world. I believe him to be the 'little horn' (Dan.7:7,8), the 'Man of Sin' (II Thes.2:3), the ruler of the restored Roman Empire, the 'Anti-Christ'. The world will believe it is entering into the Millennium, when it is actually entering the terrible tribulation. 'For when they shall say, Peace and Safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape' (I Thes.5:1).

- B. Second Seal. Red Horse (v.4).
- a. Red: Symbol of blood.
 - b. Sword: Symbol of war.

Note: The rider will have power to take peace from the earth and cause men to kill one another.

- Disarmament explodes into global warfare.
- The world, today, cries for 'peace at any price'. And everything is in place for a counterfeit Christ to sow his propaganda of peace and good will.
- But, remember: The 'peace' which introduces the tribulation, under the first seal, is a 'false peace'.

C. Third Seal. Black horse (vs.5,6)

- a. Black speaks of mourning (Jer.4:28; Mal.3:14).
- b. 'A pair of balances in his hand'. Indicates a scarcity of food: 'Famine' (Lam.8,9). **Note:** Famine almost always follows war. When the 'Red Horse (of war)' rides, the Black Horse of famine will be riding on his heels.
 - i. 'A measure of wheat' (Approximately two pints; a soldier's rations for one day.)
 - ii. A 'penny' (Roman denarius, which is equal to one shilling; a day's wages in New Testament times (Matt.20:2). **Note:** This means that food will be 8 to 10 times higher than at normal times.
- c. 'Hurt not the oil and wine'. These possibly represent the luxuries (olive oil and fruit of the vine) which men will have to do without, since the bare necessities of life will be hard to afford.

D. Fourth Seal. Pale Horse (v.8). (Death and Hell - Eze.14:21)

- First of all, the nations are lulled into a false peace through great swelling words; then disarmament; afterwards war; then famine; and finally, disease and death.
- One-fourth of earth's population (some 2,000,000,000) will die during this period. And this is before the time of the 'great tribulation' even begins (last half of Daniel's 70th Week). Compare the order of events with Matt.24:6,7 and Lu.21:9-11.)
- So great will be the destruction of human life in days of the 'Fourth Seal' that 'Hades' will have to 'enlarge herself and open her mouth without measure', as prophesied in Isa.5:14.

E. Fifth Seal. Souls under the altar - martyrs (v.9).

- a. 'Souls of them that were slain'. (Slain for same reasons John was exiled to Isle of Patmos.)
 - i. For the word of God.
 - ii. For the testimony which they held.
- b. 'The altar'. A place of sacrifice. These martyrs had made the supreme sacrifice, giving their lives for Christ and the Gospel.

Note: These are not martyrs of the Christian Church (as some believe). Nor are they martyred saints of the Old Testament (as taught by J. McGee). They will already have been resurrected.

These saints will be martyred by the 'Great Whore', of Rev.17:1-7, while she is ruling the 10 kings of the old Roman Empire territory and while Antichrist is coming to power over them (Dake).

Too: Some teach that some of the saved Church will be left behind to go through the tribulation; and it's these who have been slain, mentioned here. (I disagree.)

F. Sixth Seal. Great Earthquake (v.12).

- 'For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places' (Matt.24:7). **Note:** In the past 4000 years earthquakes have caused the deaths of some 15 million people. Yet, the most devastating earth-shock is yet to come.
- 'Sun became black as sackcloth of hair'. 'Moon became as blood'. (Joel 2:30,31; Acts 2:19,20)
 - a. It's believed that this will be natural forces at work. Sun blackened by mushroom of nuclear explosions, and the moon a battleground bathed in the blood of opposing armies (G.H. Montgomery). (I disagree.)
 - b. I believe this is the beginning of God's wrath being poured out upon the ungodly.
- 'Stars of heaven fell unto the earth' (v.13). Cannot be literal stars, since they are much larger than the earth. Actually, these are meteor showers (shooting stars) such as have never been witnessed by man.
- 'Heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together' (v.14). 'The sky is in such turmoil that it rolls and boils in fury, and appears to be folding up and rolling away' (Montgomery). 'Heaven will split wide open and roll back like a scroll' (O. Green). (I disagree, but not sure of it's true meaning.)

- 'Hid in dens...and rocks', crying out, 'Fall on us and hide us' (vs.15,16). Praying, yet, instead of repenting and crying out to God for mercy and forgiveness, they call for the mountains and rocks to hide (bury) them from the sight of the Almighty. Think about it: Not trying to hide from Satan, or the Great Whore, or the Antichrist, or the False Prophet - but from Jesus!! the only One who could save.
- 'The wrath of the Lamb' (v.17). The 'Day of the Lord' (judgment).