

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

REVELATION 6: THE FIRST VISION ON EARTH

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

This is a revelation from Jesus Christ,

which God gave him to show his servants the events that must soon take place.

He sent an angel to present this revelation to his servant John,

who faithfully reported everything he saw.

This is his report of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

THE LAMB, THE LION, AND THE HEIR

But one of the twenty-four elders said to me, “Stop weeping! Look, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the heir to David’s throne, has won the victory. He is worthy to open the scroll and its seven seals.”

REVELATION 5.5

- ▶ The redemption of humanity has been accomplished by the Lamb; now the time has come for the Lion and Heir to reclaim all creation and dominion, and take the throne as David’s heir.

After that the end will come, when he will turn the Kingdom over to God the Father, having destroyed every ruler and authority and power.

1 CORINTHIANS 15.24

REVELATION 6 AND MATTHEW 24

- ▶ In Matthew 24, the disciples asked two questions:
 - (1) When will the temple be destroyed?
 - (2) What would be the sign of His coming and the end of the world?
- ▶ In reply, Jesus gave them a list of signs that correlate to the events of Revelation. The seals give us an overview of the divine judgments which will usher in the "Day of the Lord" and the return of Christ as King (Revelation 19).

THE FIRST SEAL: A RIDER ON A WHITE HORSE

As I watched, the Lamb broke the first of the seven seals on the scroll. Then I heard one of the four living beings say with a voice like thunder, “Come!” I looked up and saw a white horse standing there. Its rider carried a bow, and a crown was placed on his head. He rode out to win many battles and gain the victory.

- ▶ The first of the “Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse” is a rider on a white horse. He has a “bow” (an OT symbol of military power) and is given a crown of conquest (*stephanos*). In Matthew 24, Jesus prophesied the coming of false Christs (vss. 4-5). The Antichrist who will be the personification of deception, comes to conquer the world.

THE SECOND SEAL: A RIDER ON A RED HORSE

When the Lamb broke the second seal, I heard the second living being say, “Come!” Then another horse appeared, a red one. Its rider was given a mighty sword and the authority to take peace from the earth. And there was war and slaughter everywhere.

- ▶ Throughout the Old Testament, the “sword” symbolizes God’s judgment (eg. Ezekiel 14.13-21; 38.21; Jeremiah 25.29-31). The second seal correlates with Matthew 24.6-7a, preparing the way for the rise of the rule of the Antichrist.

In those days it was not safe to travel about, for all the inhabitants of the lands were in great turmoil. One nation was being crushed by another and one city by another, because God was troubling them with every kind of distress. 2 CHRONICLES 15.5-6

THE THIRD SEAL: A RIDER ON A BLACK HORSE

When the Lamb broke the third seal, I heard the third living being say, “Come!” I looked up and saw a black horse, and its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard a voice from among the four living beings say, “A loaf of wheat bread or three loaves of barley will cost a day’s pay. And don’t waste the olive oil and wine.”

- ▶ Food shortages and famine are an inevitable consequence of war (the second seal). Famines as judgment are literal throughout the OT and are the determined judgment of God (eg. 1 Kings 17.1; 18.2b; 2 Kings 8.1). During the siege of Jerusalem, food was weighed and water was rationed as God’s decreed judgment (Ezekiel 4.10, 16-17).

THE FOURTH SEAL: A RIDER ON A PALE HORSE

When the Lamb broke the fourth seal, I heard the fourth living being say, “Come!” I looked up and saw a horse whose color was pale green. Its rider was named Death, and his companion was the Grave. These two were given authority over one-fourth of the earth, to kill with the sword and famine and disease and wild animals.

- ▶ Once again, we read that authority was given, this time to a rider named Death and his companion, Hades (or Grave), fulfilling the prophecy of Jesus: *“Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places.”* MATTHEW 24.6-7
People still do not recognize God’s judgment or repent.

THE FIFTH SEAL: THE SLAIN MARTYRS UNDER THE ALTAR

When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of all who had been martyred for the word of God and for being faithful in their testimony. They shouted to the Lord and said, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you judge the people who belong to this world and avenge our blood for what they have done to us?” Then a white robe was given to each of them. And they were told to rest a little longer until the full number of their brothers and sisters—their fellow servants of Jesus who were to be martyred—had joined them.

- ▶ The altar is the place of sacrifice and John now sees those who truly became a living sacrifice and “loved not their lives unto death” (12.11). They are given white robes of righteousness and victory (3.4) and told to rest until their full number is complete.

THE SIXTH SEAL: CATAclySMIC EVENTS

I watched as the Lamb broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake. The sun became as dark as black cloth, and the moon became as red as blood. Then the stars of the sky fell to the earth like green figs falling from a tree shaken by a strong wind. The sky was rolled up like a scroll, and all of the mountains and islands were moved from their places.

- ▶ This long-propheSied cataclysmic event of judgment is quoted by Jesus in Matthew 24.29–

For see, the day of the Lord is coming—the terrible day of his fury and fierce anger.

The land will be made desolate, and all the sinners destroyed with it.

The heavens will be black above them; the stars will give no light.

The sun will be dark when it rises, and the moon will provide no light. ISAlAH 13.10 (also 34.4)

“For this is what the Lord of Heaven’s Armies says: In just a little while I will again shake the heavens and the earth, the oceans and the dry land. I will shake all the nations . . .”

“Tell Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, that I am about to shake the heavens and the earth. I will overthrow royal thrones and destroy the power of foreign kingdoms. I will overturn their chariots and riders. The horses will fall, and their riders will kill each other.”

HAGGAI 2.6-7a, 21-22

► **Only now do people recognize these events as Divine judgment—**

Then everyone—the kings of the earth, the rulers, the generals, the wealthy, the powerful, and every slave and free person—all hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains. And they cried to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of the one who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to survive?” (cf. Isaiah 2.19)

WHAT SHOULD WE DO? 2 PETER 3.7-14

But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements themselves will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be found to deserve judgment.

2 PETER 3.10

- ▶ The day is coming when everything that everyone has lived and worked for will be destroyed. Nothing will be left (11a). What we do now, determines what happens to us then: ⁽¹⁾ repent (v.9), ⁽²⁾ do not lose sight of what is coming (8a, 12a), ⁽³⁾ and live in surrender to the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, devoted to the purposes of God (11b, 12b).