

The Revelation Of Jesus Christ

Study 30

Revelation 6:1-8 (NKJV)

¹ 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."

² 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.

³ When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come and see."

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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."

⁷ When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see."

⁸ 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 Bible teaches that the world is headed inexorably not toward peace and unity, but toward a final, cataclysmic war, the battle of Armageddon

Revelation 16:14-16 (NKJV)

¹⁴ For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

¹⁵ "Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame."

¹⁶ And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.

Until that climatic holocaust, things will continue to deteriorate as the world falls deeper and deeper into chaos, confusion, and sin.

As the end approaches, wars will increase, crime will escalate, there will be economic upheavals, and unprecedented natural disasters; such as earthquakes, floods, famines, and diseases.

Matthew 24:6-8 (NKJV)

⁶ And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.

⁸ All these are the beginning of sorrows.

All those calamities will mark the outpouring of God's wrath on the fallen, rebellious world.

The Old Testament prophets spoke of this terrifying time of future judgment.

Describing Israel's sufferings during that time, Jeremiah wrote:

Jeremiah 30:7 (NKJV)

⁷ Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob's trouble,

Describing the coming judgment of the Gentile nations, Isaiah wrote:

Isaiah 34:1-4 (NKJV)

¹ *Come near, you nations, to hear; And heed, you people! Let the earth hear, and all that is in it, The world and all things that come forth from it.*

² *For the indignation of the Lord is against all nations, And His fury against all their armies; He has utterly destroyed them, He has given them over to the slaughter.*

³ *Also their slain shall be thrown out; Their stench shall rise from their corpses, And the mountains shall be melted with their blood.*

⁴ *All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, And the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll; All their host shall fall down As the leaf falls from the vine, And as fruit falling from a fig tree.*

In *Revelation 5:1-7*, Christ received from God the Father a scroll sealed with seven seals until opened by the One with authority to do so.

The scroll contained the title deed to the earth. Unlike normal title deeds, it did not contain a description of Christ's inheritance, but rather the details of how He will execute His reclaiming of what is rightfully His.

Beginning in *chapter 6*, that scroll is unrolled and its seals broken.

The unrolling of the scroll marks the beginning of God's wrath and judgment of sinful mankind as the Lord takes back creation from the usurper, Satan.

Each of the scroll's seven seals represents a specific divine judgment that will be poured out sequentially on the earth.

The seals encompass the entire period of the Tribulation (*3:10*), culminating with the return of Christ.

It seems best to understand the first four seals as taking place during the first half of the Tribulation, the fifth stretching from the first into the second half, called the "**great tribulation**" in *7:14* and lasting three and one-half years;

Revelation 11:2 (NKJV)

² *But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months.*

Revelation 12:6 (NKJV)

⁶ *Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.*

Revelation 13:5 (NKJV)

⁵ *And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months.*

And then the sixth and seventh seal taking place during that "**great tribulation.**"

Apparently the seventh seal contains the seven trumpet judgments, (*8:1-11:19*) and the seventh trumpet (*11:15*) contains the seven bowl judgments (*16:1-21*).

The seven seals thus contain all the judgments to the end when Jesus Christ returns.

The unfolding of the seven seals parallels our Lord's chronology of Tribulation events found in Jesus own message describing the end times and His return, recorded in *Mathew 24*.

The First Seal

The first seal describes a brief, false peace that will precede the final holocaust.

In *Mathew 24:4-5*, Jesus also spoke of that peace, warning of the deceiving, false christs who will promote it.

Matthew 24:4-5 (NKJV)

⁴ *And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you.*

⁵ *For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.*

The Second Seal

The second seal depicts worldwide war, which Jesus also predicted:

Matthew 24:6-7 (NKJV)

⁶ *And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.*

⁷ *For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.*

The Third Seal

The third seal, famine, finds a parallel in *Mathew 24:7*

Matthew 24:7 (NKJV)

⁷ *For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.*

In this same verse Jesus predicted earthquakes, representative of natural disasters, including earthquakes and plagues.

The Fourth Seal

The fourth seal represents death by such natural disasters, including earthquakes and plagues

The Fifth Seal

The fifth seal, revealing the martyrs under the altar, finds a parallel in Jesus' warning that believers will be martyred during the Tribulation:

Matthew 24:9 (NKJV)

⁹ *Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake.*

The Sixth Seal

During the unfolding of the sixth seal, the sky goes black, just as Jesus predicted it would;

Matthew 24:29 (NKJV)

²⁹ *"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.*

The Seventh Seal

The seventh seal reveals the final cataclysmic judgments, including all the devastation from the trumpet and bowl judgments, leading up to His second coming

Matthew 24:37-39 (NKJV)

³⁷ *But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.*

³⁸ *For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark,*

³⁹ *and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.*

THE FIRST SEAL: FALSE PEACE

Revelation 6:1-2 (NKJV)

¹ *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."*

² *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.*

As *chapter 6* opens, the praise heard before this moment in heaven ceases in anticipation of the coming judgment.

The scene now shifts from heaven to earth, which will be the focus of events through the return of Christ in *Chapter 19* and the establishment of His earthly kingdom in *Chapter 20*.

Having received from the Father the title deed to the earth, the **Lamb** (the Lord Jesus Christ) **broke** the first of **the seven seals**.

As each seal is broken in the vision, what is written on the scroll is not read, but acted out.

Immediately, John **heard one of the four living creatures** (cherubim) **saying with** a powerful shattering **voice of thunder, "Come."**

In response to the summons, **a white horse** came forth bearing its rider.

The first four seals, involve horses and riders (the so called four-horsemen of the Apocalypse).

Horses in scripture are associated with triumph, majesty, power, and conquest. (*19:11, 14; Job 39:19-25; Prov 21:31; Isaiah 43:17; Jer 6:23; Zech 9:10; 10:3*)

Some, seeing a parallel with *chapter 19 verse 11*, identify the one **who sat on** the white horse as Christ. But since Christ opens the sealed scroll, He cannot be the rider.

Further, this rider wears a *stephanos*, a crown won as a prize,

Christ, further on in scripture is seen wearing many *diademas*, or royal crowns.

Unlike this rider, who carries a bow, Christ carries a sword (*19:15*)

And finally, Christ returns at the end of the Tribulation, not at its beginning.

Others identify the rider as Antichrist. But since the other three riders represent not individual persons but impersonal forces (war, famine, and death). It is best to view the first one as a force as well.

That force is best defined as a worldwide peace, shattered during the second seal by the second rider (6:4).

However Antichrist, as will be seen, will play a leading role in promoting this worldwide obsession with seeking peace.

So before the terrors of the Tribulation break loose and lead to the battle of Armageddon there will come a period of world peace.

But it will be a deceptive peace, as the world is lulled into a false sense of security followed by war, famine, and death.

The world's desperate desire for international peace will serve as the bait for the satanic trap. That longing for security and safety will play into the hands of Antichrist, Satan's ruler, who will convince the world that he can provide them.

He will particularly deceive Israel, whose people have for so long desired peace;

Daniel 9:27 (NKJV)

²⁷ Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week;

Antichrist's peace pact and protection of Israel will not last, however

Daniel 9:27 (NKJV)

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,

The false peace that Antichrist brings will come to an abrupt halt at the midpoint of the Tribulation when he desecrates the temple in Jerusalem, betrays the Jewish people, and launches deadly attacks on them;

Matthew 24:4-10 (NKJV)

⁴ And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you.

⁵ For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.

⁶ And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.

⁸ All these are the beginning of sorrows.

⁹ Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake.

¹⁰ And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.

There can and will be no peace until the Prince of Peace sets up His earthly kingdom;

Revelation 20:1-6 (NKJV)

¹ Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

² He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;

³ and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive

the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

⁴ And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

⁵ But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

⁶ Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

Now that the rider **had a bow** but no arrows, and that he was honored with **a crown** that **was freely given to him**, reveals that his **conquering** will involve bloodless victories, His crown *stephanos*, is a winner's crown.

He is no real king and has no real monarch's crown *diadema*, but he has won a crown from the world for his triumphant achievements leading to world peace.

He will not conquer by military force, but by cunning and deceit

2 Thessalonians 2:9-11 (NKJV)

⁹ The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,

¹⁰ and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

¹¹ And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,

His conquest will be a "cold war" victory, a peace, won by agreement, not conflict;

Daniel 9:24-27 (NKJV)

²⁴ "Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy.

²⁵ "Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times.

²⁶ "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.

²⁷ Then he 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."

Even as the final doom of the world approaches, Antichrist will promise a golden age of peace and prosperity. In gratitude, he world will honor him and elevate him to the position of supreme leadership. But both the accolades and the peace will be short-lived.