

## THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

Revelation 6:5-8 | Session 11 | The Beginning of the End; The Four Horses and Their Riders, Part 2

### THE FIRST VISION ON EARTH (6:1-7:8)

## The opening of the six seals<sup>1</sup>

### Seals Three and Four

**Opening of the Seals in Chapter Six**



<b>Seal #1</b>	False Messiahs	<b>Matthew 24:4-5</b>	Revelation 6:1-2
<b>Seal #2</b>	Wars	<b>Matthew 24:6-7</b>	Revelation 6:3-4
<b>Seal #3</b>	Famines	<b>Matthew 24:7</b>	Revelation 6:5-6
<b>Seal #4</b>	Pestilences, Death	<b>Matthew 24:7</b>	Revelation 6:7-8
<b>Seal #5</b>	Martyrdoms	<b>Matthew 24:8-28</b>	Revelation 6:9-11
<b>Seal #6</b>	Signs in Heaven	<b>Matthew 24:29-30</b>	Revelation 6:12-17

The New Testament states there will come a time when the Church will be caught up from this earth to be with the Lord. A key passage that explains this is found in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18:

*“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be **caught up** together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort (or exhort) one another with these words.”*

While there are some who reject the catching up of the Church, commonly called the Rapture, it is probably correct to say that most hold to a belief that it will occur. The primary argument among Christians isn't "if" the Rapture will occur, but "when."

<sup>1</sup> The seventh seal will be opened in the second vision in Heaven (8:1-6).

There are good people on all sides of this discussion. There are four common views of the Rapture and when it will occur. All views have strengths and weaknesses. All opinions should be studied, and either accepted or rejected. And while it should not be an issue that divides us, all four cannot be correct.

#### FOUR COMMON VIEWS OF THE RAPTURE

**1. The Post-Tribulation view:** Some say that this *supernatural catching up of believers (the Rapture)* happens at the end of the Tribulation. Adherents to this view claim that the Church will go through the seven-year tribulation and be caught up together with Christ at the end.

**2. The Mid-Tribulation view:** Another view is that the Rapture will happen at the halfway point of the Tribulation. That view is called the “mid tribulation view.”

**3. The Pre-Wrath Tribulation view:** A view that is not as popular but has recently gained more supporters is that the Rapture will occur before the *wrath of God* is poured out on the earth. That’s called a “pre wrath view.”

An overarching question is, *when does God’s wrath begin?* Is the entire seven-year period composed of God’s wrath? Is that why Jeremiah calls it, The Time of Jacob’s Trouble?

*“Alas! For that day<sup>2</sup> is great, so that none is like it: It is even the time of Jacob’s Trouble.”*

**4. The Pre-Tribulation view:** This is the view I take, and the one which I believe to be correct. A Pre-Tribulation view assumes that the Church will be supernaturally taken up from this earth before the Tribulation begins. This view states that the Church will not go through the seven-year tribulation. It is supported by verses like 1 Thessalonians 1:10: *“And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.”* And Titus 2:13, which presents the *glorious appearing* of Jesus Christ as *our blessed hope!*

#### PRE-TRIBULATION AGREEMENT.

1. The Seven Year Tribulation begins with the signing of a covenant between the Antichrist and “many,”<sup>3</sup> according to Daniel 9:27. Most say this signing occurs with the opening of the first Seal, but their reasoning for that is their belief that the first horse is Antichrist. I have given reasons it is not Antichrist (see session 10). So I reject the signing of the covenant taking place with the first seal. We will develop this more in our next class.

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<sup>2</sup> The word “day” (*yom* in Hebrew) likely means a period or times as in Genesis 47:28 *“Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years: so the whole age (the day) of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years.”*

<sup>3</sup> Who are the “many?” It is always assumed that the *many* refer to Israel. But this may be incorrect. What if the *many* refer to **all those who desire to see Israel destroyed and wiped off the face of the earth?** The assumption is that Antichrist signs a “peace” agreement, but what if that is not the case and the covenant is a “death” agreement? That aligns better with the theory that the seven-years begins with seal five and believing Jews are immediately killed at the beginning of the Tribulation. This view presents other problems, for example: The question, when did these believing Jews (Revelation 6:9) believe?

*“And he shall confirm the covenant<sup>4</sup> with many for one week (seven years).”*

2. The Rapture (literally, the catching up of the Church) appears to be imminent. It will happen at any moment, and nothing needs to happen first. We could be caught up together with the Lord today, tomorrow, next month, next year, ten years. We don't know when, but it is our *blessed hope*, and we are looking for it (Titus 2:13).

There are six seals that are opened in Revelation 6. The first four describe four horses and their riders who will be unleashed upon the earth. Many believe that the seven-year tribulation begins with the opening of the first seal (Session 10). But let's build a case to *question the assumption* that the Seven-year tribulation begins with the opening of the first seal.

#### REVELATION 6 AND MATTHEW 24 PARALLEL

We discovered previously (See session 10) that Revelation 6, and Matthew 24 likely parallel each other and that we can use scripture to interpret scripture and get a full understanding by reading both passages.

It seems clear from the context of Revelation 6 that we can likely derive that the horses and their riders in Seals 1-4 are figurative<sup>5</sup>.

Take, for example, the first Seal (Revelation 6:1,2). By cross-referencing these verses with Matthew 24:4-5, we can determine that the first rider on the white horse is not Christ, but is a figure of false Messiahs/Deliverers (plural). This rider is the antithesis of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ will come back at His second coming and will be seated upon a white horse (Revelation 19:11), but things that are similar are not the same. Jesus, in Matthew 24:4-5, sheds more light on Seal #1, when He prophesied, *“Take heed that no man (singular) deceive you. For many (plural) shall come in my name.”* There will be *many* who will claim to be the deliverer (the Christ). Don't be deceived by any of them. This first rider then can't be Jesus Christ since Jesus does not deceive, nor can he be the (singular) Antichrist, since Jesus describes (plural) *many* false Messiahs who will come.

Also, according to Daniel 9:27, the seventieth week<sup>6</sup> begins when Antichrist will *“Confirm a covenant with many for one week (seven years).”* The first Seal is about *conquering*, not

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<sup>4</sup> This is the only place in Scripture that mentions this covenant. Nearly everyone says this is a covenant of peace between Antichrist and Israel. But notice that it does not say that. It says “many.” What if this is NOT a peace treaty with Israel at all? Is it instead a covenant of DEATH TO ISRAEL?

<sup>5</sup>We can derive that from the fourth seal, where “Death” and seated on the horse, and “Hell” followed him. “Death and Hell” cannot ride a horse and are therefore figures.

<sup>6</sup> The Seven Year Tribulation.

affirming a covenant. Both of the above are strong evidences that the first rider is not the Antichrist.

The second Seal, the rider on the **red horse**, will *take* peace from the earth. Wouldn't we assume it is war that takes peace from the earth? Jesus said in Matthew 24:6, there would be "*wars and rumors of wars.*" He told His disciples, and this is significant, "*Be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.*"

*What will be the sign of Christ's return at the end of the age?* Jesus first tells the disciples what will not be the sign of the end, e.g., *False Messiahs and wars.* These are *things that will happen on earth, but they are not the end.*

#### IS THERE A FIFTH VIEW?

Perhaps there is another pre-tribulation view that we should consider?

This fifth view assumes that Seals 1-4 are pre-tribulation events and that the actual seven year tribulation begins with the opening of the fifth seal, not the first, and that it ends with the opening of the sixth seal.

This is a minority view. Most have never heard this view before and I don't expect it to be immediately embraced, but it is worthy of consideration.



We have only looked at two seals, but if these first two seals are not about the end of the age, then what are they about? I want to propose for consideration that the first four seals, all four of the horsemen, are pre-tribulation events. Let's try to answer the question, can these four events happen before the Tribulation?

There is no time frame to show us when these events will happen. All we know is that they will happen, and when they do, Jesus said, *they are not the end*. In Matthew 24:8, Jesus calls them "The beginning of sorrows" or, translated another way, *birth pains*. Just like in the birth of a child, the pains the mother experiences are not the actual birth, but a sign that the birth is near. So too the *sorrows or birth pains in Matthew 24:8* are not the actual birth of the Tribulation, but the pains that lead up to its birth.

The Tribulation begins after the birth pains. If the four horses and their riders are the birth pains, then the Tribulation begins, as noted above, with the opening of Seal #5, and ends with

Seal #6. That means, if we hold to this interpretation, that the Tribulation is sandwiched between Seals five and six (See chart above). The first four seals certainly look like God's wrath, but Jesus implies they are not. Rather, He says, they are *birth pains*.

And while the events of the first four seals have occurred in many places throughout the world over

the past 2,000 years since Jesus prophesied that, like a woman in labor, they will intensify as the seals are opened. Then God's wrath will be exponentially poured out at the beginning (or the birth) of the Tribulation at the fifth seal. We will develop this more when we examine seals #4 and #5 in a moment, and seals #6 and #7 in our next class.


This means it is possible that we could live in the time of the first seal (or second, third or fourth). **What about the Rapture?** It is imminent, at hand, close! It will occur at any moment. But a pre-tribulation view means that it must occur before the birth of the Tribulation. It could happen before, during, or after any of the first four Seals. There is nothing that must be accomplished or fulfilled in order for the Lord to *snatch away the church*. But it will happen before the Tribulation (before seal #5).

Might we be in for tough times if we are to experience birth pains? Of course we could be. Portions of the world have always experienced difficult times, but as the birth pains intensify, so will the trials of living on this earth until we are caught up together and meet the Lord in the clouds.

In fact, we don't know that the first horseman has not already been unleashed upon the earth (see the last session).

**Disclaimer:** I don't know the timing of the Seals (When they will begin? Or, how far apart each rider will be spaced? Or how long will they last? But neither does anyone else. My purpose in sharing this view is to cause us to think and not take everything we have heard about the end times hook, line and sinker. I even welcome someone poking holes in this theory, but keep an open mind.

**Opening of the Seals in Chapter Six**



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Let's look at two more pre-tribulation *birth pains* that must take place.

**THE THIRD SEAL | THE RIDER ON THE BLACK HORSE (6:5,6) | FAMINES | MATTHEW 24:7**

Verses 5-6 —

The third birth pain that will intensify upon the earth is that of **famines**. The Lord mentions these in Matthew 24:7: *“And there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.”*

The red horse and rider brought worldwide war; now the Black horse is loosed upon the earth to bring worldwide famine. Famine often follows war.

John **heard the third beast** (zoon, or living creature) and saw a **black horse**. *Black* in Scripture often denotes famine.

*“Their visage is blacker than a coal; they are not known in the streets; Their skin cleaveth to their bones; it is withered, it is become like a stick.”* Lamentations 4:8

*“Judah mourneth, and the gates thereof languish; They are black unto the ground; And the cry of Jerusalem is gone up.”* Jeremiah 14:2.

Those who suffer from famine often have dark pigmentation on their face and trunk.

We should be reminded again that the Lord calls for this **famine**. In other Scripture, God called for famine and drought (Haggai 1:11; 2:16,17).

*“And I called for a drought upon the land.”* Haggai 1:11.

*“Since those days were, when one came to an heap of twenty measures, there were but ten: When one came to the press fat for to draw out fifty vessels out of the press, there were but twenty. I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labors of your hands; Yet ye turned not to me, saith the LORD.”* Haggai 2:16,17.

We don't want to spiritualize this famine; there is no reason not to take it literally as a real famine upon the world.



The **balances in his hand** indicate weights and **measures** for food prices. The word **penny** is not the penny we think of today. It is the Greek word *denarius*, which was a day's wage<sup>7</sup>. A denarius would usually buy eight times that amount. During a famine, food is scarce, and money will not stretch as far because of inflation.

It is God who is measuring out the famine, and the **pair of balances** (scales) show the scarcity of food. A prohibition is given, **see thou hurt not the oil and the wine**. In Deuteronomy, *grain, wine, and oil* are linked to show the idea of having plenty, but with famine, the good old days are gone.

*"That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy grain, and thy wine, and thine oil."* Deuteronomy 11:14.

Jeremiah gives a beautiful picture of the future Kingdom:

*"Therefore, they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the LORD, for wheat, and for wine, for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; they shall not sorrow any more at all"*

We can't give a definitive answer to what is meant by not harming the **oil and wine**. Some say it's referring to medicine, but that is speculation.

**THE FOURTH SEAL | THE RIDER ON THE PALE HORSE (6:7,8) | PESTILENCES | MATTHEW 24:7**

Verses 7-8 —

The **fourth** and final **beast** (Or, *zoon*; living creature) is sent forth, and John **looked and behold a pale horse**, a greenish/ashen color (i.e., Greek, *chloros*). This is the color of death and is explained in that the rider who sat on this horse **was named Death**. What is causing the Death? It is *pestilence or plague, along with famines and earthquakes* Matthew 24:7. We saw in 2020 the worldwide effect of a pandemic and how it can, especially when bolstered by a manipulated virus and a worldwide political agenda, rapidly spread and kill.

The Opening of the Fourth Seal		
Seal #4	Matthew 24:7	Revelation 6:7-8
 <p>A Pale Horse Death (Caused by Pestilence and Famine)</p>	 <p>"And there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places."</p>	 <p>"I heard the voice of the fourth beast... And I looked, and held a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beast of the earth."</p>

<sup>7</sup>E.W. Bullinger notes that a denarius was a day's wage based on Matthew 20:2.

And **Hell followed him**. The word **Hell** is *not the Lake of Fire*, rather the Greek word is *hades*, meaning *the place of the dead or the grave*<sup>8</sup>. Wherever **Death** rides, it takes people down into the grave. Hades follows in the train of Death because Death ends in the Grave.<sup>9</sup>

All who are in the Grave will be raised to life one day. Chapter 20:13 states, “*And death and Hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.*”

We, beloved, will not be among them since we will be caught together and will always be with the Lord.

In Revelation 1:18, Jesus has *the keys of Hell and Death*, for it is Christ who raises the dead.

**A fourth part of the earth** (that would be over two billion<sup>10</sup> people in 2023<sup>11</sup>) **was given over to Death and Hell to:**

- 1. Kill with the sword.**
- 2. Kill with hunger.**
- 3. Kill with death** (caused by pestilence).

This trio of death, **sword, famine, and pestilence** are found together in other Scriptures (Jeremiah 14:10-12; 21:7; 24:10; 44:13; Ezekiel 6:11,12). These three choices were offered to David after he was incited by Satan to take a census of Israel.<sup>12</sup>

But here, a fourth is added:

- 4. Kill with the wild beasts** (Greek: *therion*, not *zoon*).

In the Tribulation, to kill with **wild beasts** is another form of **Death**. The beasts consume the wounded and the dying and seize on those who are left defenseless.

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<sup>8</sup> In the O.T. Hades is called Sheol.

<sup>9</sup> E.W. Bullinger. Revelation. Page 260.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/>

<sup>11</sup> Compare that to the nearly one billion cases, and nearly 7,000,000 who reportedly died from COVID as of July 2023. <https://covid19.who.int/?mapFilter=deaths>

<sup>12</sup> It is difficult to know completely why this was an offense before the Lord, but it was, and David's choice of punishment was three years of famine, oppression by the sword of his enemies, or pestilence from the Lord. David chose the latter (1 Chronicles 21:12).



Looking back on history, not one of these Seals has yet been opened that we can tell. There has been no period in history where these four judgments have been operating simultaneously to the extent we see here, "A fourth part of the earth" destroyed.

The first four seals have to do with all mankind on Earth. The next three are concerned with the *saints (Israel and the Jews) of the Most High in the Tribulation (Matthew 24:9)*. It will be before the fifth seal is opened that the Body of Christ will be removed from the earth (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

In Matthew 24:8, Jesus stated that *all these things in verse 7 are the beginning of sorrows*. The word *beginning* is *arche* in Greek and means *something that commences*. The word *sorrows, as we've already noted*, is the idea of a woman *travailing in labor pains*.

Beginning with the fifth seal, the seven-year Tribulation is birthed. And that will be the subject of Revelation, beginning with our next class and continuing until chapter 19.