

## Revelation Pastor Lou DeVizia

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Introduction: We have seen the mighty Lord Jesus in glory as He appeared to the Apostle John (Chapter 1). We have considered His heart for His church, His bride, in His own address to the church age (Chapters 2-3). We have seen the future of the church, raptured to the Lord in glory, worshiping along with all the host of heaven; and we have seen the Lamb take the scroll from the Father (Chapters 4-5). The Book of Revelation is, if nothing else, very logically laid out for the discerning reader.

Here in Chapter 6, the heavenly scene continues as the Lamb begins to open the seals of the scroll. And as He does, with each seal, attention is turned back to earth. The *church* no longer appears on earth. There will be those who repent and believe in Christ, and the Holy Spirit will still work in them and through them; but the church, as we experience that now, has departed for heaven via the Rapture by this point. Earth will be a very different, very dark place. The Holy Spirit will no longer restrain evil (2 Thessalonians 2:7b), and those who come to believe during this time which is coming will suffer tremendously - martyrdom will occur with regularity (subsequent studies will take this up more). And as for the unbelieving world - what it will face is wrath and devastation like has never been seen and will never be seen thereafter. The longest distinct section of this book, Chapters 6-18 cover what is known as the period of "great tribulation" (so called in 7:14; also, compare these chapters with Matthew 24:7-31); Chapter 6 sees its commencement with the opening of the seals of the scroll. This study focuses on the first four of those seals, which perhaps can be seen as a unit (they are announced the same way, and each is presented by a different horseman and horse), highlighting in a general way the initial outpouring of destruction that is coming on the earth.

*The knowledge of the future should affect us in the present! Now is the time to renew, to revive, to examine yourself, to make your calling and election sure. Also, turn beyond yourself: pray for and encourage your brothers and sisters, and invite those who are lost to the only hope of salvation, JESUS! These things will come to pass!*

1. Verses 1-2 - A temporary and deceptive peace.

- v.1 - The **Lamb** - the Lord Jesus - was the only one worthy to take the scroll. Now He begins to open the **seals**. Each seal will bring forth a new judgment on the earth (the seventh will actually trigger a new *series* of judgments). Only Jesus is worthy to inaugurate such judgment on the earth, for it is He who has overcome the world. Also, each one of the first four seals/judgments is announced in heaven by one of the **four living creatures**.

- v.2 - The **white horse** is indicative of a victorious warrior. Indeed, the rider is described as a **conquering** ruler of sorts (note he has a **crown**). Later in the book, the Lord Jesus is seen returning to earth on a white horse; so here in this chapter this obviously is not the Lord Jesus. This is a ruler who will bring a *temporary peace* (Jesus, the Prince of Peace, will bring *permanent* peace). Perhaps this is representative of the *Antichrist*. It shows a worldly ruler who will rise up - possibly in the wake of the chaos caused by the Rapture - and **conquer** the world peacefully (note that he has a **bow**, but no mention of arrows is made - he has a weapon but does not fight). Oddly enough, *immediately after the Rapture, the Great Tribulation starts with peace!* Also: Compare to Daniel 9:27 - the future of Israel is prophesied there and coordinates very cleanly with the future of the world here in Revelation; that prophecy also starts with a season of peace.

2. Verses 3-4 - Violence and war.

- vv.3-4 - **fiery red**... Likely representative of the fire of warfare. ...**take peace from the earth**. Thus ends the first horseman's temporary peace, whose arrowless bow gives way to this horseman's **great sword**. The temporary peace installed after the Rapture gives way to - probably - world war. *When today's world is examined, it is not difficult to see many forces moving towards this. There are military threats and great unrest in every part of the planet seeming to affect every nation. Could this be setting the stage for the imminent Rapture of the church?*

3. Verses 5-6 - Economic collapse and famine.

- v.5 - The **black horse** likely represents the darkness of despair caused by famine and worldwide economic collapse - the **scales** are used to measure out money and goods at market.

- v.6 - A **denarius** was about a day's wages for a typical worker, and a **quart of wheat** and **three quarts of barley** are enough for a meal or a day's worth of meals, respectively. The scarcity of food will make it so expensive people will barely be able to survive - note there is no money for anything else, not even a little **oil** and **wine**, which remain untouched. *Note that the economies of the world in the present day teeter on the brink of catastrophe, especially in Europe. Even the USA is being crippled by mounting debt.*

4. Verses 7-8 - Widespread death by various causes.

- v.7 - Same pattern as vv.1, 3, and 5...

- v.8 - The **pale horse** can perhaps be seen as representative of weakness, sickness, an overall lack of the vitality of life, almost corpse-like. This is the only rider with a name: **Death**. And he is accompanied by **Hades**, a word meaning "the place of the dead." Whether this is what is caused in connection with the previous horsemen or is *additional* dying is unclear. This much is certain: One-fourth of the world's population will die by various causes, including violence and war, starvation, and even by exposure to equally desperate animal life (indicative of widespread worldwide homelessness). *The current world population is over 7 billion. One-fourth of that is 1,750,000,000 people, almost six times the population of the USA.*

Conclusion: This isn't even all of it. But this should certainly be enough to cause any Christian to be close to the Lord, to shun worldliness and sin and pursue righteousness, love and mercy; and to reach out to the lost who will face this if they do not repent and come to Christ.