

THE SEAL JUDGMENTS REVELATION 6:1-17

Chapters 4 and 5 of the Book of Revelation are soul inspiring chapters giving us a small glimpse of heaven in the future when the Lord will be gloried. Every true believer in Jesus Christ can look forward to this day because every child of God saved through the Old Testament and during our current dispensation will be there. We can be excited about our future and being present at this wonderful event.

Chapter 6 now unfolds the future beginning of these very disturbing events on earth as the beginning of the terrible seven year Tribulation be unfolding. We must remember that believers in this the Church Age will be in heaven with the Lord and be spared from this judgment that God is about to pour out on earth.(1 Thess. 5, Rev. 3:15,) Remember also it will be a time when great numbers of people on earth will be saved.(Rev. 6:9-11, 7:9)

The scroll has been placed in the hands Jesus the Messiah, who is the righteous and just Judge who has the right to judge the earth and rule the world. Chapter 6 moves from the heavenly scene of Chapter 5, to the earth as God's judgments are about unfold. The world that has rejected its Creator and corrupted even his image will see the hand of God first hand and experience His power. God's power can be experienced by man in two ways.

First, God's wonderful power can be experienced in the blessing and mirage of the new birth as the sinner in faith receives the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior. During these seven years many on earth will be saved. Secondly, God's power can be experienced in His just judgments. In spite of seeing the Lord's power and offer of salvation, sadly most of the world's population will continue its rebellion and be destroyed. Those who are saved will live through a great persecution and great numbers of believers will lose their lives for the sake of Christ. These Tribulation believers will be living in a world under the judgment of God.

The world for centuries has rejected the love of God and has waxed worse and worse. God now intervenes and begins His plan to purge the earth of sin in preparation for the coming Millennial kingdom. The name "tribulation" is an apt description of this era in the history of the earth. What is about to happen, with the pouring out of the various judgments, is a horrible time.

The wrath of God is revealed on earth in many ways:

1. The Seven Seal Judgments
2. Reign of Satan through the Antichrist
3. The Seven Trumpet Judgments
4. The Seven Vial Judgments
5. Destruction of world's religious system
6. Destruction of world's economic system
7. Blood bath at Armageddon

8. Destruction of the Antichrist and False Prophet
9. The Judgment of the nations
10. The Rapture of the unsaved who are cast into Hades to await the final judgment

DANIEL'S SEVENTH WEEK BEGINS.

It must be understood that this is the beginning of the seven years of Tribulation and is the final "week" of Daniel's 70 weeks prophesied in Daniel 9:24-27. The dispensation of the Old Testament at the present time in history is not completed. History records that four hundred and eighty three years of Daniel's four hundred and ninety years as being fulfilled. However, according to Daniel there is one week left until the Messiah comes and finishes God's plan of the Old Testament. In other words the Old Testament period is not completed yet.

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy." (Daniel 9:24)

This last week that shall conclude the Old Testament and will end with the Messiah (1) ending the transgression and sin of Israel, (2) to make the reconciliation for iniquity, (3) to bring in everlasting righteousness, (4) to seal up the vision and prophecy, and (5) to anoint the most Holy.

Only one of these five goals Daniel states has been accomplished. Jesus made the "reconciliation for iniquity" which was His redemptive work on the cross where He with His shed blood paid the sin debt of the world. The other four elements in God's plan has not been accomplished yet. This is strong evidence that the present Church Age is not part of the Old Testament dispensation and is a separate economy of God's overall program for the world. When Israel rejected Jesus as their Messiah clearly God interjected this present dispensation in which He would gather to Himself a bride from among the Gentiles. However, nothing in God's word even hints that God's purposes for Israel, as expressed by Daniel 9:24 were put aside. They were only moved to a later time which is yet future to this age. Thus with the beginning of Revelation 6 and the outpouring of the seal judgments the last week of Daniel's Seventy weeks will unfold and end with the Messiah purging the Earth and He being anointed the Righteous King who rules in the Millennium. The Church Age has ended with the rapture of all the saints of God who have been saved since Pentecost, meaning born again Christians of this current Church Age.

THE SEAL JUDGMENTS. Revelation 6:1-17; 8:1

The events in Chapter 6, parallel those of Matthew 24:4-31. Matthew 2, without question, refers to the beginning of the 70th Week of Daniel which is the Tribulation. The prophecies here are yet future to our day and will not happen until the Body of Christ is raptured from off the earth. Note in Matthew 24:3, Jesus is answering the question, "what shall be the sign of thy coming and the end of the known world or

"age"? The Christian is not looking for signs, as our hope is our faith in the written word of God. The context shows this revelation is addressed to Israel who seeks for signs. (See Matt. 12:39, 1 Cor. 1:22) Believers in our present Church Age are told to look for the imminent return of Christ and there are no promised prophetic events to give a sign that the rapture is about to happen. There may be some minor similarities between current events and Matthew 24, but the timing, scope, and magnitude of these events preclude them from being a fulfillment of the prophecies.

What is happening today such as wars, earthquakes, and natural disasters cannot be compared to the events described here. First, the timing is wrong because the Rapture has not taken place. Natural catastrophes of today cannot be a fulfillment of these prophecies as they are yet future in the Tribulation according to the Bible. Second, present catastrophes are insignificant in magnitude compared to the judgments poured on the earth during these seven years. Third, what is happening today are natural events whereas what is predicted in Matthew 24 and Revelation 6 are caused by the hand of God as He pours judgment on the earth. It is believed by many that these current catastrophes show we are moving closer to the Lord's return

Some believe events such as Israel returning to Palestine in 1948 was a fulfillment of the prophecy of Ezekiel that says the Jews will be taken from among the heathen and returned to the promise land. However, not what Ezekiel 36:24-28 says, *"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God."*

Modern Israel has certainly not been cleansed from all their sin, nor do they have a new heart that worships and loves God. Most of the Jews in Palestine are atheists and only a small percentage of them claim to be Orthodox (believing) Jews. Even the Orthodox Jews still reject Jesus as their Messiah and therefore are lost in their sins.

Ezekiel prophecies that the Jews would return to Israel before God gave them their promised kingdom. (Eze. 37) The re-gathering of Israel is an act of God in returning His chosen people to their promised land. When God judged Israel and removed them from their land they never gave up hope of returning as shown in their song Ha-Tikvah (The Hope), the anthem of the Zionist movement and the state of Israel. There are currently many Jews from around the world returning to Israel in what they call the "Aliyah" or "to go up" meaning to return to their homeland. But of the 13.5 million Jews in the world, only 5.7 million are living in Israel. The United States has the next largest population with 5.2 million Jewish citizens. Therefore less than half the Jews are in Israel although 2.2 million Jews have made the Aliyah. Certainly this is not the mass migration that God speaks of in the Bible.

What can be said is that current events seem to be setting the stage in preparation for the coming Tribulation. That may be so, but it is of little consequence to the Christian for he is to look for Christ's return any moment which will come without

warning or sign.

There are a number of parallels between Matthew 24 and Revelation 6:

- (1) War. Matt. 24:6-7 Rev. 6:3-4
- (2) Famine. Matt. 24:7 Rev. 6:5-6
- (3) Death. Matt. 24:7-8 Rev. 6:7-8
- (4) Martyrdom. Matt. 24:9-10 Rev. 6:9-11, 24:16-22
- (5) Sun, Moon darken, and the Stars fall. Matt. 24:29 Rev. 6:12-14

It is quite clear the events of Matthew 24 closely parallel those of Revelation 6 which is the beginning events of the Tribulation in both references.

THE FIRST SEAL. Revelation 6:1-2.

The judgments begin with Jesus Christ (the Lamb of Rev. 5:12, 6:16) who opens the first seal (v1). Jesus is love, but He is also just. Many want to see Him only as the loving Savior, but he is also fully the Judge of all creation. He is the Righteous Judge of the unsaved who died in their sins as Revelation 20:15-18 reveals and also the Judge of believer at the Judgment Seat of Christ as 2 Timothy 4:1, 8; 2 Corinthians 5:10 reveals.

It should be noted that the modern Pre-wrath movement teaches that the seal judgments, which clearly begin the first half of the seven year Tribulation, are not the judgments of God, but of man and in particular the wrath of the Antichrist. The problem with that idea is that this verse plainly states that the Seal Judgments begin with Christ opening the first one and each subsequent judgment. This is not the judgment of the Antichrist or his action, but of the Worthy Lamb of Chapter 5. Revelation 6:1 plainly states it is Jesus Christ who begins the seven years of judgment by opening the first Seal judgment. The Pre-wrath position clearly and correctly states that believers in this dispensation of the Church Age will not go through the wrath of God. Therefore, the Rapture must take place before the judgments of God begin which must be before the Seal judgments are begun. This and many other biblical truths refute the false teachings of the poorly thought out Pre-wrath rapture view. The rapture will occur before the Tribulation which is the biblical and correct view of a Pre-Tribulational Rapture. The outpouring of God's judgments will begin the seven year Tribulation.

THE FOUR HORSEMEN. Revelation 6:2-8

THE RIDER OF THE WHITE HORSE. Revelation 6:2

The first seal judgment begins with the coming of a rider on a **White Horse**. (v2)
The identity of the rider is the Antichrist. Do not confuse this rider with Revelation 19:11 when Christ comes in final victory. God's allows the Antichrist to come to power when the crown is given to him to rule over the earth. What he rules over will later be addressed, is the ten nation confederacy which is the revived Roman Empire. (See Daniel 2:31-45)

This could be referred to as the cold war period or the first three and a half years of

the Tribulation in which the Antichrist shall rise to power by offering peace for the earth. The color white is deceiving in that he comes presenting himself as a savior to bring peace to the earth. It is only a symbolic peace that he offers, promising Israel and the world a lasting peace and prosperity. (Matt. 24:5)

The false eschatological views of the Pre-Wrath and Mid-Tribulationist both characterized this period as being one of relative peace on earth. However, during the first part of the seven years there will be worldwide destruction on earth and to imply that this period is one of peace on earth is to blatantly ignore what the Revelation six plainly states will transpire.

This rider carries a bow, but he has no arrows. It would seem he comes to power by diplomacy rather than a shooting war or by force. The world and the Jews today are desperately seeking an end to all the violence and turmoil, but continue to refuse to believe in God and accept His lasting peace. The Antichrist comes on the world scene as a charismatic leader offering a diplomatic solution to the world's problems. "The despairing world grasps at the hope he offers and the Antichrist is given world power. The Jews continue to seek a political savior to solve their material woes and ignore the real causes of conflict which is man's sin and spiritual blindness and rejection of God. Throughout Israel's history she has looked to treaties with pagan nations to bring about peace. That is clearly what Israel is doing today. For several decades Israel has given away their land in their "land for peace" policies. Modern Israel is not in any way following God and seeking human solutions to insure their security. This is a failed policy which continues to bring only grief and continued turmoil to this little nation. This trend of seeking security from pagan nations will continue into the Tribulation. Israel will readily accept the Antichrist's offer of protection and peace. However instead of getting a savior they receive a conqueror as the first seal is opened in a supposed peace. (See Daniel 9:27, 1 Thess.5:1-3, 2 Thess. 2:11)

SECOND SEAL. Revelation 6:3-4

The **Red horse** rider symbolizes blood as many men are killed as this seal judgment is poured out upon the earth. The supposed peace is uneasy and the treaty the Antichrist makes with Israel is threatened. (See Isa. 57:20-21) The Antichrist can't give peace and begins to exercise his power and the false peace he brought begins to fail. The Bible says Holy Spirit's "restraint" is removed during this time. (2 Thess. 2:7) This is not saying that the Holy Spirit will be removed from earth. Today the Spirit of God is restraining Satan from bringing global war, but in the opening of the second seal the restraint is removed and Satan through the Antichrist has a hay-day bringing destruction upon the earth.

Parallels can be made in comparing the color "red" with the colors of nations on earth today. Red is the color of Soviet Russia, China, and Communism! This fits perfectly with the fact that in the first part of the Tribulation Russia will attack Israel. In 2 Timothy 3:1-3 it warns that in the last days men shall be truce breakers. Ezekiel 38:21 says every man's sword shall be against his brother. Russia and all the communists' nations have always been treaty breakers and that has been the way of nations throughout history. The Nuremberg trials revealed that before and during WWII Germany between 1933 and 1941 made 68 violations of treaties they had with other nations.

The Rider on the Red horse is probably the same as the White horse, but now he is revealed and seen for truly who he is. The world peace quickly digresses into to turmoil! Chronologically this is taking place in the beginning of the first half of the seven years of the Tribulation.

THE THIRD SEAL: BLACK HORSE. Revelation 6:5-6.

The color black has always stood for death. This terrible black rider comes with balances (scales) in his hands which show that now famine comes to the world with strict rationing of food. The penny (Verse 6) is a Roman denarius or day's wage (See Matt.20:2). Normally a denarius would buy eight measures of wheat or twenty four of barley. Under famine conditions only one measure of wheat could be bought or three measures of barley. This is a picture of runaway inflation. Money will only buy or be worth only an eighth of what it was. That is an inflation rate of eighty seven and a half percent. During these times a dollar will be worth twelve and a half cents.

Oil and wine during the Tribulation will probably be in good supply. However, oil and wine become a luxury and few will be able to buy them. The unstable economic situation fueled by inflation causes unrest, probably civil disobedience, hoarding, and violence. With the Antichrist's promise of peace and prosperity not forth coming, and instead causing unrest and economic turmoil the world begins to lose confidence in him. Having lost public support he now begins to maintain his power with military might as all dictators have done.

Following is Dean Stanley's account of famine in 586 BC which followed the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. In graphic detail it gives us in site in to the horrors of famine:

"Famine and its accompanying visitation of pestilence ravaged the crowded population within the walls. It was only by a special favor of the king that a daily supply of bread was sent to Jeremiah in his prison, from the baker's quarters, and at last even this failed. The nobles who had prided themselves on their beautiful complexions, purer than snow, whiter than milk, ruddy as rubies, polished as sapphires (Lam.4:7) had become ghastly and blank with starvation. Their wasted skeleton forms could hardly be recognized in the streets. The ladies, in their magnificent crimson robes, might be seen sitting in despair on the dunghills. From the foul heaps were gathered morsels to eke out the failing supply of food, (Lam.4:5). There was something specially piteous in the sight of the little children, with their parched tongues, fainting in the street, asking for bread, crying to their mothers for corn and wine, (Lam.2:11,12,19). There was something still more terrible in the hardening feeling with which the parents turned away from them. The Hebrew mothers seemed to have lost even the instincts of the brute creation, to have sunk to the level of the unnatural ostriches that leave theirs in the wilderness, (Lam.4:3). Fathers devoured their own sons and daughters, (Ezek.5:10) Baruch 2:3. The hands even of the compassionate mothers have sodden their own children, the mere infants just born," (Lam.2:20, 4:10).

Today we are told by World health organizations that there are 400 million people in

danger of starvation and roughly a billion hungry in the world. This will be nothing compared to what will come. (See Heb. 12:29, 10:31; 2 Cor. 5:11)

THE FOURTH SEAL: PALE HORSE. Revelation 6:7-8

The color referred to as "pale" describes a sticky, yellowish green tone. It probably is representing the inevitable result of disease which accompanies war and famine. The name of this rider is Death & Hell which means both physical and spiritual death. During WWII one out of 40 people in Europe lost their lives and now during this the Fourth seal judgment, one out of four will lose their lives. The world population is estimated at 6.66 billion people today. (Source: US Census Bureau - May, 2008) If one fourth was killed it would mean that 1.65 billion people would lose their lives. Although the Gospel will be preached during the Tribulation many will still die and never be saved. Satan will be allowed to destroy millions of people; thus damning their souls to hell. What a frightening thing to imagine that one quarter of the people on the earth will die! Some believe that the reference to the "beasts of earth" is referring to rats. If you kill 95% of the rats in an area within one year they will replace themselves. Rats carry at least 35 diseases. The fleas on the rats which carried the Bubonic Plague in the Middle Ages killed one third of the population of Europe. It is estimated the plague killed 200 million people in the world for centuries carrying typhus. Rats also eat food supplies which would worsen the famine.

The earth's people will be weak, governments will be in disarray, and there will be one and a half billion human bodies to bury. Many will not be buried spreading disease, and will become food for wild animals.

Will nuclear bombs be used during this time? Maybe, but most likely describes biological warfare. Since the terrorist attacks which destroyed the World Trade Center in New York, the world has been on alert for the use of biological agents by terrorists. Chemical and biological weapons can be cheaply produced and many nations now have bio-weapons. Biological weapons have been referred to as a poor countries "nuclear bomb." For example, the virus called "parrot fever" could be produced at little expense. One square cubic centimeter of this deadly virus could kill 20 million people in one week if it were dropped on a city in an aerosol bomb.

THE FIFTH SEAL. Revelation 6:9-11

This is evidence of the terrible persecution of people who are saved during the tribulation. (See Daniel 7:21-22) These souls "under the altar" are those that were slain "for the Word of God and for their testimony." They believed the message of Jesus Christ, but the Antichrist, using the powers of the one world government, will have them slain. It will be the greatest carnage of the spilt blood of the saints of God and the world has ever seen.

Note these were slain for the "*for the Word of God.*" They preached and taught the truth. In a day when nations of earth are saying "peace" it is not popular to preach the judgment and damnation of earth and sinners. America who is the past was called a Christian nation now is passing laws restricting public prayer, the mention of God or Jesus Christ in public. Our public schools can openly teach any religion on earth, but by law cannot mention or refer to our Creator the God of the Bible. In the Tribulation these

saints will refuse to be intimidated and will openly preach the Bible. They were killed for their testimony that God's word is true and Jesus Christ is the only Savior. These Tribulation saints will live what they believe and be martyred for their faith. Matthew 24:10 says many will be offended and shall betray others. Any witness of truth and move toward living by the Bible always brings out the "sleepers" or lost the religious lost in our society. The most dangerous threat to Bible believing Christians has always been the religious lost. Today the World Council of Churches and the American Council of Churches are some of the greatest opponents of God's word. Siding with the atheistic ACLU and most Protestant churches, today support the passing of laws with the intent of removing all traces of God from our society.

Note that the saints are calling for vengeance against their persecutors. Until now, Christians have always prayed for the forgiveness of those who persecuted them. In the tribulation, it is the Dispensation of judgment. The mood of God is different. Those who believe and accept the Lord will be saved, but those who do not will be dealt with swiftly. God's long suffering will be at an end.

The Jews will see persecution as never before. Many will turn to Jesus and accept Him as the Messiah. This causes a greater persecution and the Holocaust will seem as nothing compared to this time. These Tribulation saints are told that the persecution will continue for a little while and their brothers shall be killed as they were. (Rev. 6:11)

Three theological implications are seen:

1. This totally refutes soul sleep. (Taught by Seventh Day Adventist and some cults)
2. It refutes the idea of one general resurrection. These do not have glorified bodies as did the Church Age saints. They are waiting for the end of the Tribulation and the Second coming to be resurrected and glorified. These saints are not from the Church Age, but saints who have come through the Seal judgments and are martyred for their testimony for the Lord. They were killed because they believed in God and would not deny their Savior.
3. This suggests that those in heaven have some intermediate body. They are in heaven, but have not been resurrected or glorified. They are given robes; therefore they must have some type of body which is probably temporary. (2 Cor. 5:1) (See Matt. 24:4-13, it reveals many will be saved in the tribulation).
4. This also refutes the false idea that the first half of the Tribulation will be a time of peace and that God does not pour out His wrath during this period.

CHRIST OPENS THE SIXTH SEAL. Revelation 6:12

As the sixth seal is opened there will be a catastrophic earthquake resulting in the sun light being blocked and the moon turn blood red. The effects of the earthquake will be seen worldwide. This will be the greatest earthquake in the history of the world. In China in 1556, a million people died in the earthquake. On April 18, 1906, 700 were killed in San Francisco and March 27, 1964, 114 died in the Anchorage, Alaska earthquake. May 12, 2008 a 7.8 earthquake hit central China killing over 9000 people. These are the worse earthquakes known in recorded history, but this one described in Revelation 16:18 is much worse.

Scientists in the past fifty years have discovered that Yellowstone National Park sits atop of Yellowstone National Park sits atop a subterranean chamber of molten rock and gasses so vast that the region, known for its geysers and grizzlies, is arguably one of the largest active volcanoes in the world.¹ The caldera or magna chamber is 40 by 80 kilometers wide. Scientist estimates that if the volcano erupts the ash would circle the globe and would be so catastrophic that it would plunge the world in to a winter that could last for years.

STARS FALL TO EARTH. Revelation 6:13-17

During this judgment there will be great cosmic disturbances. Stars of heaven in verse 13 are said to fall to earth. We cannot be sure if these are comets or meteors. Some speculate that atomic warfare will begin here. When a nuclear explosion happens, the atmosphere rolls back on itself which creates a vacuum. Destruction comes when the air rushes in and fills the vacuum. The upper atmosphere will be full of fall-out and dust. Dust in the air could cause the moon to appear blood red.

There is a problem with this speculation. It is God, not man who is pouring out this judgment on the earth. A direct hit by a large meteor or many smaller ones could cause such destruction that could even change the climate of earth. The verse says that stars (plural) fall, meaning this will be a shower of meteors, comets or some object that comes from space. Great amounts of dust would be thrown into the upper atmosphere when the bodies hit the earth which could in turn shield the sun's rays from the earth and cause serve global cooling. The effects of such an event would be devastating on crops and destroy the world's economy.

Verse 14 says that every mountain and island on earth is to be moved out of its place. This earthquake could be triggered by the meteors hitting the earth. The severity of these earthquakes could cause great volcanic activity which would also release enormous volumes of dust which coupled with the meteor strikes would cause the moon to appear blood red.

The earth's mantle is riddled with tens of thousands of faults. It is on the fault lines that earthquakes occur. The latest data shows that there is an average of 24,201 earthquakes each year worldwide, which caused an estimated 87,899 deaths. ¹ This supernatural event is cause by the direct intervention of God and cause ever mountain on earth to be moved. The scope of the geographical event cannot be comprehended and the devastation cause unimaginable.²

Note that verse 16 says men shall hide in caves and rocks of mountains to escape seeing the *"face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb"* (See Luke 21:25-26). The whole world will know that Jesus Christ is God and these catastrophe events are coming from Him. Those that refuse to believe and receive Him as their Savior are terrified at His return. The world knows that what is happening is coming from God, yet instead of running to meet the Savior, they run and hide from Him and His offer of grace and mercy. No one will be able to escape and the rich and proud will all be humbled and afraid at this time.

In 2 Corinthians 5:11 Paul says “. . . *knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.*” Here we can see part of the blessing of studying this book. The blessing is being fore-warned to accept Christ now and be received as His glorious Bride not as His foe. No unsaved person on earth during this time will escape the wrath of God. For those who will not repent and humble themselves to the loving Lord Jesus Christ there is no escape possible. There is only swift and sure judgment for those who reject Christ Jesus. (See Isaiah 2:11-12) It should be noted that all the event of these six Seal judgments come directly from the hand of Jesus Christ who has opened the book of judgments and is beginning to pour out God's wrath on the earth. Yet, as catastrophe as these event will be they will be dwarfed by the coming Trumpet and Bowl judgments.

END NOTES

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1. Source: <http://dsc.discovery.com/convergence/supervolcano/under/under.html>
 - 2.USGS web site, <http://neic.usgs.gov/neis/eqlists/eqstats.html> , October 23, 2008