

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

CHAPTER SIX

"OPENING THE SEALED SCROLL"

I. THE OPENING OF THE FIRST SEAL - ANTICHRIST (6:1-2)

- A. Was followed by an exhortation from one of the living creatures for John to come and see (1) .
- B. Revealed a rider on a white horse going forth to conquer with a crown and a bow but no arrows (2) .
 - 1. The rider here represents Antichrist who begins his rise to power. After the church is raptured he goes forth to conquer the nations.
 - 2. The fact that the rider has no arrows represents a bloodless victory or a peaceful conquering of the nations. The scriptures tell us that Antichrist will bring about a false peace as he unites Europe and signs his covenant with Israel (Dan. 9:27; I Thess. 5:2, 3) . Compare a parallel passage in the Olivet discourse which concerns Israel (Matt. 24:4,5) .
 - 3. There are some who confuse this rider here with Christ who rides in conquest at the end of the tribulation period (Rev. 19:11) . But note first of all that Christ is in heaven opening the seals. Secondly to have Christ coming at the beginning of the tribulation instead of the end is out of order chronologically or time wise.

II. THE OPENING OF THE SECOND SEAL - WAR (6 : 3 , 4)

- A. Was followed by a second living creature calling John's attention to a second rider (3) .
- B. Revealed a rider on a red horse who was given a great sword and power to take peace from the earth (4) .

1. The rider here is Antichrist whom we see is now riding on a different horse. Red is associated with terror and death (12:3; 17:3).
2. According to God's plan we see that Antichrist will have the authority to take away the temporary peace which he has established (Dan. 7:8; 9:27). Note the parallel passage speaking to Israel (Matt. 24:6, 15 Here we see the time of Antichrist's switching horses will be in the middle of the tribulation period or after three and one-half years.

III. THE OPENING OF THE THIRD SEAL - FAMINE (6:5, 6)

- A. Was followed by a third living creature calling John's attention to a third rider (5).
- B. Revealed a rider on a black horse with a pair of balances in his hand (5). Along with the rider John heard a voice in the midst of the living creatures speaking about the price of food (6).
 1. The rider here also represents Antichrist
 Who will be in control of the food distribution in the tribulation period. The black horse is a picture of famine (Jer. 14:1, 2; Lam. 5:10)
 2. The penny is the Roman denarius which is worth about 15 cents. It represented the wages of an entire day at that time (Matt. 20:1, 2). A measure of wheat, about a quart, would make a laboring man one meal.
 3. During the tribulation period Antichrist will have economic control of things when famine comes as the natural aftermath of wars. The situation will be such that a man will have to spend a whole day's wages for one meal of wheat or for three meals of barley (cheaper grain). Apparently folks will have oil which could speak of travel and they will still be drinking alcoholic beverages (Matt. 24:38-41; Isa. 24:6-12). Note once again the parallel passage in Matt. 24:7.

IV. THE OPENING OF THE FOURTH SEAL - DEATH (6:7-8)

- A. Was followed by the fourth living creature calling John's attention to a fourth rider (7) .
- B. Revealed a pale or greenish horse with death riding upon it. Also following this rider was hades or the abode of the dead. To this rider of death was given power to kill the fourth part of the earth with the sword, hunger, death, and with beasts (8) .
 - 1. The rider here is identified as death and the color of the horse is picturing the same thing (Lev. 13:49) .
 - 2. During the tribulation period, as a result of wars, famine, and pestilences, death will claim one fourth of the people. Out of 3 billion this would mean 750,000,000 .
 - 3. Note the sword (from violence and wars), hunger (from famines), death and pestilence (diseases out of the former), and beasts will all kill men. Apparently the animals will attack men because of the famine (Ezek. 14:21) . Compare this also with the paralled passage in Matt.24:7 .

V. THE OPENING OP THE FIFTH SEAL - MARTYRED SOULS IN HEAVEN (6 : 9 - 11)

- A. Revealed the souls of those who were slain for the Word of God and their testimony. These were under the heavenly altar (9) .
- B. Was followed by cries of these souls asking when their blood would be avenged and their murderers judged (10) .
- C. Showed that those souls were given white robes and told to rest until their fellow servants and brethren should join their company (11) .
 - 1. Notice here we have John's attention taken from the earth to heaven and shows the souls of those who had been martyred up to that time during the tribulation period. In the O.T. the priest poured the blood which spoke of life (Lev. 17:11) under the brazen altar (Lev. 4:7) .

2. These souls are those saved during the tribulation period. After the rapture of the church martyrdom will be a sign of those who get saved. Notice saints are slain in 12:11; 14:13; and 20:4, 5. Among these will be Moses and Elijah(11:7)
3. The robes which these souls are given suggest a temporary body for those who die in the tribulation. According to Rev. 20:4 these martyred saints will receive their resurrection bodies when Christ comes at the close of the tribulation period. Once again compare the parallel passage in Matt. 24:9.

VI. THE OPENING OF THE SIXTH SEAL - DIVINE INTERVENTION (6:12-17)

- A. Revealed a great catastrophic judgment from God. There was an earthquake. The sun became black and the moon like blood. Stars fell from heaven to earth like ripe figs and heaven and earth were moved (12-14).
- B. Resulted in men of all classes trying to hide from God and the wrath of the Lamb (15-17).
 1. Notice up to this point the judgments in the tribulation will have resulted from human decisions and the evil rule of Antichrist. But now we see those judged realizing it is God's judgment upon them. This time is prophesied in Joel 2:30-31; 3:15; Isa. 13:9-10; 34:2-4.
 2. Many explain the catastrophic judgment here as the results of atomic warfare with men hiding in the earth to escape radiation. But we should note that men are not trying to hide from the destructive powers of men but from God's(6:16).
2. We should note at this time the second 3 1/2 years of the tribulation period or "the great tribulation" is under way.
4. Compare the parallel passages in Matt. 24:7; Luke 21:24-26. According to Luke 21:24-26 "the time of the Gentiles" were not fulfilled when Israel became a nation, but will be fulfilled when Christ returns in judgment (Dan. 2:44). It

began with the captivity of Judah (II Chron. 36:1-21) when the Gentiles ascended over Israel.