

The Rest of Revelation Session 3

Revelation 6-7

March 27, 2024

Pray and sing a hymn 735 and then jump in.

The Seven Seals

6 Now I watched when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, “Come!” ² And I looked, and behold, a white horse! And its rider had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer.

³ When he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, “Come!” ⁴ And out came another horse, bright red. Its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth, so that people should slay one another, and he was given a great sword.

⁵ When he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come!” And I looked, and behold, a black horse! And its rider had a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶ And I heard what seemed to be 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 wine!”

⁷ When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, “Come!” ⁸ And I looked, and behold, a pale horse! And its rider’s name was Death, and Hades followed him. And they were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by wild beasts of the earth.

⁹ When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. ¹⁰ They cried out with a loud voice, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” ¹¹ Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.

¹² When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, ¹³ and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. ¹⁴ The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. ¹⁵ Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶ calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, ¹⁷ for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”



1. VERSE 1: Not a triumph, but a calamity.
2. VERSE 2: Begins the “four horsemen of the apocalypse,” Zechariah 1:8-17 and 6:1-8. They are powers of the earth whom God uses as His agents of judgment upon the earth. Each color signifies the character of the rider and the form of judgment that strikes the earth before the end of the world.
3. VERSE 2: The first horseman is a conqueror, riding a white horse, the symbol of purity and of victory. Similar to Christ in 19:15, he is but an imitation, allowed for a time to set himself up as the ruler of the world – hence, an antichrist, that most blatant symbol of human pride, who seeks to be honored as God. His weapon is the bow, the weapon of Gog,

the enemy of the people of God mentioned in Ezekiel 38-39. That he comes into the world should be no surprise, since Christ Himself warned of the coming of false Christs (Matthew 24:4-5).

4. VERSE 3: Christ the One with all authority continues to open the seven seals, He opens the second seal of the scroll.
5. VERSE 4: Red horse = bloodshed to the world with his sword. This is warfare. Read Matthew 24:6.
6. VERSE 5: The third horseman, riding a black horse, is famine, which follows in the wake of warfare. He has a pair of scales, indicating the care with which the precious remaining food is doled out among the people. The voice from among the four living creatures shows the great value of the basic needs of life when they become hard to attain.
7. VERSES 6: Brighton: “The picture is given...of imbalance and scarcity of foodstuffs in the market. The ‘measuring quart’ could represent the Hebrew...equivalent to around twenty-two liters (almost six gallons), or the Greek measure of almost a quart. Most likely here it is the Greek measure. It took a worker’s daily wage, ‘a denarius’...to purchase just one ‘measuring quart of wheat’ or ‘three measuring quarts of barley.’ Both the wheat and the barley were costly, but at least a worker and his family could subsist – though barely. [the language suggest price-control measures were being taken to counter the runaway inflation that comes when vital goods are scarce.] Regarding the olive oil and wine...these were not be harmed, probably meaning that they were to be kept from being spoiled or soured.
8. VERSES 7-8: The fourth horseman, riding a pale horse, is Death, followed by Hades. How can such calamities as conquest, bloodshed, and famine end, except in death? Hades is death’s domain.
9. VERSE 9: 5th SEAL: The scene moves from earth to heaven. Here we see the souls “under the altar,” that is, those whose lives have been poured out like sacrificial blood because of their faith. Probably a reference to the martyrs.

10. VERSE 10: Seeing the turmoil on earth that continues without letup because of human wickedness, including the persecution of the people of God, these souls cry out, “How long?” How much longer must this wickedness be tolerated? How much longer before God finally intervenes and vindicates His people?
 11. VERSE 11: God replies by telling them to be patient. These saints have already received the white robe, which is the righteousness of Christ, and there is more to come. God does not believe that “justice delayed is justice denied.” God delays His justice so that His mercy can be displayed on even more people. Though the wait seems long, God will not bring things to an end until the number of those who would be put to death as they have been is completed. But, He assures them, they will be vindicated.
 12. VERSE 12: 6th SEAL: God begins His final judgment. The very foundations of the universe will be shaken – the earth with the earthquake, and the sky as sun and moon darkened and the stars fall from the sky. Then the sky recedes “like a scroll” (Isaiah 34:4), as God rips the heavens open and comes down (cf. Isaiah 64:1).
- *** God to dissertation on cosmic distress and read from Josephus on destruction of Jerusalem.
13. VERSE 13: Cosmic distress. Apocalypticism.
 14. VERSE 14: Cosmic distress.
 15. VERSE 15: The people of this world – 7 classes are listed – turn and run as they seek to hide themselves from God. The wrath of God is so terrible that even being covered by the mountains would be preferable to facing it.
 16. VERSES 16-17: Again, preferable to facing the wrath of God.

The 144,000 of Israel Sealed

7 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, that no wind might blow on earth or sea or against any tree. ²Then I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called

with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm earth and sea, ³ saying, “Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.” ⁴ And I heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:

- ⁵ 12,000 from the tribe of Judah were sealed,
12,000 from the tribe of Reuben,
12,000 from the tribe of Gad,
- ⁶ 12,000 from the tribe of Asher,
12,000 from the tribe of Naphtali,
12,000 from the tribe of Manasseh,
- ⁷ 12,000 from the tribe of Simeon,
12,000 from the tribe of Levi,
12,000 from the tribe of Issachar,
- ⁸ 12,000 from the tribe of Zebulun,
12,000 from the tribe of Joseph,
12,000 from the tribe of Benjamin were sealed.

A Great Multitude from Every Nation

⁹ After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” ¹¹ And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹² saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

¹³ Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?” ¹⁴ I said to him, “Sir, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

- ¹⁵ “Therefore they are before the throne of God,
and serve him day and night in his temple;
and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.
- ¹⁶ They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore;
the sun shall not strike them,
nor any scorching heat.
- ¹⁷ For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd,
and he will guide them to springs of living water,
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

VERSES 1-3: The picture then shifts from those who stand under the wrath of God to the people of God.

The angels of God hold back the four winds (four being the symbol of the world), which is God's destructive power sent out against the world (Jeremiah 49:36). The powers of destruction are not unleashed until the servants of God are sealed by God.

*** VERSE 3: "on their foreheads"

1. Baptism
2. The Sign of the Cross (review)

VERSE 4: These are 144,000 in number $12 \times 12 \times 10 \times 10 \times 10$. The number of the church squared times the cube of 10, signifying completeness. These are not 144,000 specific individuals, but represent the entire Christian church on earth.

Note that these verses do not indicate that the people of God will be removed from the world before the end. Rather, they show that God preserves His people in the midst of His judgment. He knows His own, and He protects them. He has marked them with His seal (2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13), the Holy Spirit, through the Sacrament of Baptism. Thus, while they are not preserved *from* the suffering the world endures because of sin, they are preserved *in the midst* of it, and they are preserved by nothing other than the Word of God. As the terrors of war surround them, the people of God remember that God "breaks the bow and shatters the spear" (Psalm 46:9). Though death and Hades are loose in the world, the people of God remember that Christ holds the keys of death and Hades (Revelation 1:18).

VERSES 5-8: Unique in Scripture. Symbolic with 12,000. The landed tribes would exclude Levi, the tribes of Joseph would be EPHRAIM and MANASSEH, and the tribe of Dan would be included in the list of the OT tribes.

Perhaps Dan is excluded because of its frequent association with idolatry. After all, this list describes spiritual Israel, not Israel according to the world.

VERSE 9: Another shift. From the church of earth to the church in heaven. Here the people of God are as “a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages,” the same four groups mentioned in 5:9, though in different order.

They are clothed in the righteousness of Christ and stands before the throne, as did the heavenly chorus in chapter 4.

VERSE 10: Here, finally, the triumph won through the death of the Lamb is realized in all of its fullness.

VERSES 11-12: Review the four living creatures (see pg. 22 of Leaders Guide **VERSE 6**. The Elders if you recall are 24 and again, represent the entire Church (OT and NT)...everyone is worshipping Christ.

What God has promised has been brought to pass. The saints have come through the tribulation, the judgment that will come upon the world at the end of its history as described in chapter 6, prophesied by both Danniell (Daniel 12:1) and Jesus (Matthew 24:21). Preserved through their trials, they will live and serve God for eternity.

VERSE 13: White robes!

VERSE 14: “The great tribulation” = collective of all Christians through all ages.

How are our robes washed or with what?

VERSES 15-17: Their eternal state is described in terms of the miseries of this world, which they no longer experience.